

# SIGNA



MODÈLE PÉDAGOGIQUE  
COMPAGNIE DE MARIE  
NOTRE-DAME

MODELO PEDAGÓGICO  
COMPAÑÍA DE MARÍA  
NUESTRA SEÑORA

COMPANY OF MARY  
OUR LADY  
PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

MODELLO PEDAGOGICO  
COMPAGNIA DI MARIA  
NOSTRA SIGNORA

MODELO PEDAGÓGICO  
COMPANHIA DE MARIA  
NOSSA SENHORA



**International Network**

Company of Mary Our Lady Schools and Educational Centers

## Presentation

Where there is a project there is meaning, and where there is a project with meaning there is a future. The Company of Mary educational institutions have a Project that has stood the test of time for more than four hundred years. It has engaged in dialogue with different historical moments and with different cultures. Its purpose is to educate and, in the words of Jeanne de Lestonnac, "to do it better and better." <sup>1</sup> For this reason, the Company of Mary Pedagogical Model is formulated and disseminated at this point in time.

The Model embodies our accumulated experience in its DNA and, without losing its essence, integrates new ideas that enrich it. This process enables it to face the challenges that are prevalent in societies and in the world today. How could it be otherwise? The Educational Project of Jeanne de Lestonnac places the person at the center of the learning and teaching processes. It is a commitment to Personalized Education. This approach expands desires, widens possibilities of expectations, provides the necessary vigor to always go further ... creating the formation of healthy and solid identities, forming links with others and with all of creation, and influencing reality by making it better.

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<sup>1</sup> Foundational Documents 1605-1638, ODN 1. Rome, 1976. Formula of the classes, c.III, p. 142, n. 1. Company of Mary Educational Project. ODN Bordeaux, n. 1, 2011, n. 8.

The formulation of the Pedagogical Model is the fruit of exchange of knowledge and experience among educators, religious and lay people from different countries. It is a collective project that puts into practice some of the core values in which we wish to educate our students, the citizens of a global and intercultural world: openness, flexibility, collaboration, cooperation, commitment to the common good, etc.

This Universal Pedagogical Model is defined at a complex moment in time. The pandemic generated by Covid 19 has revealed many other global challenges and the need for profound changes. It has made us keenly aware that our schools can be catalysts for change. Promoting the distinctiveness of each student, who is a unique and irreplaceable being on the horizon of a united global citizenship, is the responsibility we have in our hands as Educational Communities and as a Universal Company of Mary Community. It is a fraternity that is “capable of fertilizing the earth and creating a future,”<sup>2</sup> the new future in which we believe and to which we are committed.

Mary, Our Lady, is for us a companion and model. Led by her hand, with our eyes fixed on the Lord who leads us, we continue our journey.

M<sup>a</sup> Rita Calvo Sanz, odn  
Superior General

Rome, November 21, 2020  
Feast of the Presentation of Mary

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Encyclical, “Fratelli Tutti”, fraternity and social friendship. Pope Francis. October 2020, n.53.

## Introduction

For more than 400 years, the Educational Project has been characterized by placing the student at the center of the learning process. The education offered focuses on empowering the person to be the best possible version of themselves, the person whom God calls them to be. The Company of Mary Pedagogical Model, "SIGNA", incorporates the benefits of Personalized Education. It attempts to deepen its influence in today's reality, and it implements new dynamics, methods and tools that respond to the changes demanded by this multicultural, global and complex world. It is a document of universal character with the flexibility to be put into practice in various contexts and cultures where the Company of Mary carries out its educational mission.

**The content is developed in three sections:**

**First:** *The origin and significance of Company of Mary Educational Centers.*

As a starting point, the first section includes the Mission, Vision and Values that underpin the reason for our existence and the purpose and aspirations of the Institution. In a brief summary, it addresses the sources and historical roots at the foundation of the Educational Project and the philosophical and pedagogical principles that have marked and continue to mark our educational work that are a sign of identity. At end of the section, certain characteristics of Company of Mary education will be presented.

**Second:** The *Company of Mary Our Lady Pedagogical Model*: Personalized Education. The Model gives the basis and defines the reason for this type of learning/teaching and the commitments that it entails. It also expresses the specific characteristics and the role of the Educational Community and the necessary interaction between all the components. It specifies various forms of assessment of the program.

At the end of this section, various active methodologies for “learning to learn” are described.

**Third:** Various projects offered in some of our schools are presented. This section highlights the fact that what is offered goes “beyond the classroom and what is stipulated” in the search for a comprehensive and inclusive education. By way of example, only a few projects, considered to be significant, are noted. Each school may implement them, according to its reality and conditions and add other ideas or enrich the ones presented.

**SIGNA**, as its etymological meaning indicates, expresses the desire to continue to “**sign**” the commitment to educate with the Company of Mary identity in service to the Church and the world, and according to the vision of Jeanne de Lestonnac.

# I

## Origin and significance of Company of Mary Centers

### 1. Mission, Vision y Values

#### 1.1. Mission

The mission is to offer a Christian humanist education that, from the dialogue of faith-justice, faith-culture, faith-science and technology, influences the formation of students as a whole person and the transformation of society.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.2. Vision

The Educational Centers of the Company of Mary, inspired by the charism of Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac, are identified by living the values of the Gospel, educational excellence, quality of management, openness to a plural and diverse world, and with a social and caring commitment for the planet.

#### 1.3. Values

Sharing values, intrinsic to the Company of Mary, is configuring a way of being and doing that identifies us. These values not only give an identity, they embody the sense of meaning that is reflected in attitudes and

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<sup>3</sup>Company of Mary Educational Project (ODN Educ. Proj.), n° 1 ODN Bordeaux. Lestonnac Editions, 2011, n. 1.

behaviors lived on a daily basis. The following have been defined at a universal level: <sup>4</sup>

- *Passion for Jesus.* Jesus as the origin, foundation and meaning of existence.
- *Humility.* Acceptance of one's own reality and that of others which opens one up to relationships and mutual help.
- *Simplicity.* Appreciation of the small, the fragile and the everyday.
- *Gratuity.* Welcoming life as a gift and the willingness to serve, expecting nothing in return.
- *Compassion.* Letting oneself be affected by the suffering of others and responding with effectual love.
- *Hospitality.* Openness of heart to meet others and journey together, welcoming new possibilities.
- *Authenticity.* Consistency in what one thinks, says and does.
- *Joy.* Fruit of a positive outlook that radiates the joy of living.

## 2. Historical sources and roots

The foundress of the Order of the Company of Mary Our Lady, Jeanne de Lestonnac, was born in Bordeaux (France) in 1556, to the Lestonnac-Eyquem de Montaigne family. She grew up in a humanist environment and experienced first-hand the wars of religion between Protestants and Catholics. She married Gastón de Montferrant and was the mother of five children. When she was widowed, she entered the Cistercian monastery of the Feuillantines in Toulouse. Due to health problems, she had to withdraw

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. XVII General Chapter. ODN n. 26, Rome 2015, p. 248-251.

shortly after her arrival. In 1607, she founded the Order of the Company of Mary Our Lady, the first Religious Order dedicated to the education of women. On May 15, 1949, the Church declared her a saint.

The Educational Project that she offers to society is the result of her rich and deep life experiences and the influence of the innovative currents of the time:

- The humanism of her uncle Michel de Montaigne has fundamental repercussions on her vision of education, such as: a pluralistic and global vision, critical but trusting view of the world, the unique, integral and dynamic character of each person, the value of friendship, the virtue of honesty, the need to discover oneself, the importance of conversation and the acceptance of everyone with their differences, sound judgment and the love of the constant search for truth.<sup>5</sup>
- The Calvinist thought transmitted by her mother introduces Jeanne de Lestonnac to an intellectual and moral formation that prepares her for integration into society and how to bear witness to her faith. It makes her aware of the purpose of education: good customs, good doctrine and the "public good."<sup>6</sup>
- Inspired by solid spirituality, the Ratio Studiorum of the Society of Jesus provides a foundation for pedagogy, regulations and school organization.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Michel de Montaigne, Los Ensayos, Acantilado. Libro I, sobre los maestros (24) y sobre la formación de los hijos (25), libro II, sobre los libros (X). Barcelona 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Foundational Documents 1605-1638, ODN 1. Rome, 1976. Formula of classes, c.III, p. 142, n. 1. Company of Mary Educational Project. ODN Bordeaux, n. 1, 2011, n. 9.

The Educational Project created from these sources contains within itself a continuous dynamism of striving to “become better and better.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, while preserving its essence, it demands an on-going renewal according to time and place.

### 3. Philosophical and pedagogical principles

Throughout history, a Company of Mary education has been identified with expressions of deep philosophical and pedagogical meaning that have characterized its work. The pedagogy is a sign of its identity in all places where it is present. Among these expressions are:

“Not everyone wears the same size shoe”

“Formation of a well-balanced minds rather than a well-filled one”

“Do not allow the flame to be extinguished”

“Women must save women”

“Educate in life and for life”

“Educate in community with a common Project”

“A relationship which accompanies, integrates and fosters growth”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> ODN. Educ. Project. 2011, n. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. ODN. Educ. Project. 2011, n. 13-19.

## 4. Emphasis of Company of Mary education

### 4.1. Contextualized Education

The reality of the students, knowing their family and social environment, becomes a fundamental aspect in offering the opportunity to accomplish significant and relevant learnings that relates to daily life. It also opens up new experiences at the local and universal level, motivating interest in knowledge and the creation of new knowledge.

We must also train students to analyze their reality from a critical and hope-filled perspective, develop awareness of the particular time in which they live, believe in the ideal that a better world is possible and discover their place in bringing it about, investing themselves in its advancement, and the common good.

### 4.2. Person-centered education

The Educational Project of the Company of Mary places the student at the center of the learning process to promote personal and academic development. It takes into account the characteristics and unique educational needs of each student in order to provide the conditions for inclusive environments where processes of personalization and socialization are fostered.

The student is seen as a unique and particular being, original in their singularity, with their own identity, capable of exercising freedom and being progressively responsible for their own growth and progress. The main objective of this personalized approach is to offer comprehensive training that contributes to the development of all potential and helps meet needs.

### 4.3. Formation in ethics, values, social responsibility and integral ecology

The Educational Community is a reference place for conveying values. The commitment to ethical conduct and the search for a rich and meaningful life for all are indispensable challenges in the formation given by the Company of Mary. This also applies to creating an awareness of universal responsibility, one in which every person and the planet is recognized, respected and cared for. The formation of students for a dynamic and positive relationship with everything that exists helps them develop a global cosmopolitan identity that motivates them to live a lifestyle of commitment and in establishing harmonious relationships with everything created.

This vision involves the promotion of a culture of encounter where differences are considered an enrichment. These factors are perceived as an invitation to dialogue and search for common objectives which foster the important causes of humanity and the planet, such as: the struggle for justice and peace and care for our "common home." This leads to adopting a general moral conscience and a spirit of global citizenship.

### 4.4. Formation in spirituality and the faith

The Company of Mary sets forth the values announced by Jesus of Nazareth as paths of human fulfillment and ways to enter one's interior life, and to embrace the encounter with others and with God.

With this vision, our Christian humanist education focuses on Jesus who is the path to the Father, and Mary Our Lady, our companion, who models the values that herald a new world. Ignatian Spirituality, in terms of the

concrete experience of Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac, is the guide to discover the acting and liberating presence of the Spirit of Jesus in the world and to collaborate in the building of the Kingdom of God.

The Company of Mary educational centers offer a holistic formation according to the values of the Gospel, respecting the conscience and convictions of each person. This evangelizing education is a source of inspiration for believers and non-believers because, being deeply human, it is universal.

#### 4.5. Quality Education, path of excellence

Following in the footsteps of Jeanne de Lestonnac, education is considered a public good that impacts the transformation of society. Today, this gives clarity to the life in our schools and the work of the entire educational community. The effort for continuous improvement, through a well-defined project, the search for integrity and consistency in everything we do, helps us to move forward in a constant process of openness, evaluation and renewal.

The pedagogical, methodological and organizational developments that are incorporated in our centers and classrooms highlight the advances in the quality of the education we offer. This education, which seeks excellence, affects all areas of the community and is projected towards the enhancement of the surrounding context.

In today's constantly changing, interconnected and global world, active methodologies and information and communication technologies (ICTs) become allies in our daily work, facilitating the growth of knowledge and the interrelationship between knowledge and cultures. These

advancements strengthen networking, sharing knowledge and talent in collaborative spaces and learning communities.

#### 4.6. Communication and accompaniment

Conversation, dialogue and critical thinking are essential components in the path of personalization and socialization. For Michele de Montaigne and Jeanne de Lestonnac, the art of conversation, dialogue and accompaniment are key in a humanist education. These dynamics invite us to learn from all and with all, that is from people and everything around us. This thought is reflected in the Company of Mary Educational Project, and it indicates a form of relationship between the student and the educator that is characterized by trust and mutual respect: "educators walk alongside students, in a spirit of relationship and affection, pointing to the horizon and allowing the person to follow their own path".<sup>9</sup>

Each student in their personal growth creates life goals that gradually become a reality. But in order to move forward, students need the opportunity to dialogue, to experience respectful and stimulating accompaniment that, along with moments of silence and personal introspection, can help them acquire the autonomy, freedom and self-esteem necessary to discern and judge life decisions wisely. This will enable them to develop their skills and abilities confidently.

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<sup>9</sup> ODN. Educ. Project. 2011, no. 15.

## II

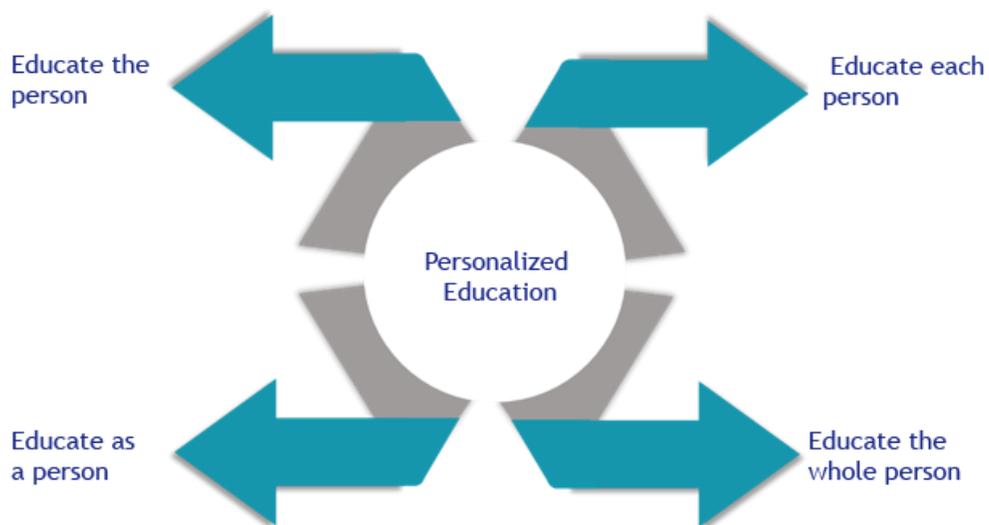
# Company of Mary Pedagogical Model: Personalized Education

The Company of Mary, throughout its history, has embodied the educational insights of its Foundress. From the beginning, Jeanne de Lestonnac became familiar with established sources of Renaissance humanism in which both the Catholic and Protestant worlds highlighted the value of the person in their entirety and the importance of education. The person as the center of learning and providing an education which empowers the individual to develop their potential and competently carry out their mission in the world is a characteristic of the Educational Project and the teaching-learning process of our schools from its origins.

The educational vision that Jeanne de Lestonnac embraces and offers as a gift to society and to the Church, wisely captures the nascent educational experiences that had emerged at the time. It has been enriched by the contribution of the pedagogical currents of each age consistent with this style of education.

Today, we feel it is necessary to formulate the Company of Mary Pedagogical Model in order to incorporate the contributions of Personalized Education and to reinforce its implications and add new dynamics, methods and tools that respond to the changes that a multicultural, global and complex world demand.

This new Pedagogical Model "SIGNA", consistent with the Company of Mary Educational Project and complemented by our specific Model for Evangelization, "UNITAS" are an inseparable whole. SIGNA seeks to influence the comprehensive and inclusive formation of each person as the protagonist of their own learning and ability to develop the skills that prepare each according to their life-goals, to be global citizens of this world and to collaborate with others in its creation.



## 1. Personalized Education: Concept

Personalized Education, "as an educational concept, aspires to present a world view of the process of educating. It should be valued for its openness to all currents, research, systems, methods, techniques, strategies and procedures, provided that they contribute to the overall formation of the person." <sup>10</sup> The conceptualization of Personalized Education has a

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<sup>10</sup> Bernardo, J. Personalized education: principles, techniques and resources. Madrid: Synthesis, 2011.

constructivist perspective that advocates a meaningful structuring of knowledge as a result of interaction with the environment, others and oneself. "In a multifaceted and holistic manner, it encompasses all the factors necessary to achieve the integral development of each person. It defines education as the intentional improvement of human faculties in a person-centered style, the person being the foundation of their origin and goal."<sup>11</sup>

A personalized learning system drives the processes of socialization and personalization. It recognizes the originality, freedom, autonomy and responsibility of each student to develop their potential to the fullest. It takes into consideration the principles and dimensions of the person through a well-done, conscious, freely performed activity and positive social interaction. It also empowers all human dimensions: physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual. This educational process, which is always dynamic, allows the modification of the pedagogy, curriculum and environment of the student to adapt to their needs and aspirations. It requires time and the exchange of important ideas. The new content becomes meaningful when creating the relationship between the unknown and the known, by using material with logical meaning that relates to the cognitive structure from which it learns. The classroom work adapts to the personal and specific characteristics of each member of the group: age, cultural environment, ability to process and organize information, among others. This instills curiosity and interest in real and new situations and problems.

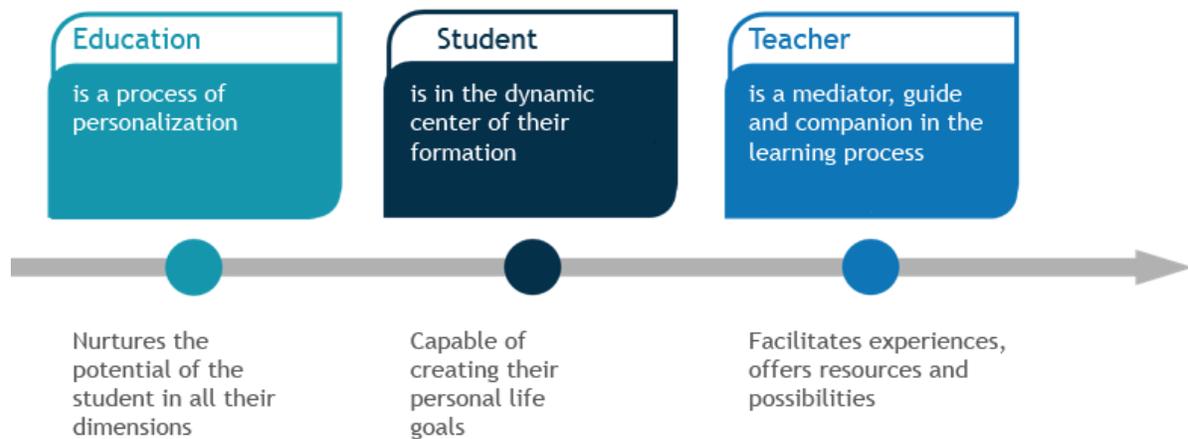
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<sup>11</sup> García Hoz, V. General introduction to a pedagogy of the person. Found in, *Treatise on Personalized Education*. Madrid: Rialp, 1993.

Students learn to observe and understand how the world around them works. They learn to adapt, question, seek solutions to problems so as to respond to challenges with perseverance and to have the courage to make mistakes as an essential part of learning.

During this process they are presented with knowledge. Skills are enhanced, work is adapted to learning needs and styles, requirements and preferences are made in a collaborative and interactive environment, as much as possible. This is an educational style that avoids uniformity, homogeneity and repetition. In the classroom, self-regulation is given importance throughout the process so that the student can assess the effectiveness or not of the chosen and used strategy. All of this sets up a meaningful type of learning that becomes relevant to the personal and school experience.

In summary:



## 1.1 Personalized learning

Upon receiving the prompt, the student processes information and formulates questions that arise from their reality. They acquire knowledge after a thoughtful process of exploring, analysis and in the preparation of data offered by the prompt.

Learning starts with an activity that presupposes the formulation of an inquiry or question. First, students engage in functions such as: observing, identifying, naming, analyzing, comparing, organizing, deducing. Attention and memory are used. Next, the student will acquire a new knowledge, transforming the information received through the elaboration process that takes place within them. This new knowledge implies the inner enrichment of the person, the retention and application of what has been learned. Thus, the knowledge assimilated is used in contexts other than that of the original learning, and it can be expressed in the following manner: verbal, written, body language or practical.



## 1.2 Personalized educational style

This educational style facilitates:

- Individual and group work that is more active and participatory in the classroom, enhancing awareness of the present: the here and now.
- Lifelong learning.
- The central role of the student in the learning process and that of the teacher as one who inspires, mediates, guides and accompanies.
- The assessment of knowledge as a key factor to generate objectives and values according to the personal and contextual reality of each student.

The personalized educational model is characterized by being:

- Integrating and being open: it combines all the elements of reality. A different component is introduced as one more element is complemented. This complementarity is, by essence, inclusive. It promotes an attitude of openness towards the other and towards a reality that favors the development of all the possibilities of each person.
- Reflective and critical: reflection plays a fundamental role in giving a human dimension to learning. Activities are enhanced to encourage thought and promote objective personal judgment. It allows for:
  - Reflection
  - Awareness of one's life to discover its deepest meaning
  - Observing and appreciating reality with an informed judgment and opinion
  - Developing critical thinking.
- Individualized and socially interactive: the depersonalization that characterizes today's society can be countered in the classroom by accepting each student as a unique and singular person, encouraging

whatever can help them act on their own, reinforce their identity and strengthen their self-reliance.

At the same time, the social tendency of individualism and the formation of closed and selfish personalities is countered. For this reason, special importance is attached to how the person bonds with those around them. Communication and openness as a means of developing relationship is promoted. The following behaviors and attitudes are fostered:

- Sincerity in relating to others
  - Promoting friendship and companionship
  - Quality time in the relationship between the teacher and the student.
  - A good working environment, social interaction and the development of habits and routines.
  - Collaborative work among all members of the educational community.
- Operational and creative; reinforces the creative capacity found in all manifestations of life: science, art, technology, school life, family...  
Therefore:
    - Quality work is promoted
    - Learning and activities that facilitate articulation are fostered.
    - Individual and group work are encouraged as a means of collaboration and social interaction.
    - Situations are created where students take the initiative, always accompanied by their teachers.
  - Challenging and enjoyable: quality work and good behavior are encouraged, knowing that what is worthwhile sometimes requires effort and brings joy. Filled with optimism and hope, the meaning of

life is discovered as a personal good, as well as a common good. For this reason, we work toward:

- Recognizing what is going well and rectifying behaviors, actions or products that need to be reviewed and improved.
- Enhancing areas of interest as sources of joy and interaction.
- Strengthening discipline and self-control.

## 2. Current commitments in Personalized Education in the Company of Mary Pedagogical Model.

- Accompany each student as unique, with personal needs addressed.
- Set the conditions for the dignity, identity and uniqueness of each person to be recognized. Cultivate individuality and socialization that foster respect for oneself and others based on personal interior reflection, on dialogue and participation within the group
- Develop all the dimensions of the person and promote autonomy, freedom, personal initiative and work habits.
- Maintain an active approach to education and the personalization of learning with equity, accessibility and social responsibility. The school should facilitate the necessary tools the student needs to develop responsibility for their own life and learning.
- Adapt educational processes to the specific characteristics and needs of each student to help them grow and develop, as much as possible. Offer them opportunities to reflect and explore the possibilities presented to them.
- Promote meaningful and relevant learning that develops 21st century skills: interpersonal, technological, innovative and creative thinking and how to structure a global cosmopolitan identity.

- Work in creative, dynamic and stimulating environments, that are cognitive and welcoming, and promote the enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity of students.
- Choose a personalized and open curriculum that adapts to the characteristics and needs of the student and helps to objectively identify and document their progress.
- Promote intellectual work habits and the mastery of learning and thinking strategies: ability to distinguish the important from the trivial, the real from the apparent, the permanent from the changing and a metacognitive learning that helps foster self-regulation and self-control throughout the process.
- Use various physical and technological means and resources for content and new learning.
- Evaluate methodologies and tools that promote the development and articulation of various digital skills and thoughts.
- Use continuous and formative evaluations, so students are aware of their development, potential and difficulties; readapt the program based on student capability and motivation rather than on performance.
- Try to ensure that the process of personal growth is combined with quality work which is ethically accomplished.
- Promote collaborative, committed and consistent family participation in school life and student development.
- Facilitate openness to other realities that encourage intercultural encounters, formation in the acceptance of differences and strengthening the capacity for listening, communication, collaboration and exchange.
- Prioritize the ethical and socio-political formation involved in the commitment to the care of the planet and life in all its manifestations,

to collaborate in building a more equitable and peaceful society, with an awareness of being citizens of the world.

- Provide a Christian and Catholic education that encourages the encounter with Jesus of Nazareth and commitment to the building of the Kingdom of God.

### 3. Roles: functions of the Educational Community and their relationship to one another

In the Company of Mary Pedagogical Model, the student is at the center of attention, and the school and family work together with a common plan in a broad and well-defined social context. Thus, relationships based on mutual trust mark an ongoing and stimulating process that enables growth, interrelationship, dialogue and joint work.

#### 3.1 The student

Personalized Education recognizes and grants the student the role of being the protagonist of their own learning and makes them ultimately responsible for their own learning and development process. Being active and responsible, they are engaged in what they do and the goals they strive to achieve.

The students, thanks to the work inside and outside of the classroom with the relationship and accompaniment of educators, acquire autonomy and awareness of their learning in their personal development. They are engaged in the process and become aware of the objectives and how to achieve them. They can receive stimuli, ask questions, seek answers, generate knowledge, accept commitments and make decisions. They use the metacognition and self-regulation of the learning process that allows

them to plan the strategies that should be used in each situation, how to apply them, and how to keep track of the evaluation process to detect errors and adapt to new situations. As a social being, they relate to the environment and learn from and with their peers how to take into account and learn to reflectively and critically accept the recommendations of teachers and peers, and be able to transfer what they learned in and outside of the classroom. The process of personal growth, appropriate self-knowledge and positive self-esteem become the basis to make this comprehensive development possible.

### 3.1.1 Profile of student when they leave our school

Establishing a leaver's or exit profile has as its main objective that the student, upon completing their formation process in our schools, be prepared to act responsibly in the future, show initiative, commitment and personal excellence.

This exit profile, expressed in the form of general competencies, acquires a global character that helps address the dimensions of the person in a holistic and complete way. The globalizing nature that marks the learning and teaching process must be related to planning a program that helps the student develop skills and acquire the resources to respond to the challenges posed by life in the personal, interpersonal, social and professional spheres.

This exit profile guides and orientates educational decisions made in the school and the classroom. The choice of programs and methodological strategies address the different characteristics of each.

*The student, as the leader of his/her life, is described as a PERSON who is:*

- *Optimistic:* with a hope-filled realism tending to see people and situations in their most positive or favorable aspect.
- *Self-driven:* with a personal set of criteria, students make decisions and undertake choices with freedom and commitment.
- *Pro-active:* with initiative and entrepreneurship, students identify problems, set improvement goals and act with creativity and responsibility.
- *Competent:* student knows what they would like to do, capable of doing it and makes it happen, looking for excellence in consistency with their values.
- *Disciplined:* hard working, resilient and persevering, with a desire to do the best and to move forward.
- *Empathetic:* perceives the feelings of others and of situations that affect people's lives and nature; becomes involved in the care of self and others.
- *Emotionally Intelligent:* possesses self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-control with the ability to recognize and manage their own emotions and respect those of others.
- *Identifies with social and transcendental values:* lives with a spirit of solidarity and gratitude, is a critical thinker and acts with ethical commitment, is open to the world and the transcendent, and can get along with others seeking the common good.
- *Committed:* Altruistic and generous, with capacity for service and dedication, finds in Jesus of Nazareth the meaning of their life and finds in Mary, Our Lady and Jeanne de Lestonnac models of commitment and human and Christian fulfillment.

### 3.2 The Teacher

The educator at Company of Mary educational centers is committed to the Institutional Educational Project. Educators are familiar with the reality in which they serve and that of the students. They have a fundamental role in the classroom, not as the protagonist and lead exhibitor but as a mentor, mediator and companion, attending to the integral formation of each student and establishing a meaningful relationship with them and their families.

They promote quality education and accompany students toward the intended goals. Through interaction with each student, educators track a personalized process, guiding and using the means and resources needed to respond to student needs and offer opportunities for growth. They design and adapt the curriculum according to the Pedagogical Model and the needs of each person, and they evaluate the learning that has taken place.

The educator helps students be open to the needs in their reality in order to do good, offering them confidence and realism. They accept and are sensitive to student's individual differences. They create a climate that promotes dialogue, participation and personal inner reflection. The educator's personal commitment, communicative ability and empathy with students leads them to have an attitude of assistance and service with sensitivity, tolerance and respect in defense of the principle of equity in opportunities. Educators value effort more than success. They appreciate successes and accept mistakes by rating them as a source of learning.

"Educators bear witness by their word and life to the principles we wish to inculcate."<sup>12</sup>

The suitability of an educator for teaching plus their human and professional training, enriched by the pedagogy and spirituality of the Company of Mary, guarantees the quality of the educational center.

Lifelong learning is a key point for teachers in order to live out their mission meaningfully and to adapt to the changes that reality and the educational system call for on a continuous and demanding basis. Through training, the educator updates or acquires new ways of thinking about learning and teaching, as well as knowledge and skills that help them renew methodologies, teaching strategies and resources used to respond to the needs of students and the demands of society. They will periodically self-assess and participate purposefully in the evaluation of how the Educational Project and the Pedagogical Model are being implemented.

### 3.3 The Family

The family, as the child's primary educator, is actively involved in their educational process. The family's participation in school life is encouraged by enhancing the collaborative relationship and channeling those initiatives that promote adequate and fluid communication. The school offers families various training opportunities to assist them in the education of their children and in the promotion of the values to be shared and lived out so they may contribute in other personal and professional areas of their life.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. ODN. Educ. Project. 2011, n. 12

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ODN, Educ. Project, 2011. n. 11.

This relationship requires promoting:

- The establishment of common goals between parents or student counsellors and the teacher which are periodically reviewed.
- The joint and ongoing evaluation of the student's educational process with their parents; this helps assess progress and introduce necessary improvements for the child's overall formation.
- Meetings and activities that promote an open and cordial relationship among the members of the community: presentation of projects, conferences, social gatherings, graduations, feasts and celebrations unique to the Company of Mary...

### 3.4 The Educational Community

The Educational Community, through collaborative and complementary work, facilitates the development and implementation of the Pedagogical Model in the Centers. The Model is created by means of the respectful reception of all its members and the specific contribution of each one through the promotion of a participatory culture, dialogue and communication. Thus, the Company of Mary Educational Project becomes a shared common project.

Teamwork, resource personnel, and the responsible engagement of all the individuals who carry out the educational task show that education is everyone's job. "The educational action of the Company of Mary is an open and plural process, nourished by a web of interpersonal relationships, structured around a common project."<sup>14</sup>

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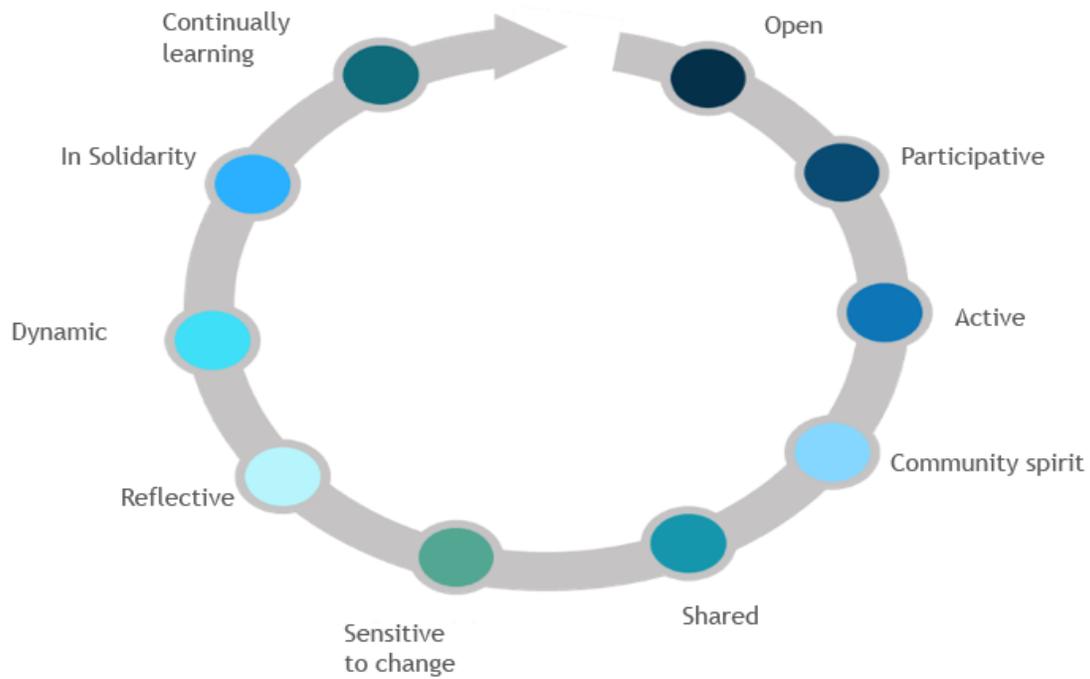
<sup>14</sup> ODN Educ. Project, 2011. n. 11.

In this Community every member has a mission:

- The student is the subject and they are responsible for their own formation. In each of the stages they assume different responsibilities and prepare to face the situations presented to them with commitment and motivation.
- Educators accompany and guide student growth, promote student development, and help students create their life goals.
- Administration and service staff educate with their witness. They participate according to their specific responsibilities and are an essential support for the proper functioning of the school.
- The family is the principle agent in their children's education. With their support, collaboration and identification with the philosophy and ethos of the institute, they contribute to the integral formation of their children.

The Order of the Company of Mary Our Lady, through the Titular Director of the educational center, is responsible for continuing and ensuring that the education offered is in accordance with the spirit of Jeanne de Lestonnac and the pedagogical tradition of the Company of Mary expressed in the Educational Project.

Everyone's commitment makes it possible for the Company of Mary to offer a school program with the following characteristics:



#### 4 Characteristics

Our perspective on learning and teaching practices have characteristics that define our educational style and promote competency innovation and attention to diversity.



#### 4.1 Importance of global and holistic learning

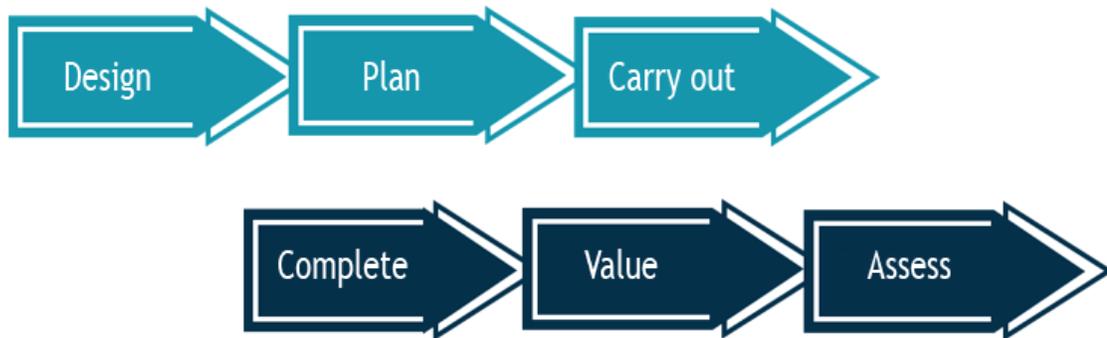
We believe in the importance of global and holistic learning. The goal is to help students be aware of the significance of this educational focus so that it will last over time and they will have the resources they can rely on to act competently throughout life. In this time of change and constant transformation of society, we know that school is no longer the only source of information. Schools, open to the world, are places of learning and not just teaching. They motivate active student participation.

In the Company of Mary centers, real or simulated, experiences are offered. These experiences are always contextualized. These experiences foster the interests, skills and learning styles of each student and promote the important building up of knowledge. Here, one of the pillars of the philosophy of our Educational Project is prioritized and addressed: "Formation of well-balanced minds not full heads".<sup>15</sup>

Autonomous and self-directed learning, the creation of challenges and in-depth reflection on the lesson's significance leads to strengthening different ways of thinking. Creativity is enhanced by these means, and it contributes to the training of entrepreneurial and innovative people who can make the world around them a better place for all. Activities become the means by which students develop capacities and promote values. These activities become a fundamental component of learning. Thus, they should follow the process below:

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<sup>15</sup> Cfr. ODN. Educ. Project, 2011. n. 16.



When transmitting content, the importance of the development of the inner-life (being), capacities (knowledge), skills (know-how) and motivations (wanting to do) are encouraged. At the same time, the formation of thoughtful, open and supportive thinking with procedures that lead to self-questioning and generalization are stimulated. Students learn strategies to improve and self-manage their learning effectively and autonomously by discovering the *what*, *how* and *why* of a task.

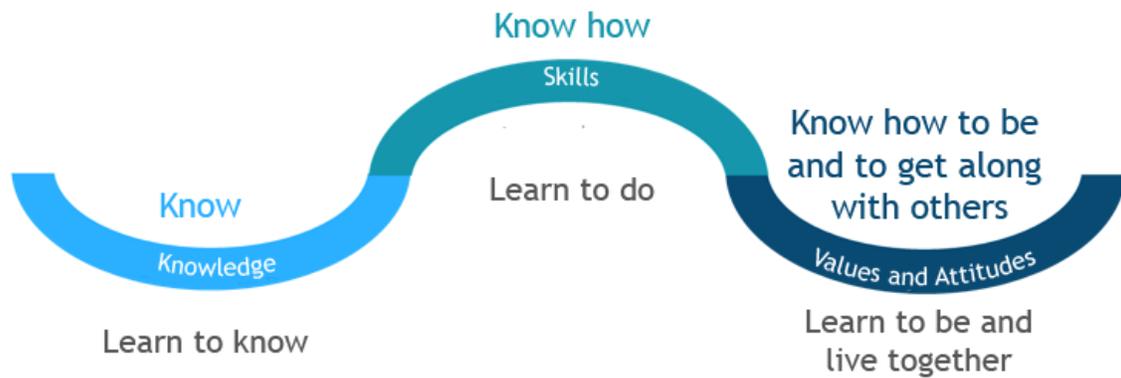
#### 4.2 Classrooms open to the world

Classrooms, laboratories, workshops, library... all become dynamic and constructive workspaces where dialogue is encouraged, knowledge is acquired. Learning takes place together through debate, research, experimentation and the experience of meaningful activities. They generate a highly motivating climate that increases student curiosity and performance. They are spaces open to the world, to the local reality and to the life of each Center. This facilitates an exchange among all the members of the Educational Community and on-going improvement.

The educator is not responsible for only a single class but observes and participates in the management of the classrooms of other teachers (*collaboration*). This opens and encourages communication and interaction in a trusting and respectful environment. Discussions regarding the observation, management and class methodologies leads to professional improvement and collaboration to benefit modeling and educating. This teamwork promotes a flow of knowledge and the development of teaching teams in a shared professional practice and continuous improvement. In addition, this networking facilitates creating diversified programs for students. Classes are transformed into specialized classrooms, with appropriate educational resources that develop the curriculum of the particular subject.

#### 4.3 Competency based education

The school should promote attaining key competencies that help students apply what they have learned to real situations and to grow individually, socially, academically and with the ability to apply knowledge in the work force throughout their life. Our Model is committed to competent and meaningful learning. Students are motivated to develop competencies; that is, to integrate knowledge (to know), skills (know-how), values and attitudes (know how to be and how to live together) so they may function effectively in different contexts. They will learn to perform a role, activity, or task properly, be prepared to live a meaningful life and fulfill themselves as a person, while living in a complex world with the aim of making it better.



The competencies that focus on “being,” fostering autonomy and personal initiative, and the “learning to learn” are prioritized. These are understood as the ability to continue learning in a way that is increasingly more self-directive. Tools and methodologies that are utilized and evaluated by interdisciplinary competencies are used. Learning by discovering and problem solving prepare the student to face new and relevant situations.

#### 4.3.1 Computational thinking, digital skills and responsible use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Technology serves the pedagogical design in our schools. It is a tool for promoting learning adapted to the particular needs of students, the needs of education and today's society. In this interconnected and global world in which exponential technologies (robotics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, nanotechnology, augmented reality, etc.) are already present, the formation of computational thinking and the use of ICTs as tools to solve problems, to acquire knowledge and design new products, is urgent. Participation in virtual and networked environments are also means to promote active, interactive and collaborative learning and exchange ideas among students from different contexts.

In our educational focus, ethics in the use of technologies is key in this creative horizon that is open to continuous advances. Through the use of technology responsible work is enhanced. Fundamental challenges for students to be technologically responsible include the following: differentiation and critical selection of information sources, self-discipline and non-dependence on technology, respect for other users and respect of privacy in the public space of the Internet.

#### 4.4 Accompaniment in the educational process

The whole-person formation offered in Company of Mary centers strives for harmony and balance in all dimensions of the person. The context and interaction that occurs between the different educational agents play a fundamental role: "One person alone does not educate, but rather an environment."<sup>16</sup>

The students are accompanied by teachers who motivate and guide. Teachers who know and respect the student's personal learning pace, attend to their needs and help strengthen and develop their skills and possibilities. This relationship is based on trust and mutual respect.

##### 4.4.1 Tutorial activity

Tutoring optimizes the learning process and student growth with personal and academic accompaniment. Dialogue and conversation are the means by which continuous monitoring and evaluation take place, imperative in helping each one's growth and integration into the group. Each student is

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<sup>16</sup> ODN. Educ. Project. 2011.n. 18.

accompanied by a teacher-mentor who follows the evolution of their educational process in a personalized way. Both, mentor and student, reflect together on the work and set learning goals based on personal plans.

Through individual tutoring and group tutoring, as well as systematic observation of each student, the teacher works to create a positive classroom climate that promotes learning, interpersonal relationships and a sense of group-belonging and companionship. In addition, peer co-tutoring or mentoring strengthens student support, mutual help, social interaction and personal and social development.

Having a Tutorial Action Plan is an essential component in systematic and personalized accompaniment.

#### 4.5 Personalized assessment

The Pedagogical Model gives fundamental importance to assessment as a basic regulatory component of the learning and teaching process. It develops operational and effective systems that serve as the motor for initiating new learning, overcoming deficiencies and making real-time decisions to achieve the proposed goals. To do this, the different elements that make up the educational process are constantly evaluated: the student is monitored for the expected results, performance and involvement, consistency between objectives, content, methodology and resources.

The assessment is prepared by applying strategies adapted to various learning styles. It is carried out according to set criteria and, where possible, is made known to students. Self-assessment is also encouraged

for students to recognize and evaluate their own progress; peer co-assessment is encouraged, as well.

Assessment, according to its purpose, has different modalities and goals:

- *Diagnostic or predictive assessment* - Performed initially to obtain a diagnosis of the student's starting point. It takes into consideration the student's characteristics and personal abilities. It helps identify their degree of knowledge, experiences and interests. It also helps to recognize strengths and how to address their weaknesses.
- *Formative assessment and formation*: It is continuously and progressively carried out during the learning and teaching process. It is based on evidence of student performance which is interpreted by both the teacher and the student. It helps determine the necessary means to close the gap, if any, between current knowledge and expected goals. Information gathered from this type of assessment is used to model future teaching direction and practice within the learning environment. The assessment collects information, evaluates processes, shows progress, identifies difficulties or errors, offers the necessary help and makes decisions regarding modifications or adjustments to improve learning.
- *Summary or performance assessment*: The degree and level achieved, the final product, as well as the effectiveness of the instruments are checked. Results are assessed in relation to clearly stated objectives. The results are based on systematic and periodic processes with quantitative and qualitative assessments.

From this perspective, the assessment is not only limited to checking results, but it becomes the starting point for new learnings where errors are identified and taken into account and where focused, varied and descriptive feedback is given in a timely manner. This fulfills the purpose of guiding students in their processes, progress and performances to continue learning. The assessment will have a variety of techniques, tools and strategies that will help gather information on the mastery of the contents, verification of the achievement of the skills and student attitudes towards learning at different stages of the educational process. We highlight the following process for effectiveness and efficiency: oral and written tests, observation, interviews and tutoring, presentations and debates, standardized tests, performance tests, learning journals, troubleshooting, and concept maps. A special role is given to rubrics in assessing observable indicators and establishing levels and nuances.

In these assessment processes, on-going communication with the family to share the evaluation and criteria, according to the standards established in each country, plays a key role. Exchange and dialogue on the process, progress and performance and finally on the student's results will lead to congratulating the student on achievements and identify possible areas for improvement.

## 4.6 Optimal development of student potential

### 4.6.1 Educational centers for the development of potential

Our Pedagogical Model believes in developing each student's potential. With a systemic perspective it addresses a range of competencies, aptitudes and skills that must grow exponentially.

For this reason, the education we offer departs from a model of reproducing knowledge, where learning is closed and passive. We believe in an open and active learning model in which imagination, curiosity and research are promoted; asking questions, sharing ideas and formulating one's own conclusion are encouraged, leading one to take on challenges and go out of one's comfort zone.

To develop students' potential, it is essential for teachers to implement programs that cultivate their abilities, by first identifying strengths and detecting weaknesses. Subsequently, lines of intervention are devised from plans tailored for each student, as well as the group. The different subjects and programs offer multiple and diverse opportunities that test the potential to achieve self-directed learning in a cooperative work environment and with flexible groups. Communication, collaboration and participation skills are developed. Work generates involvement, leadership, motivation, critical and creative thinking.

#### 4.6.2 Personal learning plans

Each student, together with their teacher-mentor, designs the Personal Learning Plan. *Objectives* are defined as well as the means and resources needed to design the activities and actions adapted to their characteristics, needs and concerns. The aim is the personalization of learning. The student becomes a person capable of facing important challenges by developing their strengths. They are prepared to face difficulties in the best way possible. Value is given to effort, responsibility and self-improvement. These are considered fundamental qualities to achieve the objectives.

## 4.7 Inclusivity and attention to diversity

Today diversity is a reality in all our centers. Diversity is seen as an experience which enriches and helps us learn from one another. Enhancing positive social interaction and mutual respect encourages the exchange of initiatives and decisions that enable us to journey and cooperate with one another. Differences are managed through individualized plans that generate synergies and develop different personal capacities.

The educator takes into account the heterogeneity of abilities which are not limited merely to the academic sphere. This response takes into consideration the importance of each student's personal knowledge, emotions, feelings and beliefs.

Having a department that addresses issues of diversity supports the work of teachers. It ensures the integral formation of each student and helps adapt the teaching processes to their specific characteristics and needs. In addition, this department participates in the educational, psycho-pedagogical and professional orientation of students and collaborates with tutors, teachers and families.

### 4.7.1 The grouping of students

The criteria for grouping students must be flexible. It must respond to student needs and to the objective and type of activity that supports the intended goal. Various kinds of groupings are beneficial: individual or pairs, a large group, heterogeneous fixed teams, homogeneous or heterogeneous flexible groups, mixed-class teams and/or between grade level groups, performance-based levels with students of different ages working at the level of their capacity, competence or performance groups according to needs and interests. This variety of groupings requires

curricular adjustments and flexibility, while improving motivation, creativity and interest in learning. In addition, and as a fundamental aspect, it facilitates the growth in interpersonal capabilities and attitudes such as respect, tolerance, responsibility, collaboration, rigor, perseverance and autonomy.

#### 4.7.2 Organization of learning spaces

The design and organization of learning spaces have a direct influence on student learning, as well as improving the affective, positive and enriching relationship between teacher and student, and among peers. In our centers we attempt to create stimulating, versatile, spacious, open and friendly spaces that adapt to the nature of the task and that favor qualitative work, curricular development, a climate of positive social interaction, and habits of order and concentration.

#### 4.7.3 Organization of time

The distribution of time is flexible and adapted to the personal particularities of the student and the type of activity presented in the classroom. The teacher is responsible for managing the time and diversifying the activity according to student levels of capability, motivation, needs and aspirations.

#### 4.7.4 Organization of teaching materials and resources

A selection of teaching materials, physical and virtual resources, are prepared in relation to the educational context and characteristics of the students. It helps respond to the specific and actual diversity in the different instances of learning and teaching, as well as planning, execution and evaluation. Where possible, the selection of strategies and resources will be managed and co-designed between the teacher and the student,

giving the student the opportunity to take charge of their learning.

#### 4.7.5 Flexibility of the curriculum

With an inclusive approach which promotes more flexible, multi-level learning, open to change and continuous modification, the teacher accompanies each student in their learning. Educators respect styles and stages of development in order to avoid monotony or loss of student interest. A uniform and identical curriculum in content, pace and challenge-level is avoided in favor of an optimal and in-depth fit that produces lively and creative learning. This approach gives attention to differences and helps each student follow their own journey through programs and learning modalities designed specifically for them, and according to their progression, abilities and performance.

The work carried out in the classroom must be adapted both in its content and in the speed of presentation. The pace at which the curriculum develops must adapt to the characteristics of each student, addressing particular student needs or the pace of the group. Changes in content may vary according to the degree of abstraction, complexity, and variety. Academic program units are the classroom curricular documents used by each teacher to plan the learning, teaching, and evaluation activities. They respond to questions about *what, how, and when* one teaches and evaluates. The process always places the student at the center.

The design of academic program units, the policies, programs, guidelines, competencies and learning outcomes are designed to meet the prescribed requirements in each country. The units are flexible, thus adapting to the different needs that arise in the learning process of each student.

#### 4.8 Active methodologies for learning to learn

Personalized teaching and learning require the use of active, operational, participatory and cooperative methodologies that provide a lasting, in-depth, meaningful and transferable learning. We believe that the on-going dialogue between student and teacher helps them to know each student's possibilities, to discover how they learn and identify the processes that favor their development. It transforms learning into a dynamic, authentic and relevant activity.

Criteria and variables are followed in the selection of methodologies according to the levels of cognitive objectives envisioned according to Bloom's taxonomy. This describes the ability of the method to promote learning, the degree of control that students have over study itself, the number of people participating in the activity, as well as the resources and spaces necessary for the development of the different initiatives. The selection, adoption and implementation of methodologies is not necessarily to invent new procedures but to select those that have a pedagogical basis and that favor the work in the classroom and facilitate the work of the teacher.

The teacher, as a leader, implements the pedagogy of imagination that consists of students learning to learn by encouraging self-discipline and commitment to their work. The teacher plans and designs learning experiences and activities consistent with the expected results. The teacher combines knowledge, skills and attitudes so that each one can integrate, relate and apply these elements in various situations and in everyday contexts. This expands the classroom beyond its walls to the surrounding community with the possibility of interacting.

Students are given the opportunity to develop their top-level cognitive competencies founded in experimentation and research-based approaches and framed in complex and relevant projects that require thoughtful involvement. These approaches develop autonomy, reasoning, collaboration and the search for answers, as well as the empowerment of originality and divergent thinking.

#### 4.8.1 Teaching techniques focused on the student and the development of skills

The Company of Mary Pedagogical Model sees methodology as a vehicle to achieve meaningful and competency-based learning without diminishing knowledge and content. We believe that there is no better method. It is appropriate and relevant in each historical moment. Therefore, our preference is the combination of different methodologies that provide experiences designed in a contextualized, systematic and intentional way. With an educational program that is flexible, we do not use teaching methodologies lacking in scientific verification, nor resources that detract us from the essence and purpose of each school. The importance of plurality and methodological flexibility in planning and developing the learning-teaching process supports the intention of serving student diversity, promoting intellectual curiosity and creativity, reinforcing and expanding curriculum content, and strengthening social habits and skills. Its purpose is to teach thinking through perception and attention, reflection and memory, imagination and creativity, to develop symbolic expression and practice, and foster growth in planning, in behaviors and in the management of emotions.

The learning process, *individual and self-directed*, is very important as an activity that consolidates learning. This includes studying and performing

practical tasks. Individual work develops the habits of personal effort and discipline in carrying out one's own activities. It allows for personal interests to materialize within the academic context. It requires mastery of study techniques, the correct organization of information and an adequate environment for study.

In our centers we provide *quality taught classes* that make it possible to present and supplement content, resolve doubts, enhance knowledge and memorization. Our schools focus on reason and not on the mere mechanical reproduction of data that is not assimilated or integrated. These are well-planned sessions that strive for the effectiveness and attention of students, sessions where questions are generated, and reflection is encouraged. Verbal expression can be reinforced and supplemented by the support of technological resources. These sessions are combined with didactic methodologies that emphasize the role of students as the center and protagonist of learning, empowering them as a person and motivating reflection and constructive criticism.

Large group sharing or class presentations by students to other peers is important as a Personalized Education didactic strategy, whether it be individually or as a group. In this instance, the teacher takes on the role of guide and animator. The student learns to synthesize the research and present it in a unified manner to the group, and be open to observations and errors with a positive attitude. Peers listen respectfully, learn to discuss and appreciate the critique of others.

Our Model believes in the combination of transformation and methodology because:

- It incorporates proposals arising from attention to the unique differences and interests of each student.
- It promotes work, competency and multi-disciplinary assessment by interconnecting curriculum topics with real-life problems and present day challenges.
- It provides multi-level responses, taking into consideration the different ways of learning.
- It promotes interaction and creativity through ICT.
- It encourages redesigning learning spaces.
- It stimulates multi-lingual teaching.
- It improves the social environment and relationships in the classroom.
- It promotes the participation of families and members of the Educational Community.

#### 4.8.2 Key aspects of certain methodologies used

##### 4.8.2.1 Project-Based Learning

It is a contextualized teaching method, with an all-encompassing and interdisciplinary approach. Students acquire knowledge and skills on a topic of interest through research or contextualization, creative and shared research, culminating in the creation of a final product. It encourages students to ask questions regarding interests, put into practice what they have learned, and develop skills to enhance their own learning by making decisions, solving problems and communicating ideas. Throughout the process, students take an active role. Together with the observations provided by teachers and other members of the community in their role of facilitation and administration, students reflect on the work being done and the difficulties each needs to overcome. The PLW promotes quality

work and requires a qualitative assessment of the entire process and the final product.

#### 4.8.2.2 Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-Based Learning presents students with a relevant, real or fictional problems based on topics usually designed by teachers to acquire and integrate new knowledge. It enhances student-centered learning and promotes the integration of knowledge and evaluates the ability to reason and apply knowledge. It is assessed according to the level of learning. The student, individually or in small groups, must solve the problem by following established steps which encompass different disciplines or curriculum areas. The teacher takes on the role of guide, tutor or consultant of the process.

#### 4.8.2.3 Challenge-Based Learning (CBL)

Challenge-Based Learning is a pedagogical approach that involves the student in an open, real, significant and curriculum related situation which the student must solve looking for a specific and real solution. The student or group determines the challenge they want to address and when they succeed, they move on to a new higher-level challenge.

This methodology helps the student develop a deeper understanding of the topics being studied, as well as skills related to the following: analysis of information, choice of different possibilities, attitudes related to on-going personal improvement, the ability to take risks and tolerance with frustration or confidence in one's own abilities. The teacher accompanies the work of the student as a facilitator and addresses concerns and questions.

#### 4.8.2.4 Experiential Learning Model (ELM)

In the Experiential Learning Model approach, experience plays a central role in the learning process. It is founded on the idea that knowledge is created through a transformation caused by experience. According to David Kolb's cycle, four phases must be given for effective learning:

- *Concrete and new sensory experience:* new experiences are offered that connect with student emotions.
- *Reflective Observation:* Experience is analyzed from various perspectives and connections are made between what takes place and the outcomes. The student reflects on what is observed and experienced.
- *Abstract conceptualization:* One learns from experience, basic observations and conclusions that are drawn and then applied to different contexts.
- *Active Experimentation:* Observations and conclusions are implemented to verify their validity; they serve as a guide to solving problems that are similar to the experience observed. New learning is applied to the closest reality and to other contexts.

The teacher structures the experiences by analyzing cases or simulation models. Educators keep in mind the educational objectives and characteristics of students and groups to enhance learning. The student is accompanied in the development of skills such as: decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork and negotiation.

#### 4.8.2.5 Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a methodology focused on using creative design for problem solving. It focuses on processes such as observation,

understanding, imagining and prototyping and striving to develop the creative capacity of each student.

The teacher guides the work by encouraging students to brainstorm and analyze different variables. This promotes collaboration and respect for the opinions of others. It poses challenges that must be solved by applying the processes of design thinking.

#### 4.8.2.6 Visual Thinking

In developing Visual Thinking, the student learns to think effectively using graphic elements to represent ideas, concepts and create mind maps. These help students discover solutions, simulate processes and generate new ideas. Visual images impact the brain, capture more details, create clearer thoughts, reinforce understanding and process information more quickly.

The teacher introduces learning experiences where visual thinking can be applied and facilitate methodological strategies using graphic representations of content to help students communicate their ideas and assimilation through the combination of images and writing.

#### 4.8.2.7 Cooperative Learning (CL)

Cooperative Learning helps the student to “cooperate in order to learn and learn to cooperate.” Students work in small, stable and heterogeneous groups to achieve common goals, helping one another in the development of different activities. Positive interdependence and stimulating interactions between group members are enhanced. It is an individual and group responsibility to know and practice interpersonal and group skills. An on-going evaluation helps assess the functioning of the group and whether the expected goals are being achieved. It also makes it possible to affirm the efforts of the individual and group work. Cooperative

Learning involves four areas of intervention: group cohesion, the use of cooperative structures and activities to explicitly and systematically show students how to work as a team, team planning, group dynamics, etc. The teacher takes on the role of facilitator and turns the leading role over to the student.

#### 4.8.2.8 STEAM

STEAM is the integration of different disciplines: science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. It develops skills and learnings that are contextualized and meaningful. It enhances scientific, quantitative, visuospatial, flexible and creative thinking. These are important elements for innovation. This approach helps to develop capabilities for analysis, problem solving and teamwork at any age and level. The student learns by doing and, at the same time, it combines the practical with theory by using different methodologies.

#### 4.8.2.9 Teamwork

Students are given the opportunity to work as a group in order to achieve goals by performing individual and joint tasks. Positive interdependence between components is motivated and attitudes of openness, such as curiosity and interest in comparing personal ideas with those of others, are motivated by attention and respect. In this type of work, students learn to help each other, create, discuss and come to common solutions by developing social skills and creating feelings of belonging.

To ensure the achievement of the goals, the teacher must follow up regularly, making sure that each member feels comfortable in the group. It is not a question of all members doing all the tasks, but that everyone performs an important part and therefore benefits from the learning achieved. In evaluating the task, appropriate criteria must be established

to obtain information regarding the level of the activity carried out by each member and the quality of the final product.

#### 4.8.2.10 Thinking-Based Learning (TBL)

Thinking-Based Learning is an active student-centered method that prioritizes critical and creative thinking. It uses forms of superior thinking, such as: decision-making, comparing, contrasting, predicting, as well as important thought routines like carefully listening to others, exposing reasons for accepting or discarding ideas, etc. These processes demonstrate the capacity to reflect on the content being learned.

The teacher guides and presents challenging objectives to students. They learn to use superior thought skills that can be applied to learning content which they can use throughout their lives, in addition to guiding their thinking with reflective procedures.

#### 4.8.2.11 Learning Labs

Labs are learning spaces related to areas where students develop competencies to achieve active and creative learning. They are locations where activities close to student interests take place. They encourage experimentation, understanding, cooperation and the use of resources. The subject may vary during the course, as well as the organization.

In Labs, personalized learning becomes very relevant as the student advances and reaches a degree of development and depth. By nature of their characteristics, students strengthen and expand their competencies according to their possibilities, motivation and interests. The following are considered Learning Labs: robotics, expression and dramatic play, crafts and storytelling, among others.

#### 4.8.2.12 Movement-Based Learning

Movement as an educational strategy promotes cognitive development, emotional status and student health. It helps build motor memory that helps develop any activity with concentration and attention. Movement is included in classes by pausing to activate muscles and performing games that involve changes in positions or movement through the classroom. Changing classrooms, so common in personalized teaching, is a form of movement that contributes to focus and motivation to start a new activity.

#### 4.8.2.13 Gamification

It is a methodology that uses game as a motivating element for learning. Playful activities arouse interest and a desire to learn. Gamification helps to develop concentration and the attitudes and values appropriate to the game's objectives. Games also provide immediate and continuous feedback, making learning faster and more effective.

#### 4.8.2.14 Service Learning

The main objective of this methodology is based on the fulfillment of experiences, usually outside the school, that help identify situations of need or risk and the call to respond to these needs. To this end, the problems within the community and the context are connected with the educational work that takes place, in and out of the school. Service-Learning promotes social and civic responsibility, as well as the values of solidarity, service and the effort to build a better world.

#### 4.8.2.15 Other methodologies to consider

The following are other learning methodologies or techniques used in our classrooms. In the same way as those mentioned above, they promote self-directed, active and meaningful learning, increased participation and

involvement of the student in learning and a high degree of personalization. We highlight the following:

- Early stimulation
- Work corners or learning spaces
- Learning landscapes
- Interactive groups
- The Case Method
- Flipped Classroom
- Integrated tasks

### III

## Other programs offered in our schools

The education offered by Company of Mary schools goes beyond the classroom and what is stipulated in search of the holistic development of the person. These projects are not fixed. They depend on student needs and the context. The following are a small sample of some of them.<sup>17</sup> This is an open-ended section that, according to its reality, each school will adapt, complete and enrich.

### 1. Intercultural Formation

Our societies are becoming more diverse and this reality is reflected in many of our schools. For this reason, we must be aware of the importance of forming in interculturality to strengthen coexistence, freedom, justice, equity and a positive and respectful view of the world. It is imperative that we present a plural vision of our world to discover and take into consideration the value of each person: their dignity, history, politics, culture, language, religion and tradition. Opportunities for cultural exchange and learning different languages and traditions are ways that facilitate relationships and work towards creating a more inclusive world.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. ODN. Educ. Project. 2011, no. 14.

## 2. Linguistic and Multilingual Program

The schools incorporate a multi-lingual and multicultural learning model. This enhances the social and professional development of our students. Knowledge of more than one language is fundamental today. Therefore, the development of language skills is a priority in our schools. This work is not restricted to the use of one single language or in a single location, but it takes place in different learning spaces. It facilitates the transfer of communicative learnings to other similar situations.

Students' capacity for communication is enhanced, making it easier for them to live experiences oriented to the proper and correct use of the language in a diversity of modalities and formats. The use of ICT and other resources help the student learn actively, mainly, by listening and speaking. Active methodologies become a great ally to achieve the intended objectives. Learning other languages also facilitates openness to the world and promotes the experience of diversity as an enrichment.

## 3. Emotional Education Program

Emotional education is the linchpin and hallmark in our educational process. It enhances a learning that seeks to balance the mind and feelings, heart and head, and it develops emotional skills as essential to the integral formation of each student.

Emotional education promotes personal growth experienced in emotional stability, developing student social skills. These skills become a tool which assist in coping with individual and interpersonal conflicts. Students learn

to manage their emotions by understanding them, talking them through, becoming aware of them and responding to them.

Each student is helped to know and respect themselves and others, to express and manage their emotions, to be tolerant, to know how to control impulses and channel enthusiasm. In the classroom there are spaces that promote communication and coexistence, mutual help, the expression of different points of view, empathy and solidarity.

#### 4. Entrepreneurship and social innovation projects

Entrepreneurship is understood as an attitude that requires skills and knowledge to face the future in a positive way and to collaborate in social transformation based on innovation and creativity. In our schools there are learning opportunities that empower students to develop entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, such as personal autonomy, leadership and empathy. Such skills help face new challenges with optimism and responsibility.

Students learn to get involved and risk thinking differently to promote their own proposals and develop solutions while launching personal and group projects promoting improvement and the common good.

#### 5. Extracurricular activities and our relationship with the surrounding community

Company of Mary schools offer a variety of extracurricular activities where each student is freely invited to participate: share the gospel values of the

Catholic and Christian faith, cultivate artistic expression, encourage creativity and research, promote the enjoyment and care of nature, practice sports, come into contact with other social realities...<sup>18</sup>

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Having a Universal Pedagogical Model reinforces and enriches the Company of Mary International Network of Schools. This union has been desired from the origin of the Order: "let us join forces to serve in a new way, always better ".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Cfr. ODN. Educ. Project. 2011, n. 10.

<sup>19</sup>History of the Order of the Company of Mary (I). Lestonnac Editions, Rome 2012, p. 98 and 99.

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The Order of the Company of Mary Our Lady fulfills its educational mission in:

France

England

Switzerland

Nicaragua

Argentina

Brazil

Haiti

Vietnam

Cameroon

Spain

Albania

United States

Cuba

Peru

Bolivia

Japan

D.R. of Congo

Kenya

Italy

Belgium

Mexico

Colombia

Chile

Paraguay

Philippines

Tanzania