

JESUIT PEDAGOGY, 1540–1616



A READER

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Introduction

Prelude

The period stretching from 1543 through early 1548 was decisive for the origins of Jesuit education.¹ After Francis Xavier (1506–52) had acceded to an episcopal request in Goa, India, that the Society manage a seminary there, Jesuits were teaching some seminarians a mere three years after the official founding of the Society in 1540. Jesuits were soon given full administrative powers of that institution in 1547.² In 1546, at the Jesuit college in the University of Gandía, Spain, some Jesuits were teaching a few non-Jesuits.³ But the school founded in 1548 at Messina is known as the *protocollegium*: it was the first school (1) founded and run directly by the Society, and (2) aimed primarily at educating extern (i.e., lay or non-Jesuit) students.⁴ From these beginnings, there developed over the following centuries a vast Jesuit educational network embracing millions of students. By the time of the Society's suppression in 1773, Jesuits had gained a reputation as the leading schoolmasters of Catholic Europe and of other parts of the world where they had

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- 1 An extensive literature covers this topic. See Allan P. Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education: Development and Scope of the Ratio Studiorum* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1938); George E. Ganss, *Saint Ignatius's Idea of a Jesuit University* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1954); László Lukács, "De origine collegiorum externorum deque controversiis circa eorum paupertatem obortis," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 29 (1960): 189–245; 30 (1961): 1–89; Gabriel Codina Mir, *Aux sources de la pédagogie des jésuites: Le "Modus Parisiensis"* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1968); John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism 1450–1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999). And, more recently, John W. O'Malley, "How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education," in *The Jesuit Ratio studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 56–74, then reprinted in O'Malley, *Saints or Devils Incarnate? Studies in Jesuit History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 199–216; Macau Ricci Institute, ed., *Education for New Times: Revisiting Pedagogical Models in the Jesuit Tradition: International Symposium Organised by the Macau Ricci Institute, Macao, 25th–27th November 2009* (Macau: Macau Ricci Institute, 2014); Paul F. Grendler, "Jesuit Schools in Europe: A Historiographical Essay," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 7–25.
 - 2 For details about the seminary in Goa, see Ignacio Arellano and Carlos Mata Induráin, eds., *St. Francis Xavier and the Jesuit Missionary Enterprise: Assimilations between Cultures / San Francisco Javier y la empresa misionera jesuita: Asimilaciones entre culturas* (Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra [BIADIG, Biblioteca Áurea Digital-Publicaciones digitales del GRISO], 2012), 9–21.
 - 3 László Lukács, "De origine collegiorum," 197–99. This school had been founded by Duke Francisco de Borja, who had invited Jesuits to come to it. It was a modest undertaking, but it received formal status as a university in 1547 through a bull issued by Paul III (r.1534–49).
 - 4 See Codina Mir, *Aux sources*, 263.

established a missionary presence.⁵ After the restoration of the Society in 1814, they again taught millions of students and continue to do so today.

During the days of the rise of Jesuit education, there were two major kinds of educational institution in Europe.⁶ The first was universities. Born as corporations of students or masters in the Middle Ages, they offered a professional education in which students would often apply themselves first to a course in (philosophical) “arts” before proceeding to one of the major courses of theology, law, and medicine.⁷ The teaching was based on Scholastic methods which employed the threefold pedagogical device of *lectio* (lesson), *repetitio* (repeating), and *disputatio* (disputing). Students usually graduated with a bachelor of arts degree after some years studying the subjects of the *trivium* (grammar, logic or dialectic, rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy). They would attain a master of arts degree after three and a half years of philosophical studies based on Aristotle’s works, moving from logic to natural philosophy (*On Physics*, *On the Heavens*, *Short Treatises on Nature*, *Meteorology*, *On the Soul*) and then to ethics and metaphysics.

After the arts course, students could remain in those studies or pursue one of the other major faculties in order to earn a doctorate, typically in seven or eight years. Law was divided into civil law and canon law, relying on the *Corpus juris civilis* (Body of civil law) and on a set of works such as the *Decretum Gratiani*, which were to be assembled and codified in the *Corpus juris canonici* (Body of canon law) only in 1582. Theology was commonly based on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (1100–60) and the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). Among medical faculties, Avicenna’s *Canon* held sway as the major text until it was replaced by Galen’s authority in the wake of that author’s renaissance at the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁸

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- 5 In 1623, the famous English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626) commented in the Latin (and expanded) version of his *The Advancement of Learning*: “As for what concerns pedagogy, the shortest way to put it is ‘Consult the schools of the Jesuits’: for nothing better than these has appeared” (Ad paedagogicam quod attinet, brevissimum foret dictu, consule scholas Jesuitarum: nihil enim, quod in usum venit, his melius [*De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum* (London: J. Haviland, 1623), originally published as *The Two Bookes of F. B. Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Humane* (London: H. Tomes, 1605)], book 6, chapter 4).
 - 6 For a broader survey of the educational scenario in the sixteenth century, particularly in Italy, see Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); and Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
 - 7 See Jacques Verger, *Les universités au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1973) and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ed., *A History of Universities*, vol. 1, *Universities in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992).
 - 8 Avicenna (Latin form of Ibn Sina, c.980–1037) was the author of a famous medical text known as the *Canon of Medicine*, a large encyclopaedia of medical knowledge. Galen (Aelius Galenus or Claudius Galenus, 129–c.200/c.216) was also a great medical authority in the

Part 1:
Inspirations

CHAPTER 1

Spiritual Aspects of Studies in Jesuit Formation (1541)

Pierre Favre

In 1540, Ignatius of Loyola (c.1491–1556) sent to Paris some young men who wanted to enter the Society but did not have an adequate academic background.¹ In a letter to Simão Rodrigues (1510–79), written in 1542, Ignatius explained the criteria he used when he was deciding to send such individuals to studies: the candidates should be talented, firm, trustworthy, and humble.²

Pierre Favre, the first companion of Ignatius at the Collège Sainte-Barbe and the first of Ignatius's circle to become a master of arts, wrote a letter to the Jesuit students at Paris in 1541. A contemplative character, Favre always combined his commitment to teaching with giving the Exercises. He urged his fellows in Paris to remember that fervor in learning must not be allowed to cause a diminishment of spiritual fervor. He wrote this letter from Ratisbon, where Pope Paul III (r.1534–49) had sent him to assist at the famous Diet, the last effort at reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants before the Council of Trent. His journal notes of 1540 to 1546 (the Memoriale) reveal that in Ratisbon Favre was particularly active in giving the Exercises and concerned about his spiritual progress.³ The following letter reflects his attention to spiritual matters as well as an awareness of his audience's university life and spiritual culture.

Pierre Favre (born April 13, 1506, Villaret in Savoy, France—died August 1, 1546, Rome). One of the original founders of the Society of Jesus, Favre was a roommate of Francis Xavier (1506–52) at the University of Paris when Ignatius joined them during his studies there. He had a talent for friendship as well as impressive abilities in spiritual direction and in giving the Exercises. He preached, traveled, opened communities, and taught. The Jesuit pope Francis (r.2013–) declared him a saint on December 17, 2013.

Source: *Monumenta paedagogica*, nova editio, 1:355–57 (original: Spanish)

[...] Our Redeemer Jesus Christ give all of you all the grace you need to enable you to carry forward your studies to your intended goal, without relaxing the bow of your intentions; so that in the end you might be able to delight in the Lord over the triumph you will win, if you do not extinguish the spirit of a holy thinking and feeling [*el espíritu del santo sentir*] with the spirit of knowing [*el espíritu del saber*].

1 See Juan Alfonso de Polanco, *Chronicon*, in *Monumenta paedagogica*, nova editio, 2:497–98.

2 *Monumenta ignatiana*, series prima, 1:208.

3 Edmond C. Murphy and Martin E. Palmer, trans., *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 76–77.

Part 2:
Administration

CHAPTER 8

Constitutions of the College at Messina (1548)

Jerónimo Nadal

In 1548, Ignatius agreed to send ten Jesuits to Messina to open a college as the city had requested. This group included Jerónimo Nadal, who would be the rector and teach Hebrew, Scholastic theology, and cases of conscience; Benedetto Palmio (1532–98), Hannibal du Coudret (1525–99), and Giovanni Battista Passerini (dates uncertain) to teach grammar; Peter Canisius (1521–97) to teach rhetoric; and André des Freux (c.1515–56) to teach Greek. As soon as they settled in Messina, Nadal set out the rules, which follow in general outline the common practices of the most celebrated Parisian colleges.

Nadal divides the rules into two parts. The first concerns morals and spirituality, referencing the fundamental apostolic aims of the Society (the glory of God and the help of souls) and thus supporting this new ministry in education. Spirituality stood so much at the core of the Jesuit self-concept that Ignatius wanted the ten Jesuits in Messina to teach Christian doctrine in the church of San Nicolò every Friday and to preach frequently there despite their many obligations at the college. The second part of Nadal's rules focuses on studies. It surveys the entire curriculum of Jesuit education from basic grammar classes for children to Scholastic theology, counterpointed by the teaching of cases of conscience. The success of the college was great and immediate. Polanco enthusiastically reported in his Chronicon that he could hardly believe that an institution could make so much improvement in its students' knowledge of the humanistic literary arts.

Jerónimo Nadal (born August 1, 1507, Palma de Mallorca, Baleares, Spain—entered the Society November 29, 1545, Rome—died March 25, 1580, Rome). The first rector of the college of Messina (1548), Nadal was chosen by Ignatius as the one who could organize the Society according to the Constitutions. Nadal's importance for Jesuit education cannot be overemphasized. He endeavored to provide useful and suitable rules for governing the colleges, traveled all over the provinces to survey the situation and provide educational directives, and wrote a number of letters to make Jesuit pedagogy as consistent as possible.

Source: *Monumenta paedagogica, nova editio, 1:17–28* (original: Latin)

[I. What Pertains to Religious Devotion and Good Morals]

- [1] Everyone should attend Mass daily, and it should be celebrated before the first class.

Part 3:
Formation

CHAPTER 17

Best Practices in Humanistic Studies (1564)

Benet Perera

After being asked by Diego de Ledesma, prefect of studies at the Roman College, to provide suggestions for reforming the teaching of philosophy, Benet Perera also found time to compose this pedagogical treatise encompassing a wide range of issues pertaining to humanistic studies (from grammar up to the beginning of the philosophical course). Perera even showed an interest in education as a psychosomatic process, taking an approach almost unknown in schools at that time. But we also sense a more traditional classical humanistic background in his calls for moderation, for balance between intellectual and physical activities and rest, and for imitation based on ancient exemplars as the most worthy models. Although the treatise offers advice to students on how to improve their studies, it is especially addressed to teachers, providing them with suggestions on how to organize the material, how to present it, and even how to behave when explicating an author. Perera's vision notably stresses the effectiveness that is required of a fully diligent Jesuit teacher. Unlike his document on the philosophical course (see Chapter 29), this work gives no hints of polemicizing against Ledesma, who was in fact at odds with him over his pedagogic methods. Perera can be credited with writing one of the few consistent and systematic educational philosophies that is still implicit in some current Jesuit practices.

Benet Perera (born 1535, Ruzafa, Valencia, Spain—entered the Society in March, 1551, Valencia—died March 6, 1610, Rome). An acclaimed philosopher and theologian of the Society of Jesus, Perera spent all his Jesuit life teaching at the Roman College, where he began to give classes of physics in 1559. Despite a controversy with Diego de Ledesma, rector at that time, and Achille Gagliardi (1539–1607), who accused him of supporting Averroism, he was never removed from his office. He published an outstanding tract on natural philosophy (*De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principiis et affectionibus [On the first principles and conditions common to all natural things]*, 1567) and enjoyed renown in his theological career.

Source: *Monumenta paedagogica, nova editio*, 2:670–85 (original: Latin)

Chapter 1—The Goal of Studies and Obstacles to Them

The immediate goal of studies is knowledge of the truth. That knowledge is the perfection of the human mind; everyone naturally seeks after it.¹ But the final

¹ This is a very common quotation from Aristotle, *Metaph.*, A 980a: “All men naturally desire knowledge.” Perera’s argumentation follows Aristotle’s bipartition of immediate and final goals: the former could not stand without the latter.

Part 4:
Teaching Practices

CHAPTER 23

Teaching Composition (1554)

Ignatius of Loyola

Towards the start of 1554, Pierre Le Gillon (c.1520–c.1565), a French Jesuit teaching in Padua, corrected and sent Ignatius a sample composition to elicit his advice on such assignments. Ignatius's brief response, written only about two and a half years before his death and twenty years after his own college days, reveals several things: his serious commitment to the educational work, particularly in humanistic studies; his readiness to engage the collaboration of others in formulating an approach; his interest in developing students' own inventive powers by not restricting the work to dictation alone; and his take on the Erasmian approach to correcting themes. The ever-pragmatic Ignatius suggests that this method is not feasible with the greater numbers of students that were found in Jesuit classrooms. Cicero, a favorite author in the Renaissance, is recommended here as the model for Jesuit eloquence. This preference was later confirmed in the Ratio studiorum, which would influence the Society's humanistic studies for centuries.

Ignatius of Loyola (born c.1491, Guipúzcoa, Spain—co-founder of the Society in 1540, Rome—died 1556, Rome). Chief founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius was a great supporter and administrator of "Jesuit studies" and the educational apostolate from its earliest days after official papal approval. Though he did not at first intend the Society to be a teaching order formally involved in opening and running schools, he quickly made it into one when he saw its great apostolic results and promise. He readily took on as many colleges as feasible, showing a special enthusiasm for the Roman College. His own journey manifested a deep investment in studies in Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca, and Paris, and the Society itself was uniquely tied to the University of Paris, where all of the founders were students. Ignatius is often listed as one of the great figures in the history of education.

Source: *Monumenta paedagogica, nova editio*, 1:451–52 (original: Italian)

Rome, March 17, 1554

Pax Christi [Peace of Christ]!

My dearest brother in Jesus Christ, Master Pierre, I have given some very capable individuals the task of figuring out the way to correct themes and compositions. They include Father Master Pedro [de] Ribadeneyra, Master Rafael [Riera], and Master Eleuthère Dupont.¹ They finally settled on this: several times, or at least

¹ Notice Ignatius's care to use the academic title "master" when addressing Pierre Le Gillon and when naming these individuals. For Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611), see Chapter 7. Rafael Riera (born in Vich [Catalonia] c.1526—entered the Society on September 25,