



AUGUSTINIAN PEDAGOGICAL BASES





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AUGUSTINIAN PEDAGOGICAL BASES



INTRODUCTION

The teaching of St. Augustine, which has come down to us through his works and the tradition kept through the centuries by the Augustinian family, continues to offer insights of great relevance for the people of today. In the pedagogical field, St. Augustine promotes an education that goes beyond mere academic knowledge, focusing on the integral development of the human being and their ethical and social commitment. His ideas on love, truth and the perfection of the individual continue to resonate in contemporary education and to be a source of inspiration for educators and educational systems today.

As Augustinian educators, we possess the wealth of insights derived from Augustine's work that we can translate into pedagogical principles applicable to today. But we cannot remain only in principles; we need to look to their concrete and practical application that facilitates the work of teachers in the classroom and allows us to verify the implementation of a properly Augustinian methodology.

In 2016, the Order of Augustinian Recollects presented the document Augustinian Pedagogical Bases, which has served as inspiration for the educational centers of the EDUCAR network, both for teacher training and for the application of concrete methodological proposals.

As a result of the work of the pedagogical innovation team of the EDUCAR network, the original document has been revised and updated, incorporating new aspects and offering concrete guidelines for educators to implement in the classroom.

The content of this new edition of the Augustinian Pedagogical Foundations is based on the premise of what we understand by Augustinian pedagogy. Three questions are then posed about the educational process: Why do we do it? How do we do it? What is it that we do?

The question "Why do we do it?" responds to the purpose of education based on the principles of Augustinian pedagogy. This section describes the profile of the Augustinian student, who is the center and protagonist of the

educational process.

The question “How do we do it?” responds to the elements of the educational process. This section describes the Augustinian pedagogical principles.

The question “What is it that we do?” is the proof of this process, the concretization of the Augustinian pedagogical bases. This section describes the learning pyramid that develops the methodologies used and relates them to each of the pedagogical principles.

This is followed by a description of the fundamental aspect of the Augustinian pedagogical style, which gives personality to the educational process.

Finally, the three agents of the educational process -educator, student and environment- are presented, highlighting the characteristics that they take on from the Augustinian pedagogical proposal.

With the present revision of the Augustinian Pedagogical Basis we take a further step forward in the pedagogical proposal that we want to develop in the educational centers of the EDUCAR network. It is an open, dynamic process, which will continue to be enriched by the deepening of the thought of St. Augustine and the creativity and commitment of the teachers, who are essential as guides and companions of the life of the students.

We thank the pedagogical innovation team of the EDUCAR network for the effort of deepening and revising the Augustinian Pedagogical Bases. We hope that this new step will serve as an instrument for so many Augustinian educators who every day seek to offer the best of themselves in the style of St. Augustine.



AUGUSTINIAN PEDAGOGY



Augustinian Pedagogy

Augustinian pedagogy is based on an integral process (spiritual, intellectual, moral and of the will) aimed at bringing out and energizing, through the cognitive force of love, all the latent potentialities in the student.

This pedagogy is not a disembodied process with an end in itself. It is a process that entails a responsibility to life. Hence the breadth of its scope and objectives.

It entails a responsibility to life

This process acts in a spiritual dimension by helping discover “the eternal truth where the good and unique Master instructs all his disciples” (Confessions 11, 8, 10).

Helps to find the truth where the one Master instructs

It acts in an intellectual dimension by leading to the knowledge, first of things then of of God.

Leads to knowledge of things and knowledge of God.

It acts in a moral dimension by orienting the person towards an exemplary conduct beyond mere words

or intentions.

Guidance for exemplary behavior

It acts on a dimension of the will by reorienting it, since knowledge is not enough to improve, desire or love God.

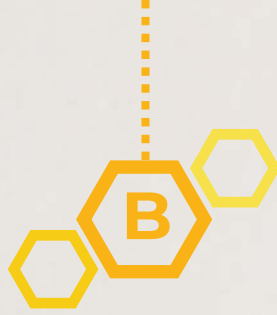
Reorienting wills

Augustinian pedagogy finds in love the main motor for its development. Love draws and empowers the act of knowing and at the same time gives meaning and dynamism to the search that man undertakes to approach the love of God.

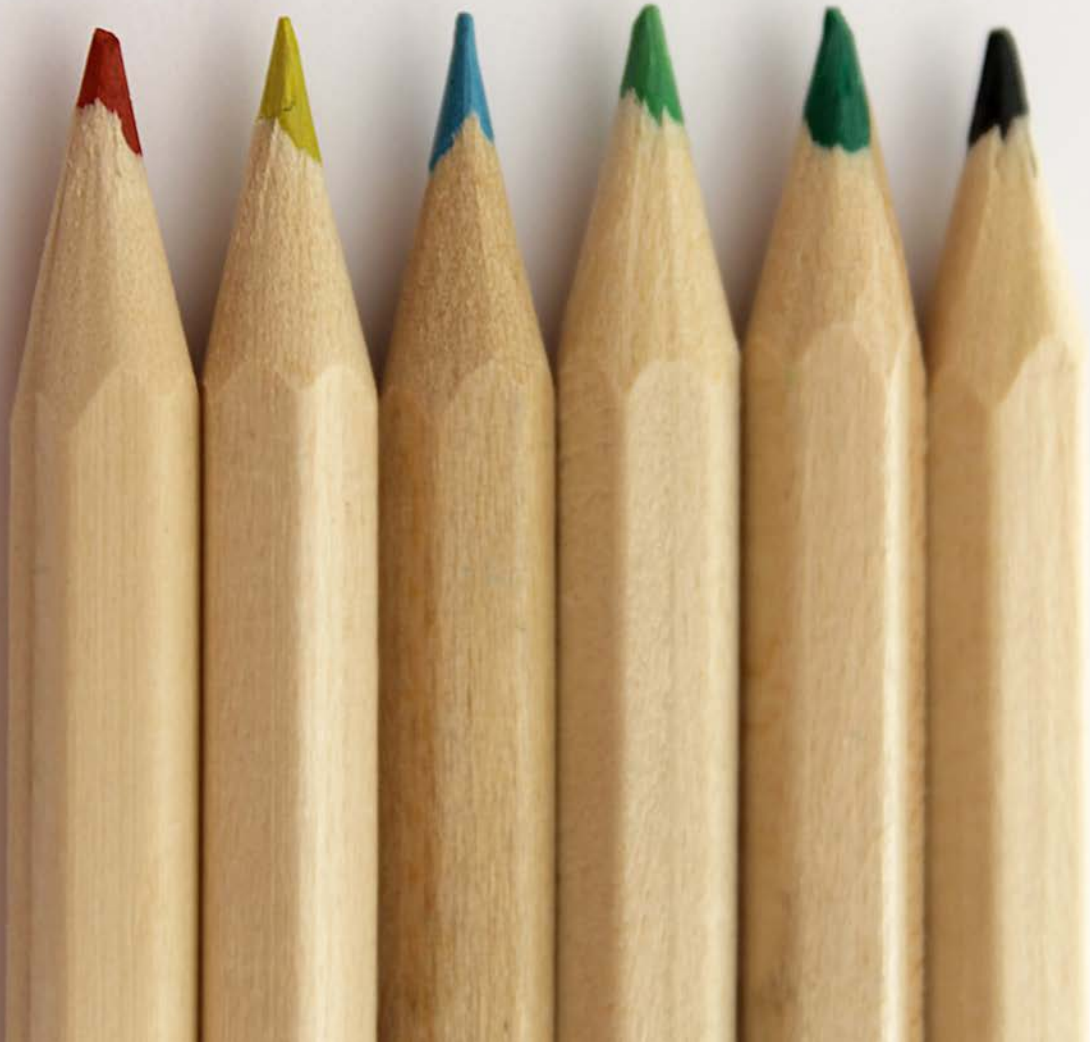
Love as the main driver of development

Augustinian pedagogy finds its scope of action in the perfectibility of human nature and in the soul's possessing infinite possibilities that can be brought to the surface.

It perfects the human nature, brings out potential



Our purpose: why do we do it?
**PROFILE OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
STUDENT**





Profile of the Augustinian Student

The Institutional Educational Project of the Augustinian Recollects aims to educate the mind and heart of the person in an integral way. Then, the final goal of the educational process is described, which is none other than the student himself. This profile is specified in two sections, dimension and descriptors, enriched with an Augustinian phrase that serves as inspiration.

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTORS	PHRASE
<p>Freedom - Responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal autonomy. • Committed to society. • Independent thinking. • With a critical spirit. • With decision-making capacity. • With healthy habits • With ecological, climatic and environmental awareness • Attentive to responsible consumption and responsible use of technology. 	<p><i>“Love and do what you will.”</i></p>
<p>Social dimension-Friendship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It relates from love and understanding. • Loyal and fraternal. • Respectful. • Proximate. • Good communicator. • Cheerful. • Consistent. • Dialogic. 	<p><i>“The measure of love is to love without measure.”</i></p>

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTORS	PHRASE
intellectual dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquisitive, informed and educated. • Flexible and efficient. • Protagonist of learning. • Thoughtful, reflective. • Digitally competent. 	<p><i>“One does not reach truth except through love.”</i></p>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In solidarity and integrity. • Generous. • Empathetic and assertive. • Participatory. • Receptive. • Cooperating. • Welcoming. • Sense of belonging and home. 	<p><i>“one soul and one heart directed toward god.”</i></p>
Restless heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curious, innovative. • With initiative and creativity. • Experimenter. • Consistent and persevering. • Strives for beauty and a work • Well done. 	<p><i>“lord, you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”</i></p>
Faith - Interiority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of one's feelings. • Aware of one's capabilities and limitations. • Open to transcendence. • With christian values. • Prayerful. • Humble. • Welcoming. • Participant in the church community (JAR) 	<p><i>“know thyself, accept thyself, overcome thyself.”</i></p>

*“You don’t want
to spill out; enter
within yourself,
because **the
truth resides in
the inner man**”*





EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES



Educational principles

When we speak of pedagogical principles, we refer to the elements that, drawn from the thought of St. Augustine, serve as inspiration for a methodological proposal that we will see concretized in the following sections. The eight principles we have selected are described below:

1. To start from the real needs of the student, connecting with his or her deepest aspirations and concerns, developing reflective learning and active listening.

2. To make the student the protagonist of the teaching and learning process, respecting and stimulating their peculiarities and adapting to their developmental pace.

3. To establish interiority as a fundamental key in developing the capacity for reflection, emphasizing the positive and seeking to overcome the negative.

4. To promote a model based on learning to listen and to inquire, connecting the interior with the exterior reality in order to interact, mold and transform it.

5. To develop didactic skills aimed at awakening the student's interest in

their own duties, and to encourage dialogue in a fluid educator-student relationship.

6. To encourage personal autonomy in learning in accord with the educator who becomes a promoter, facilitator and channel of enthusiasm.

7. To adapt the teaching-learning process to the individual capacities of each and every student, taking their diversity into consideration and developing their own personality.

8. To establish love, joy, enthusiasm and closeness as the driving forces of a positive and efficient teaching.

1. To start from the real needs of the student, connecting with their deepest aspirations and concerns, developing reflective learning and active listening.

"Although the same charity is due to all, the same medicine is not to be offered to all" (Catechesis to Beginners 15, 23).

In education, it is fundamental to recognize the student as a person in the context of their family, class, group, etc. Such education considers the uniqueness of each person with their own name and history. The student is the subject and author of their education.

1.1. Real needs

The educational action centers on the student and must be adjusted to their profile and concrete needs. This is where the differentiating cultural traits, the developmental stage and the family and social environment that accompanies and distinguishes each person come into play.

1.2. Deepest Concerns

The purpose of education for St. Augustine is to awaken the “inner man” in the student by encouraging and eliciting in them the interest and the intellectual curiosity.

1.3. Reflective Learning/Active Listening

Reflective learning seeks to develop the student’s capacity for internal dialogue in order to understand and assimilate the concepts received inside and outside the classroom. In this way, the student acquires a leading role in their own education.

This learning is based on the student’s active listening to the educator and dialoguing with the latter so as to make sure the message is received correctly. St. Augustine seeks in education a mutual collaboration between educator and student.

2. To make the student the protagonist of the teaching and learning process, respecting and stimulating their peculiarities and adapting to their developmental pace.

“If a child is fed in proportion to its

capacity, it is disposed to take more as it grows older; but if it is given more than its capacity will tolerate, it will perish before it develops.” (The City of God 12, 15, 3)

For St. Augustine, education entails the presence of a student with particular expressions, a personality and unique characters. Thus, it is essential that educators know how to situate themselves, from empathy, before the students’ reality and context, both interior and exterior, in order to be able to accompany them in their integral development.

2.1. The student as protagonist

Protagonist is the main character of an act. From an Augustinian perspective, the student is the protagonist of the educational act, the person who plays the fundamental role. There is only one protagonist in education: the student. It belongs to educators to play supporting roles.

2.2. The peculiarities and the developmental pace of students

Augustinian pedagogy considers the different capacities and idiosyncrasies of the student. It is a teaching that adapts to the psychological, cultural and social conditions of each one in order to individualize the process of teaching and learning. This process of adaptation clearly entails a pedagogy that is not abstract, but concrete, because for St. Augustine any education that ignores the

uniqueness of each student is like a message without an addressee.

It is especially important for Augustinian pedagogy to consider the different developmental paces of students. Students are human beings who evolve and become differently, with their own originality and from their own gifts and limitations. For St. Augustine, the only response to a varied educational milieu is flexible, adapted and above all diversified education. St. Augustine himself was not in favor of giving the same lesson to all students, much less preparing lesson plans that remain unchanged year after year.

3. Establish interiority as a fundamental key in developing the capacity for reflection, emphasizing the positive and seeking to overcome the negative.

“Do not go outside yourself; go within yourself, for in the inner man lies the truth; and if you find that your nature is changeable, transcend yourself, but do not forget that, in soaring above the heights of your being, you rise above your soul, endowed with reason.” (True Religion 39, 72)

This is the central value of Augustinian pedagogy. The human being who enters within himself is capable of knowing and of knowing himself. The window of the senses only allows

us to look outside. We may know the world around us and yet know nothing about ourselves. That is why the person without interiority is a person without identity. Interiority is where great questions and great certainties and convictions arise.

3.1. Interiority as the key for developing the capacity for reflection.

The Augustinian path of interiority is characterized by three moments: Not going outside oneself, returning to the heart and transcending oneself.

Do not go outside yourself means not giving up being yourself in spite of external distractions. Interiority is the capacity to recognize and judge from oneself the inner feelings and outer situations one is living. Interiority thus understood does not disconnect the individual from the situations one is immersed in, but rather deepens the perfection of these situations: one becomes capable of understanding how each situation affects one's life and that of others and of the world. We need to find time to be and to talk to ourselves, mindful that the most important task and project is ourselves.

Return to the heart, go inside yourself: this is an invitation to quiet reflection, to the encounter with the truth about oneself. It is the call of the heart, because it is in the interior where the human being judges,

searches, decides their own destiny. The heart is the space of the affect as well as of intelligence and talent.

Transcend yourself. To transcend is to strive to form what we are not yet. It is a path of overcoming. The human person learns by himself, looking into his interior, helped by the educator. The fact that the educator, in an Augustinian perspective, has the function of a “midwife”, turns teaching into the birthing of truth that each one discovers within the self. Thus, the goal of education is to awaken persons. A person is raised by a call, not manufactured by domestication. The human being reaches their maturity when they dialogue with the self and formulate within the question of the meaning of their existence, a question that can only be answered in the ultimate encounter with the true teacher, with God.

4. To promote a model based on learning to listen and ask, connecting the interior with the exterior reality in order to shape, interact with and transform it.

“For the best method of investigating truth is that of questions and answers.” (Soliloquies 2, 7, 14)

The pedagogy of dialogue is based on Socratic method, where to educate means “to bring out”. Augustine adopted Socrates’ perspective of helping elicit the truth that man carries

within himself. To this end, he presents dialogue as a pedagogical tool for learning, convinced that truth is sought and constructed through discussion and the use of questions.

4.1. Learning to listen and to ask

The student is an active being who hears and listens. For Augustinian pedagogy, the question and answer way is vital in the dynamic that is established between the student and the educator. The educator needs to be able to give each student a kind of guiding thread, to accompany them in such a way that, in the educational process, the disciple can discover what is already within and thus grasp what is within their reach, especially the discovery of the self and the interweaving of the multiple relationships that they can establish. For this dynamic to be effective, it is important to learn to dialogue because dialogue, within the framework of this pedagogy, is the main protagonist of human learning and coexistence. The interaction between the educator and the student is seen as the help that one can give to the other on their way to the truth.

4.2. Connect with the external reality so as to interact with, shape and transform it

Students internalize everything they observe and hear. Augustinian pedagogy envisions a reflective method

of communication. This is based on the active listening that the students carry out with respect to the content received from the educators in the course of the subjects. In this active listening, the listener heeds the person who is speaking, the educator, and actively dialogues with him so that the latter can grasp how the former has understood his message.

In this process of communication, and once the learnings are internalized, a further step is taken. St. Augustine speaks of “transforming experiences”. These experiences are the interior reflections that should lead students to see and understand the connections between the different processes that make up learning, as well as the link between the knowledge they are acquiring and the life they are immersed in.

Relationships in the educational environment must be connected to the times. According to St. Augustine, “the times are us; as we are, so will the times be” (Sermon 80, 8) This statement is tantamount to saying that students are also linked to a culture, to a geographical and human landscape. Therefore their task, derived from this connection with reality implies, from an Augustinian perspective, the interaction with that reality in order to transform it positively from an attitude of hope. In a dynamic society subject to rapid changes, the educational work focuses on the capacity to adapt and

discern the surrounding reality so that the student will avoid detaching their personal world from life, from external reality.

5. To develop didactic skills aimed at awakening interest in one’s own school work, and to foster dialogue and a fluid teacher-student relationship.

5.1. . Awakening interest in one’s own duties.

In the work “Catechesis for Beginners” (De Catechizandis Rudibus), St. Augustine encourages his disciple Deogratias to try to stir the interest and attention of his students. But the interest he recommends is not so much on the pupils’ active participation as on the teacher’s didactic skill in desiring to teach. To this end, St. Augustine asks the teacher not to be content with repetition but to renew himself in language and in his interior disposition towards what he must communicate to his disciples.

- **Avoiding repetition**
- **Changing the language**
- **Renewing the inner disposition towards what is to be communicated**

It is, therefore, a markedly stimulating teaching and learning process where encouragement prevails over imposition and involves the free and voluntary performance of tasks. It will be this encouragement that will awaken the inner potentialities of

the student

- **Stimulating one's inner potentialities**

For St. Augustine, among the postulates that must be present in the process of teaching and learning is not so much the accomplishment of academic tasks by obligation but as the result of the interest awakened in the student by the educator. *Libera curiositas* (free curiosity) is more important than *meticulosa necessitas* (fastidious necessity). This is how we should understand the concept of education (*educere*, to draw from)

- **Encouraging free interest, interest, as opposed to the requirement**

5.2. Fostering fluid relations and dialogue

In education, the student is not an object that the educator can manipulate at will, but a person who in essence shares the same category as he, because they are a personal being to whom he owes infinite consideration. This idea of equality in the classroom establishes an ideal space for direct two-way communication. Therefore, from an Augustinian point of view, as student and educator share time, space and research, a fluid interpersonal relationship should be established between them that leads to the attainment of values.

- **Recognizing the equality between educator and student**

- **Enhancing interpersonal relationships and dialogue**

This process that is established between student and educator is of such a nature that both parties are mutually enriched, making the principle “*docendo discitur*” (by teaching I learn) a reality. The educator is not only the one who educates but the one who, while educating, is educated through dialogue with the student, who, while being educated, also educates. Thus both are subjects of the process in which they grow together and in which authority is no longer an issue.

It is necessary to encourage dialogue: “the best method of research is that of questions and answers” (*Soliloquies* 2, 7, 14) because in this process, the student discovers the answers to the questions they ask because of an educator who welcomes their inquiries and concerns. The educator does not impose his knowledge and criteria on the student, but stimulates and accompanies them to find the answers to their questions.

- **“Docendo discitur” (Teaching I learn)**
- **Avoiding authority**
- **Warmly welcoming the student's concerns and questions.**
- **Promoting reflection**
- **Accompanying in the search for answers, for the truth**

6. To encourage personal auto-

nomy in learning in harmony with the educator, who becomes a promoter of enthusiasm, facilitator and intermediary.

6.1. Promotion of personal autonomy

One of the main functions of the Augustinian educator is to help bring to light the student's latent potential. "To help", because the subject and main agent and constructor of meaningful learning, the one who really brings out or extracts those capacities is the student himself. The educator "helps". It is the student who illuminates the knowledge that is their own or innate. From all this we can deduce the importance of promoting personal autonomy in the educational environment from an Augustinian perspective. The student assumes the main role of their own education. Often, students do not live their own educational process; they simply put up with it, unable to overcome the feeling that something is being imposed on them from outside that is beyond their real interests and meanings. This happens because in the teaching and learning process the student has not the inner motive to give birth to knowledge.

- **Helping to enlighten knowledge**
- **Building your learning**
- **Living one's own educational process**
- **Taking the lead in their education**

- **Requiring inner forces to give birth to knowledge**

The promotion of personal autonomy and the consequent progressive achievement of knowledge are affected by the pressures and controls that strengthen the student's individual effort in the search for this knowledge.

- **Conveying that learning is related to interests and senses**

Achieving the autonomy of the learner is one of the first goals of the educator. And, in the course of achieving this goal, the educator must know how to take a back seat, assuming the role of companion and allowing the learner to blaze their own trail.

- **Appreciating the individual attainment of knowledge**
- **Accompanying in the process**

6.2. The educator as a promoter of enthusiasm, facilitator and mediator.

The Educator's action must be based on a function of "stimulating, eliciting, and drawing" (Cfr. The Teacher 14, 46).

- **Stimulation, provocation, and entrainment**

Since education is an inner personal process, the educator is a guide who orients so that transformation takes place in each student because learning is something personal where

educator and student exchange words and symbols. His job is to encourage and provoke the student's return to their own inner center; the purpose of education is the search and conquest of truth, and therefore education is not a simple transmission of knowledge. The educator transmits formation and wisdom, promoting ideals and attitudes, keeping in mind that good example is his best lesson and that his mission is personal and personalized in the acquisition of a healthy balance that allows understanding education as a project and process. He is a mediator of learning, that is, someone who has the necessary expertise to lead the student to their deepest and most meaningful possibilities

- **Presenting himself as a guide**
- **Bringing about the return to one's own center**
- **Promoting ideals and attitudes**
- **Acting as an example**
- **Presenting education as a project and as a process**
- **Establishing oneself as a mediator of learning**

The educator must facilitate the passage of the light of truth so that the truth itself may be discovered by the student and illuminate their soul in such a way that their own capacities may emerge.

- **Facilitating the passage of light to discover the truth**

7. To adapt the teaching-learning

process to the individual capacities of each and every student, taking into account their diversity and developing their own personality.

The teaching-learning process in an Augustinian key is not an abstract thing, but is a concrete and personalized practice that strives to do away with mass mentality by seeking the qualities and possibilities of each student, becoming thus more effective..

- **Teaching as a concrete practice**
- **Teaching as an individualized practice**

In the classroom we always start from the mutual influence that is generated between the educator and the listening students. This gives rise to varied situations since the listeners are varied and therefore the educator must understand, at all times, that his message is different according to who receives it and hence he will take into account the different abilities of the students. Individualization is fundamental in Augustinian pedagogy. Adapting to the conditions of each student will mean establishing a different path for each one. The educator will have to respond to the singularity of each one of his students.

Teaching as a mutual educator-pupil influence
Education that is diversified

This approach has direct conse-


quences in the classroom situation. It implies:

Eliminating models of magisterial classes aimed at a group understood as homogeneous.


Teaching that does not impose master classes

Being prepared to diversify teaching and adapt it to different students, tending towards individualization.

Teaching that is adapted

 Creating class dynamics that can accommodate and respond to different student profiles, different concerns, different rhythms, different learning styles, diversity in short.

Teaching that is dynamic


 Being open at all times to renewal, lifelong learning, training and knowledge.

Challenging teaching for the educator

8. To establish love, joy, enthusiasm and closeness as the dynamic elements of a positive and effective teaching.

8.1. Love

The life of St. Augustine had love as its main center; to love and to be loved

 was the most important thing. God is love, and the commandment of love is the substantial and specific core of the life and doctrine of Jesus.

Making use of love as a generator of enthusiasm

“Love and do what you will” (Commentary on the 1st Letter of Jn. tr. 7, 8), because your love and enthusiasm educate by themselves.

It is evident, then, that an Augustinian pedagogy could not be understood without the establishment of love as a dynamic element in teaching.

“The more we love our students, the more we want them to benefit from our teachings, and consequently, the more we strive to teach them what they need” (Catechesis for Beginners. 10, 14). (Catechesis to Beginners. 10, 14).

Love acquires special connotations in the educational task. One could speak of a pedagogical love. It is the unselfish love of the educator for the pupil that manifests itself in dedication and mutual admiration. It is a paternal filial love for the pupil who is born and progressively grows into a new life as they acquire knowledge and personal qualities. St. Augustine considers that the efficient teaching and the good education of the student can only be achieved in this way.

- **Making use of love as devotion and admiration**
- **Making use of love as a path that leads to development and good education**

8.2. Joy and enthusiasm

Indissolubly linked to this conception of love is joy.

“We are listened to with greater pleasure when we too take pleasure in our own work, because the thread of our discourse vibrates with our own joy and flows more easily and persuasively.” (Catechesis to Beginners 2, 4).

The educational environment must transmit joy, joy for living, joy for discovering. Joy easily opens the doors to all that is offered in its context. The educational task is difficult and there is no lack of problems and even tensions and disappointments. All this should never cloud the marvelous work of discovery, since the greatness of learning and discovering goes far beyond a simple moment of difficulty, even if it is not exempt from them. One must be able to de-dramatize situations, break chains, cast seeds, heal wounds and keep hope alive.

- **Making use of joy as a key that unlocks doors**

If God loves the one who joyfully distributes material alms, with how much more reason will he love the one who joyfully distributes the spiritual?” (Catechesis to Beginners 2, 4.)

- **Making use of joy as a catalyst for problems.**

For St. Augustine, joy makes teaching elicit in the educator and in the student the best mental and personal dispositions to make it as effective and pleasant as possible. A message is given greater approval when it is imbued with this component.

- **Making joy a stimulant of academic readiness.**

“

The more we love our students, the more we want them to take advantage of our teachings and, consequently, the more effort we put into teaching them what they need.

”

San Agustín



The test: what do we do?
**OUR LEARNING
PYRAMID**

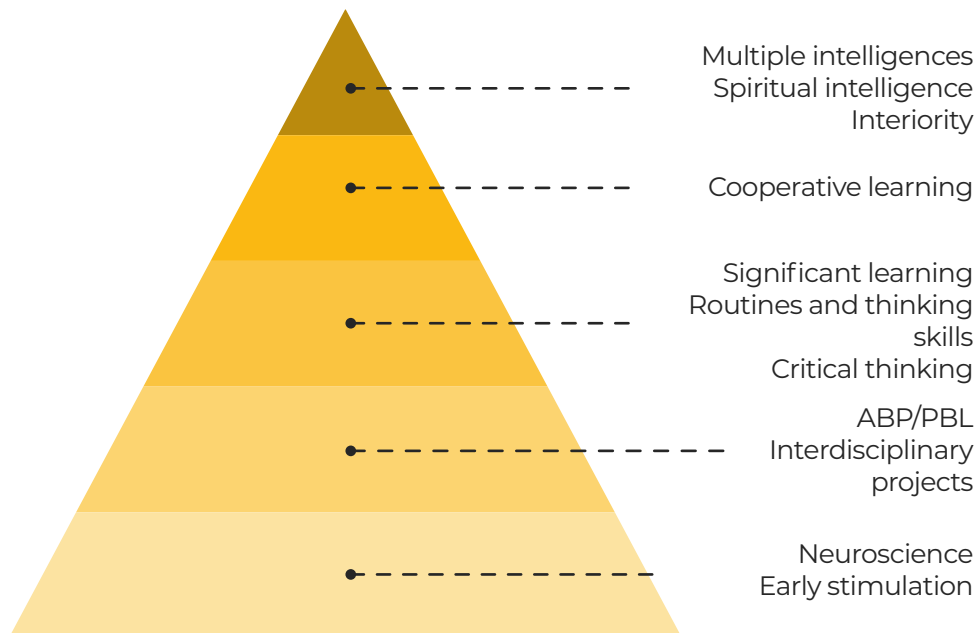




Our learning pyramid

The human person is a marvelous mystery and knowing them is an exciting adventure. The new research on the human person represents a true Copernican revolution; we call it a change of paradigm, which has also occurred in the field of education. This new paradigm must lead us to develop new learning models that overcome the limitations of the traditional system. The new model requires establishing a new design configured from concrete pedagogical choices.

We have reflected these options in a graphic representation in the form of a pyramid that we call the learning pyramid, in which the theories and methodologies derived from pedagogical principles are reflected. At the top of our pyramid is the theory of multiple intelligences, based on cooperative learning. At the base is neuroscience, which, with all its findings, allows us to integrate the methodologies presented above and complete the pyramid as follows:



Each of the methodological options represented in the learning pyramid is connected to one of the eight pedagogical principles described above. Thus, the way to put them into practice in the classroom is specified. Each of the methodological options is listed below, indicating the numbers of the linked pedagogical principles:



Multiple intelligences

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES 2 and 7

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences teaches us that each student is unique and learns in different ways according to their characteristics. By including this theory in our schools, we offer our students an integral and personalized education that allows each one to develop their own abilities to the maximum.

This pedagogy looks beyond traditional, intellectual mathematical-linguistic training, and encourages the eight ways that people have of knowing and relating to the world:

1. Logical-mathematical intelligence

2. Linguistic-verbal intelligence

3. Visual-spatial intelligence

4. Body-kinesthetic intelligence

5. Musical intelligence

6. Intrapersonal intelligence

7. Interpersonal intelligence

8. Naturalistic intelligence

Based on them, we promote learning that puts the student at the center of the teaching-learning process and respects their pace.



Spiritual intelligence and interiority

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES: 3, 4 and 8

Howard Gardner left his theory of multiple intelligences open to new intelligences such as spiritual intelligence. This intelligence involves values, the meaning of life and the connection with God according to individual beliefs. It allows us to understand the world, others and ourselves from a deeper perspective, from our inner self. Cultivating spiritual intelligence facilitates the development of skills and personal abilities that allow:

- Self-knowledge and self-improvement
- Cultivation of interiority

■ AUGUSTINIAN PEDAGOGICAL BASES

- Openness to transcendence
- Making sense of reality
- Being receptive to the inner call and responding to personal vocation

We want “spiritually competent and mature” students who know how to place themselves responsibly and coherently before life, the world and others, from a foundation and with a horizon.



Cooperative learning

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

As Augustinian Recollects we cannot understand life without considering community. For this reason, collaborative learning is the pillar and hallmark of our schools. For St. Augustine there is no learning without communion. We all learn from each other. Mutual accompaniment is essential for personal growth and continuous learning.

With this methodology, students work together in small groups to achieve common goals. It has several advantages both in individual learning, in the development of social skills, or in the general well-being of

the students.

The teaching-learning process is better adapted to their level; deeper levels of reflection and understanding are reached than those that could be achieved individually. A more participatory education is fostered and students become committed individuals with the capacity to positively influence the lives of others.



Significant learning

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES; 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7

Meaningful learning is a learning theory proposed by David Ausubel, which makes the student the protagonist of the teaching-learning process. The student has to actively relate new knowledge with previous experiences and knowledge he already has. With meaningful learning, connections and relationships are established in order to understand and retain new knowledge and be able to apply it to their real life context.

Teachers are mediators between knowledge and students; our mis-

sion is to design strategies that motivate them to learn and to add new concepts to the ones they already have. We design the work materials seeking to achieve a more integrative, comprehensive, long-lasting learning that replaces rote learning.



Drills and skills of thinking and critical thinking

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES; 1, 4 and 5

Thinking skills are cognitive abilities that allow us to process, analyze and apply the information we teach them in the classroom in an effective way. They are strategies that enhance reasoning and help us help the learner to perform a deep and careful type of thinking, which improves both thinking and learning and understanding of content.

For St. Augustine, learning springs from the search, from dialogue, from the confrontation of ideas and from questioning. The teacher enlightens the students with the right questions so that they can enter into their mind and their interior and from there make the synthesis of what they have learned.

Thanks to this methodology, they learn strategies that help them to make decisions, to argue with basis, and to be creative and critical in order to improve the world.



PBL and interdisciplinary projects

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES: 5 and 7

Project-based learning and problem-based learning are two pedagogical approaches that promote active and meaningful learning by involving students in real and challenging situations that lead to the development of a final product involving a personal, social or environmental commitment. In this type of projects we also envision learning and service projects.

The projects developed are real and require a process of design, research, decision making, creation, presentation and execution of the final product. This methodology enhances learning since it requires collaboration and teamwork of teachers and the active participation of students.

Projects are richer and more meaningful the more subject matters they involve. Doing interdisciplinary

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projects is crucial as they promote contextualized learning, foster transversal skills and prepare for an interconnected world where knowledge is not compartmentalized, but requires the ability to integrate knowledge from various disciplines.



Early stimulation

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES; 2,7 and 8

With early stimulation we use educational techniques that, while respecting the individual development of each student, serve to promote cognitive, emotional, physical and social development.

Neuroeducation has taught us that during the first years of life a person's brain is highly receptive, which makes proper stimulation vital. Through activities and games that stimulate curiosity, language skills, motor skills, manual skills, etc., we provide an enriching environment that enhances overall development and establishes a solid foundation for future growth and well-being.



AUGUSTINIAN PEDAGOGICAL STYLE





Augustinian pedagogical style

Every pedagogical proposal is based on content to be developed, a methodology to be applied and a style that, in a cross-disciplinary way, should permeate the entire educational process. In his works, St. Augustine describes the educational style of his time, the difficulties, the challenges and what he learned from his mentors. Both from his time as a professor of rhetoric and, later, as a pastor - first as a priest and then as a bishop-, we can draw a set of traits that characterized the pedagogical style of St. Augustine. Standing out among these are the love for the person, the personalized encounter with the student, the interest in their integral formation, etc. Taking all these elements, we will now describe a series of attitudes and concrete actions that make up the Augustinian pedagogical style:

Openness

Teaching is an exercise of love: Love must be the true motivation of education and the origin of the true vocation of the teacher. The relationship between teacher and student must be one of friendship, similar to that between parent and child. The one who helps and the one who receives help should have no other motive than love and generosity. The most effective education is the most affective education. By profession, St. Augustine would say, we instruct and by vocation we educate. Hence, the educational profession must be accompanied by the educational vocation.

To teach and learn with joy: Joy makes the teaching-learning process rouse in both teacher and student the best mental and personal dispositions everyone desires. This joy will create a climate of fraternal relationships and friendship where the expression of ideas is carried out freely. The more joyful the teaching environment, the more pleasant learning will be.

Discovery

The teacher must awaken the student's interest: Human beings naturally have the potential to wonder and discover the external and internal world. Therefore teaching must be a process of awakening the students' inner motivation to learn and discover. St. Augustine was aware that wisdom is achieved with the appetite for truth and goodness; and this is whetted especially by trust, nearness, dialogue, interest and above all by acknowledging the need for truth.

Play is a learning tool: When we participate in playful activities we get the best results because we are fully entering the world that children love. It is therefore a great motivator of the teaching-learning process.

Dialogue

A first requirement in education is the recognition of the student as a person: they are the subject and the author of their own education. We teachers are the secondary actors who must accompany without relegating the main actor. For St.

Augustine, truth is neither taught nor learned, it is simply discovered. And in this discovery each one must adopt what they are and what they wish to be. The teacher must facilitate the passage of the light of truth. Education is oriented to the full humanization of the person, in accordance with God's plan.

Augustine's goal was the formation of the person: his pedagogy is not oriented to the teaching of sciences or letters, but is centered on the formation of the person as a being created by God in order to tend towards Him. And, if God is their end, education must be a path that leads them to God. For this reason, Augustine understands that education is oriented to the full humanization of the person, in accordance with God's plan. This humanization supposes searching for the truth that is found within the person and knowing that the person is weak, they will only be able to achieve it with the help of God. This means the integral development of the individual according to their full potential.

Exposition

Augustinian pedagogy demands from the teacher an attitude of simplicity and humility: in teaching, the teacher's most important job is not to demonstrate how much he knows, but to attend to and guide

the student's learning. The teacher must be humble because he is facing two realities that surpass the level of his knowledge: the person of the student and the truth that is being discovered. And this path is neither blazed nor learned beforehand. That is why the teacher must be both teacher and student, because he must continue learning.

The educator must tread the delicate balance between authority and dialogue, discipline and freedom, demand and adaptation: this is the art of accompaniment and the exercise of authority. When starting the process of education, it is fundamental to establish clearly the role and the figure of the teacher; only when the student starts owning and taking responsibility for his life, will self-education begin. In the meantime, the teacher will be a companion on the way and the search, and far from filling the student's mind with contents, he will draw out their hidden potential and let them be themselves, keeping alive the student's interest in learning.

"If truth is the object of the aspirations of all men, it cannot be the preserve of any one of them. Truth is a light, private and public at the same time, within the reach of all who seek it." (Against the academics)

Apply what you have learned

Augustine understands that the teacher must be a person of reference for the student, prepared in knowledge and conduct. In addition to nurturing with his knowledge, he should stimulate and attract with his life. "The good conduct of the one who exercises authority is the best and most effective confirmation of the truths he teaches". (The City of God, XIX, 17)

This will lead to the need to put into practice what has been learned. Each one must contribute what they are and what they aspire to be. Education is oriented to the full humanization of the person, in accordance with God's plan. From the abovementioned principles it is deduced that the best pedagogy is the example and that each one has a task to carry out. The final result of all pedagogy is the type of person that the student is, how they put into practice all that they have learned.



**AGENTS OF THE
AUGUSTINIAN
EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**



Agents of the Augustinian educational process

Every educational process is concretized in its agents: the educator, the student and the environment. Each of them plays a fundamental role in the educational process. The following is a description of the elements proper to the three from an Augustinian perspective:



1. The educator

The Augustinian educator believes in man and in his possibilities, he considers himself a mediator and, from a perspective that is joyful, human and understanding, he encourages the dialogue that leads the student towards knowledge, towards the truth. He bases his mission on the absolute belief that love empowers knowledge and knowledge empowers love.

Augustine's approach to education requires constant work and a good intellectual capacity on the part of the educator. The Augustinian educator loves his mission. This love

is the starting point of a genuinely educational work. Loving his mission implies enjoying his work and the success of his students, because in it he finds his self-realization.

- **Loves its mission**

“The more we love the people to whom we speak, the more we want them to be pleased with what we expound to them for their salvation; and if this does not happen, we become displeased and during our exposition we lose our taste and become discouraged, as if our work would become useless.” (The Catechesis to Beginners 10, 14)

The Augustinian educator is capable of responding to the demands and challenges of today's society. He does not view himself as a person who is content with what he is; he possesses a restless heart that encourages him to seek as he finds. He is neither conformist nor mediocre. As an educator, he does not consider himself before his students as someone who knows everything, but is open to other points of view, to changes, showing attitudes of listening, tolerance, fraternity and decision.

- **Responds to demands and challenges**
- **Possesses a restless heart**
- **Is receptive and tolerant**

1.1 Believes in man and his potential

The Augustinian educator knows that his students come with knowledge, virtues, aspirations and desires that are not yet exhausted or fully exercised. They are not empty vessels to be filled, but people who are willing to learn but also have the possibility to contribute. That is why his mission is to encourage, push, direct, guide, lead and point out the path that the student must follow.

- **Encourages, drives and guides**

The educator must be aware that, at times, the student may present difficulties or conflicts of values. His attitude should not be, in this case, to deny the appropriate help so that the student can succeed, but should correct deficiencies and infractions while applauding achievements and encouraging aspirations.

- **Corrects deficiencies and applauds achievements**

1.2. As a mediator, he promotes the dialogue that leads to the truth.

The Augustinian educator is a mediator of learning who helps the student to discover and bring out their latent potential and to grasp what is within their reach. He is someone with the capacity to communicate, as well as with the capacity and disposition to listen. Nothing stimulates the student as much as knowing that the educator listens attentively and receptively to their questions and concerns. The most appropriate method for transmitting values and knowledge, and above all

for forming people, is open, sincere and equal dialogue. This friendly encounter with the student should seek not so much to offer knowledge as to awaken in the student a concern for the search for truth.

- **It is a mediator of learning**
- **Good communicator and good listener**
- **Educates in dialogue**
- **Awakens concerns**

1.3. Believes that love empowers knowledge and knowledge empowers love.

From love to knowledge, from knowledge to love. For St. Augustine, the basis of all educational action revolves around love and is born of love. The love of the teacher for the student is a disinterested love that teaches and helps to learn and predisposes the student to a better reception of knowledge. To learn is to remember and teaching is the trigger of that memory. The educator does not teach the knowledge but the way to acquire it; to attain knowledge is a personal conquest of the student, fruit of dialogue and communication. The educator guides his teaching through love and leads the student to the inner reflection necessary for the discovery of Truth.

- **From love to knowledge, from knowledge to love**
- **Love that teaches and helps**
- **Guiding teaching through love**

The possibility of discovering the

knowledge sown within will make the student show interest. The knowledge that the student acquires strengthens their love, which manifests itself in the desire to share with others what they have learned and in the desire to achieve happiness. This desire arises and manifests itself as a consequence of love for others.

- **Knowledge empowers love**

The circle is complete when the desire to share knowledge, what the student has learned, their truth, is transmitted to others guided again by love. Their knowledge will empower love. Out of love they learn and when they discover the greatness of what they have learned, out of love for others they share it.

- **Through love we learn, through love we share.**



2. The student

The Augustinian student loves the truth and therefore seeks it from the restlessness and responsible freedom. Humble and receptive, but dialoguing and participative, they begin their journey in the knowledge of self in order to direct their life with a transcendent meaning.

To educate is to awaken persons. The Augustinian student is not a done model of a person or a prototype,

but a project that is worked on day by day. This project is the journey of that person who in restless search for truth, by way of interiority and responsible freedom, works, studies and interacts to reach transcendence.

2.1. Search for truth from restlessness and responsible freedom.

El alumno agustiniano es aquel que The Augustinian student is one who seeks the truth and desires to attain it. Truth is not the patrimony of a few. St. Augustine was a tireless seeker of truth. When the interest to discover and learn has been aroused in the student, the logical consequence is constant restlessness. Life poses constant questions and only those who are restless in their search for the true answers will find answers. Teaching that does not address the student's restlessness is useless. For those students who seek and ask, teachers help them to seek the answers themselves. For St. Augustine, this sense of finding is synonymous with engendering. It is as if the pupil himself gives birth to what he has found. It is something of his own that becomes part of his life. The restlessness of the Augustinian student involves constantly questioning the profound meaning of everything. The teacher from Hippo asks the student to ask himself, to ask the educators, to search in books until he finds the truth that resides in each one of us.

- **Search for the truth**

- **To find is to engender**

The Augustinian student also seeks from responsible freedom. Freedom is the conquest and overcoming of all that impedes growth. “Freedom is not doing what we want, but doing what we have to do because we want” (Sermon 344, 4). That the Augustinian student approaches freedom implies that he approaches it from self-knowledge and the learning of love. It is not an empty, or uncommitted freedom. “Love and do what you will” says St. Augustine, affirming love’s sovereignty as the principle of freedom. Love and freedom are not the starting point but the final goal of the learner. Their freedom is strengthened when they assume their obligations, is maintained when they choose the good and carry it out, and is consolidated when their life is in accord with the truth that they progressively discover in themselves.

The Augustinian student searches from responsible freedom when they search with a critical mind. Because they are not freer who have more options but who have more criteria to choose better.

- **Searching critically**

The Augustinian student seeks from responsible freedom when they seek from self-mastery. “I can only do what I want when I stop wanting what I should not” (Letter 10, 1).

- **Searching from self-mastery**

The Augustinian student seeks from responsible freedom when they seek to overcome. They never end up surrendering or being disenchanted because there is always a way out of human difficulties.

- **Seeking from overcoming**

The Augustinian student seeks from responsible freedom when they seek from commitment as opposed to the culture of the piecemeal, of improvisation and of provisionality that leads to a fear of any real project.

- **Seeks from commitment**

In short, the Augustinian student not only has a physical, biological life, but, above all, possesses freedom of thought, imagination and feelings. They feel being the architect of their life without underestimating any of their personal possibilities and building a learning process linked to their capacity to love truth and freedom.

2.2. Humble and receptive, yet dialogic and participative, they begin their journey in self-knowledge to direct their life to a transcendent meaning.

The Augustinian student knows that the truth is within the self and therefore embarks on the path to interiority, which is the path to the answers. To know oneself is to go within.

- **To know oneself is to go inside**

Interiority, however, does not mean superficial introspection but opens the door to an encounter with God and others in him and, therefore, is the driving force for authentic involvement in the world. Turning inward allows us to direct our life with a transcendent sense. This transcendent sense that opens in the way towards the interior has some solid foundations that the Augustinian student must know:

- **To go inward is to go towards transcendence.**

that their life has a beautiful meaning, a solid foundation and a happy goal despite the inconveniences along the way.

- **Knows the beautiful meaning of life**

that their life has absolute security, because they have learned that it is Love that guides us, envelops us, shapes us and protects us.

- **Knows that Love guides us**

that their life is assured of a happy end, which they achieve despite the difficulties of life because Love is the engine of the road as well as its finish line.

- **Meets the happy end of life**

“You made us, Lord, for You, and our heart will remain restless as long as it does not rest in You.” (Confessions 1, 1, 1).



3. The environment

The Augustinian learning environment fosters a climate of security and trust that favors interpersonal relationships, is uplifting and encourages the involvement of the entire educational community. It focuses on a formative process based on friendship, participation, flexibility and human and material balance through a necessary, discreet and responsible “educational ecology”.

3.1. It fosters a climate of security and trust that favors interpersonal relationships, is uplifting and encourages the involvement of the entire educational community.

Student and environment are elements that complement each other. The environment consists not only of the family, but also of friends and the physical milieu along with all the elements that surround the student. All this acquires its nature due to the presence of the student and the student achieves their goals by virtue of their environment. The student's relationship with the environment fosters relationships that go beyond the classroom walls because the social and participatory dimension of the student is created and fostered as they advance in their formation. The discovery of their self and their

interaction with the environment will be intrinsically linked to their perception of the environment. If the environment complicates and hinders the teaching-learning process, it also complicates and conditions interpersonal encounters and thus weakens the personal and human dimension of the learner.

- **Student and environment are complementary**
- **Social and participatory dimension**

It is therefore a challenge for the student's environment to generate a feeling of belonging that guarantees the student's security and confidence. Feeling a sense of belonging means knowing that they are belong in a totality wherein they are one of the protagonists. Sometimes the educational environment diminishes the sense of belonging, forgetting that belonging is a component of identity. The Augustinian student is and also belongs to a concrete environment. This environment favors interpersonal relationships, favors channels of information and participation and facilitates and fosters an atmosphere of dialogue, collaboration and self-criticism. For this reason, there is need for the will to converge and the integrating character of the elements that make up the Augustinian teaching and learning environment.

- **The student belongs to his reality**
- **There is a desire for conver-**

gence

3.2. The environment focuses on a formative process based on friendship, participation, flexibility and human and material balance through a necessary, discreet and responsible “educational ecology”.

“He who would make a place for the Lord must not rejoice in his own good, but in the common good.”
(Commentaries on Psalms 131, 5)

The environment in the Augustinian educational setting consists of a series of converging forces that should favor the encounter with others, with oneself and with God. Education is carried out not only by people, but also the environment. This supposes considering two important aspects: on the one hand, relationships, organization, free time, etc. On the other hand, the different learning scenarios and contexts as well as the digital resources and tools provided by the new technologies applied to teaching, all of which make up a broad and necessary educational ecology that must have a discreet and responsible influence on the teaching-learning process.

- **The environment and the other**
- **Responsible use of resources**

We must not lose sight of the fact that educational work is basically a moral activity that in many cases

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involves spreading a way of life. All the elements of the environment must participate in and understand this way of life. From an Augustinian perspective this supposes that working and learning in a multidisciplinary educational environment is at the same time working and learning under the same principle: Giving oneself to others and putting common interests before one's own. Concentrating efforts for the realization of the common good should not result from pacts or agreements or legal documents, but from love for one's neighbor.

- **To educate is to transmit a way of life**

From the support of a community reality, with everyone maintaining their own characteristics, all the elements in the educational community must be fully integrated and treated with genuine equality. Only from this perspective can participation, flexibility and human balance in the teaching-learning environment be guaranteed.

- **Equality in the environment**





NOTES

