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PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY THE LASALLIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION (Brazil)

The Pastoral and Pedagogical Committee of the District of Porto Alegre had asked the Lasallian National Commission for advice on the practical application of Lasallian pedagogy in the circumstances of today. The first intention of the Committee was to study the characteristic traits of Lasallian pedagogy as experienced by the Brothers, lay teachers and former students of our establishments at national and continental (Latin American) level.

A circular under two headings was sent out:

- 1) What are the traits that characterize Lasallian educative practice?
- 2) Suggestions for the realization of the work proposed.

The circulars were sent to 80 Brothers in the two Brazilian Districts and in Latin America, to 49 teachers in the two Districts and to 5 former students.

On reception of a satisfactory number of answers, the team appointed by the National Commission for the study of Lasallian pedagogy met to study and analyse the answers. It was agreed that, in view of the nature of the answers received, the work should be divided into three parts:

- a) drafting an introduction to the basic objectives of Lasallian education;
- b) elaboration of a series of principles which at the beginning envisaged the following: general principles, community and social principles, educative principles, principles of pedagogical practice and training;
- c) account of educative practices corresponding to each of the above principles.

The results of this work were submitted to a group of Brothers and Lasallian educators as well as to a large number of former students. The group studied the principles proposed, rewrote them and provided a series of educative practices relating to each principle.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Lasallian education is characterized by its Christian outlook and its insistence on an evangelical spirit of fraternity. It proves its loyalty to the Church. It engages in the task of reforming society with a view to bringing about the Kingdom of God.

PRINCIPLES

- 1) Lasallian education aims at the formation of the whole human person considered as the centre of the educative process.
- 2) Lasallian education is education for freedom and undertakes to work towards this end.
- 3) Lasallian educative practice is engaged in continual self renewal in order to meet change.
- 4) Training and development of the critical sense is an essential factor in Lasallian education.
- 5) The Lasallian educative process is one of participation and communication.
- 6) Lasallian educative action is characterized by its care to plan and organize its programmes in accordance with its principles.
- 7) According to de La Salle, the value and dignity of the educator spring from constant effort.

- 8) In Lasallian thought, the educator is a minister of God's Word.
- 9) Solid formation of the educator, evident in his life and work, is indispensable for the work of Lasallian education.
- 10) The Lasallian educator gives priority to the most needy.
- 11) Preference for the poor should be evident in every Lasallian educative initiative.
- 12) Lasallian education makes a synthesis of faith, culture and life.
- 13) The Lasallian educative mission is undertaken as a community effort and gives preference to:
 - a) education in the family setting;
 - b) formation of community leaders;
 - c) attention paid to the school personnel;
 - d) follow-up of former students;
 - e) effective and significant presence of the Brothers;
 - f) integration into the educative community of pupils, parents, educators, management, personnel and former students.
- 14) The Lasallian educative community is open to the wider national and universal communities. Consequently:
 - a) it analyses the reality of which it forms part;
 - b) it confronts it with the ideals of the Gospel;
 - c) it undertakes to transform it.
- 15) The Lasallian educative process is characterized by a spirit of friendship and fraternal esteem between teachers and taught.
- 16) Esteem, understanding and welcome for people are characteristic marks of the Lasallian educative style.
- 17) Attention to the emotional and affective development of students is an important factor in Lasallian education.
- 18) Lasallian education announces Jesus Christ and His message.
- 19) Education in faith is an all-embracing process which involves the participation of the entire educative community.
- 21) Pastoral care of the young and fostering of vocations have a quite exceptional importance in Lasallian educative action.
- 22) The Lasallian school is characterized by the quality of its teaching, its serious formation and the continual renewal of its programmes.
- 23) The teaching and training given in Lasallian schools are aimed at preparing the students for life.
- 24) In the teaching and formation he gives his students the Lasallian educator takes account of individual differences, respects the personal rhythm of each, stimulates and shows appreciation of individual effort, tries to adapt his teaching to the level of each individual and pays special attention to the slow learner.
- 25) The Lasallian educator tries to make learning and training as appealing as possible... His aim is the formation of the individual.
- 26) Art, music and sport are given an important place in the school curriculum.
- 27) Preparation for work and development of the scientific spirit are constants in the Lasallian school programme.

These principles, and suggestions for their application, were sent back for further study, additions and suggestions, to those who had answered the first questions.

A member of the national team was asked to compare these principles with those laid down in the Management of Schools and other Lasallian documents in order to find a sound basis for and enrichment of the principles which are to guide all educative action in Brazil.

They noted deficiencies in popular education which is given priority by the District of Porto Alegre. These deficiencies will be made good after the Latin American meeting in Lima in July, 1984, which has made popular education its theme.

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