

Curriculum for a Changing World: Assessing Character and Leadership Formation in Jesuit Business Education

Proposed Presentation (500–1000 words)

Artificial intelligence, climate technologies, and social innovation are rapidly reshaping how organizations create value, exercise power, and understand responsibility to stakeholders and the common good. In this context, the central challenge for Jesuit business schools is not only curricular relevance, but formative effectiveness: how do we know whether our students are actually becoming the kinds of leaders envisioned by the Jesuit tradition? This proposal responds to the theme *Curriculum for a Changing World: An Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education* by focusing explicitly on the question of assessment—how we can meaningfully evaluate progress toward the goals articulated in *An Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education* (2020).

The *Inspirational Paradigm* calls Jesuit business schools to form leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion who are capable of ethical discernment, systems thinking, and action for justice in a complex global environment. Yet while many institutions have embraced curricular innovation around AI, sustainability, and social entrepreneurship, far fewer have developed robust, evidence-based methods for assessing students' moral, civic, and leadership formation. Perhaps the Jesuit value most difficult to assess is that of compassion, which situates principled decision-making within a larger context of "cura personalis" or care for the whole person. As cultural norms shift and evolve, this capacity becomes ever more important as leaders must not only determine what ought to be done but also what can be done to create an environment that builds pro-social behaviors and promotes human flourishing for all. Despite the challenges of assessing character and leadership development, this presentation argues that without credible assessment approaches, Jesuit business education risks treating formation as aspirational rhetoric rather than measurable practice.

The presentation has three primary aims. First, it will survey leading methodologies for character growth assessment emerging from the Educating for Character Initiative (Wake Forest University), the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (University of Birmingham), the Human Flourishing Program (Harvard University), the Transformative Education Lab (Boston College), and Project Zero (Harvard University's Graduate School of Education). Second, it will examine how these approaches align with the learning goals of Jesuit business education. Third, it will offer a practical illustration of how some of these methodologies can be integrated into leadership program assessment through a case-based discussion of existing practices in a Jesuit business school.

The Educating for Character Initiative emphasizes longitudinal, mixed-methods approaches that combine validated survey instruments with reflective practices and narrative data. Its work highlights the importance of tracking character development over time rather than relying on single-point measures. Similarly, the Jubilee Centre advances a virtue-ethical framework grounded in practical wisdom (*phronesis*), using scenario-based assessments and moral

exemplars to evaluate how individuals reason and act in complex situations. These approaches resonate strongly with Ignatian pedagogy, particularly the emphasis on experience, reflection, and action.

The Human Flourishing Program broadens the assessment conversation by situating character development within a holistic account of well-being, encompassing meaning, purpose, relationships, and pro-social behavior. This perspective is particularly relevant for business education in an era of AI-driven productivity pressures and climate anxiety, where technical competence alone is insufficient for sustainable leadership. Project Zero contributes a complementary methodological lens through its qualitative, interview-based approaches that probe how individuals make sense of ethical dilemmas, uncertainty, and learning over time. Rather than reducing formation to numerical scores, Project Zero's methods surface patterns of thinking, values articulation, and moral imagination.

Building on these frameworks, the presentation will then turn to applied assessment practices within a leadership development program in a Jesuit business school context. These practices include structured self-assessments over time that promote metacognitive awareness, 360-degree assessments that capture peer and mentor perspectives, and in-depth, open-ended interviews from Project Zero's qualitative protocols. Together, these tools provide a more textured picture of student development than any single instrument alone. They also model a formative approach to assessment that supports student growth while generating evidence of program-level impact.

The presentation concludes by proposing a set of guiding questions for Jesuit business educators: What forms of evidence genuinely indicate growth in conscience, compassion, and ethical judgment? How can assessment practices remain rigorous without undermining the deeply personal and contextual nature of formation? And how might shared assessment frameworks strengthen collaboration and accountability across Jesuit business schools globally?

By grounding curricular innovation in credible, mission-aligned assessment practices, Jesuit business education can move beyond good intentions toward demonstrable impact. In doing so, we can better discern whether our curricula are truly preparing graduates to lead wisely, ethically, and courageously in a changing world.