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Introduction to the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm: An Online Course for Librarians

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Introduction to the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm: An Online Course for Librarians

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Abstract

This article discusses the development and delivery of a three-week asynchronous online course in Jesuit history, education, and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) for librarians working in Association of Jesuit Colleges and University (AJCU) institutions. Created by two instruction librarians and one instructional designer from a pair of AJCU institutions, the course explores incorporating the IPP—a contemplative learning model—into a one-shot, single class library instruction session. Included is a practical description of the development, revision, marketing, and success of the online course, along with a list of the class contents. Over three course offerings in 2017 and 2018, thirty-one participants discussed readings and videos, and shared ideas about their current teaching practices. They reflected on how the IPP, or at least some elements of it, might become part of their teaching, despite the time and content constraints. Other topics included the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) “Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education,” critical librarianship, and social justice. The intent of the article is to raise awareness of the course for interested librarians and to offer guidance to anyone working to develop an online course related to Ignatian pedagogy and teaching.

Introduction

Similar to the process of guiding others in the Spiritual Exercises, the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (or IPP) views faculty as accompanying students in their intellectual, spiritual, and emotional development. They do this by helping students navigate the five stages of the IPP: context, experience, reflection, action and evaluation. Context takes into account both the students’ and faculty’s frames of reference, allowing both to better understand the circumstances and conditions surrounding their knowledge. Reflection is an intentional process where both faculty and students give serious thought and consideration to an experience. Action asks faculty and students to address a relevant problem, experience, or need with new knowledge and the experience gained. Evaluation of this process includes academic mastery as well as ongoing assessment of the faculty and student’s growth as a whole person, in mind, body and spirit.¹
These elements should be understood as representing an iterative process and are often visualized as a dynamic sequence that continually repeats as new levels of experience, reflection, and action unfold:

There is an abundance of resources, writings, and communities of practice focused on how a class instructor can incorporate the IPP into a course. These include online sites such as “Ignatian Pedagogy Resources” from St. Louis University’s Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning,2 “Teaching Jesuit Values” from Regis University’s Center for Teaching and Excellence,3 and many articles in Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal.4 However there are very few resources on the same topic for instruction librarians. These librarians are typically invited by a faculty member to one class session to cover all the relevant aspects of information literacy for their students, usually within a fifty-five minute time frame. The drawbacks of these so called one-shot instruction sessions, lamented by librarians since the 1960s,5 continue to persist today. These include not enough time to adequately cover the necessary material, lack of follow-up with students, and the inability to have students take the session seriously when the librarian is not grading their work.

The lack of resources on how to incorporate the IPP into the unique nature of library instruction inspired a librarian from Marquette University, an instructional designer from Marquette, and a librarian from the University of San Francisco to develop a three-week online course to address this topic and to share it with librarian colleagues at other member institutions of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU). This article chronicles the journey from inspiration to successful development and implementation of the course. Based on post-course survey responses, participants found the course informative, appreciated feedback from facilitators, felt the resources appropriate, and enjoyed the opportunity to engage with colleagues that they would not have encountered in another setting.

Our “Manresa Moment”

In 1522 St. Ignatius stayed in the Spanish village of Manresa for almost a year. It was here, while sitting on the banks of the Cardoner river, that he had an epiphany.6 In March 2016, a smaller Manresa moment occurred for one member of the Marquette team when he came across an article by Lu and Rosen, “Practicing Ignatian Pedagogy: A Digital Collection of Resources” in the 2015 edition of Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal.7 After reading the article, he reached out to the two co-authors, one of whom would become a collaborator in this project. After a few initial meetings in April 2016, the team—an Instructional Designer, a Research and Instruction Librarian, and a Distance Learning Services Librarian—began to develop an outline for what would become the pilot offering of the course. Since all three members had done independent reading and attended various campus seminars on Ignatian pedagogy, Ignatian spirituality, and Jesuit history, the group was aware of a rich array of multimodal resources that could be used to teach others about the IPP and Jesuit education. The librarians also wanted to tie other challenges facing instruction librarians—application of the 2016 Association of College and Research Libraries “Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education,”8 an increasing emphasis on social justice, and the field of critical librarianship—into the overall reflections on their teaching. The challenge for the developers became fitting the right amount of material into a three-week time frame and developing engaging activities and discussion prompts to keep participants involved, while also offering them the
opportunity to unpack what they were learning each week.

From late spring until early fall of 2016, the team met via video-conferencing and developed their course using the backward design model. This model is composed of three steps: (1) identify what students should know, understand, and be able to do, that is, learning objectives; (2) determine what evidence will indicate the students achieved the learning objectives; (3) develop teaching methods, sequence of lessons, and resource materials that will allow the students to achieve the desired results.

The focus and learning objectives for each week:

**Week 1—Jesuit History and Foundation**

Learning Objectives

- Describe the identifiable qualities of a university rooted in the Jesuit tradition.
- Identify key terms and tenets of the Jesuit order.
- Explore an item of Jesuit identity on your campus.
- Reflect on what captured and excited you about what you learned this week.

**Week 2—The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm**

Learning Objectives

- Identify the terms and concepts of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP).
- Analyze the merits and weaknesses of courses utilizing Ignatian pedagogy.
- Compare and contrast the IPP to other learning models.

**Week 3—IPP in Library Instruction**

Learning Objectives

- Examine ways you are already using the IPP (or eloquenta perfecta or social justice) in your teaching or ways you could incorporate the IPP into your teaching.
- Discuss ways to infuse social justice and its themes in library instruction.
- Reflect on the areas IPP does well (consolation) and where it falls short (desolation) in relation to teaching.
- Reflect on infusing social justice and its themes in your instructional practice.

Once the course outline with learning objectives, resources, and activities was complete, the Marquette team members worked with their Information Technology Services department to acquire a course site in Marquette’s learning management system for a non-credit course.

With a home for the course secured, the team spent two weeks developing the site, such as adding links to resources, writing module introductions, and creating discussion boards, quizzes, and so forth. The course now completed and christened “Jesuit Education and Library Instruction,” it was time to begin recruiting participants for its pilot run.

**A Positive Pilot**

The team was concerned about how to advertise the course to AJCU librarians. Outside of the annual AJCU Library Deans meeting, the only place where AJCU librarians gather is the annual AJCU Virtual Reference (VR) conference. A consortium of nineteen of the twenty-seven AJCU member libraries, this service provides online reference help to member libraries twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (excluding some federal holidays) from AJCU librarians and a contracted librarian staffing service.

One of the Marquette team members chaired the ACJU VR committee at the time and added the course as an agenda item for the annual AJCU VR meeting held in November 2016. During the meeting the other Marquette team member joined via web conference and gave a brief overview of the course pilot, inviting those present to share the information with their librarian colleagues at their home institutions. The presentation was well received and a number of those present expressed interest in taking the course. To encourage participation, no minimum or maximum number of course participants was established.
The course pilot ran from January 23, 2017 through February 12, 2017 and was composed of twenty-four librarians from thirteen AJCU institutions. To ensure engagement with the participants, the three facilitators divided the twenty-four participants into three groups of eight, and strove to provide a response to every participant’s initial posts before the end of each week. The assignments, with the exception of quizzes, were graded pass/fail, and participants passed if they made a good faith effort to complete the assignment. The three weekly modules also included a selection of resources (i.e., blogs, articles, book chapters) and multimedia (i.e., videos and audio) that guided the discussions. Twelve participants completed 70% or more of the assignments and were awarded a certificate of completion.

Pilot Assessment

Two assessment tools were used to gauge the impact and effectiveness of the course. The first was an identical survey given to participants before the course and at the end of the course. The two-question survey gauged the participants’ familiarity and comfort level with the IPP on a 1-5 Likert scale:

**Question #1: IPP Familiarity Questions**

On a 1-5 scale, 1 representing the least and 5 representing the most, indicate your familiarity with:

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<th>Statement</th>
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<td>Ignatian Discernment</td>
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<td>IPP Context</td>
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<td>IPP Experience</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>IPP Evaluation</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Principles of Social Justice</td>
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</table>
**Question #2: IPP Application Questions**

On a 1-5 scale, with the numbers in the scale representing the following:

1. I don’t have sufficient knowledge of key concepts.
2. I have awareness of key concepts, but I’m not ready to put them into practice.
3. I have awareness of key concepts, but I need more practice.
4. I have awareness of key concepts, and I can put them into practice.
5. I have awareness of key concepts, and I can use them with complete success.

Please mark the number that you most identify with regarding the concepts below.

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Six participants from the pilot cohort completed both the pre- and post-course survey and the mean responses reflected an increase in familiarity and knowledge of the IPP as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

![Figure 1](image1.png)

![Figure 2](image2.png)

The second assessment tool was an end of course survey with seven free-response questions, completed by nine participants. Major takeaways from the participant comments were:

- The timing of the class made it difficult for most participants to stay engaged in the course. The start of the semester, which is when this pilot was offered, is often the busiest time for academic librarians, especially those who do instruction.
- There was too much to read and view for a three-week class. The weekly resources...
 Participants enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and share instruction ideas with their AJCU colleagues—a rarity among librarians. An online community of practice grew as participants made their initial posts and then engaged with each other in one or more follow-up discussions.

**Lessons Learned for Next Course Offerings**

The pilot provided invaluable feedback that guided the team as they prepared the next offering of the course. First, the team reduced the number of required weekly resources across all three weeks from twenty-three to nineteen. A couple of lengthy readings were replaced with alternate shorter readings or brief videos that addressed the same topic. Then the next offering was planned for early August 2017 because participants indicated they have more time in the summer to complete the course before the start of a semester.

The team also reassessed the logistics of facilitating the course. It was assumed that three facilitators could adequately handle twenty-four participants, split into three groups of eight, by replying to each initial post in their group. In reality this proved difficult because of work commitments, and because it didn’t allow the facilitators the freedom to jump in and comment on other posts. For the next offering, the team capped enrollment at twelve participants. The plan was that at least one facilitator would craft a response to each participant’s initial post during the first week. During weeks two and three, participants were told that the facilitators would be reading their posts, but would not necessarily post a reply to each one. In practice one or more of the facilitators often replied to most of the posts. Despite these improvements, finding the right balance of facilitators’ responses to participants’ posts is an ongoing process.

To spread the word about the course, in April 2017 the Marquette team members promoted the class to academic librarians in Wisconsin during a poster session about the project at the annual Wisconsin Association of Academic Libraries Conference. In June 2017, all three team members gave a presentation about the course at the annual AJCU CITM (Conference on Information Technology Management) Conference at Seattle University. Registration for the pilot course was performed by having participants e-mail one of the team facilitators. A Qualtrics form was used to register for the second offering, to begin in late July 2017. A link to the form was e-mailed to the AJCU VR librarians group, and to those who had expressed interest during the two conference presentations. The form was set up so that after twelve people had registered, a message displayed stating the course was full and one could leave an e-mail address to be placed on the waitlist.

A few weeks before the July 2017 course was set to open, the facilitators learned that their application for a Simmons Grant from Marquette’s Office of Mission and Ministry was accepted. This fund provides small one time non-renewable grants, usually less than $500, for projects and course development that extend the mission of Marquette University in significant ways. The grant funded twelve copies of George Traub, S.J.’s 2008 *A Jesuit Education Reader: Contemporary Writings on the Jesuit Mission in Education, Principles, the Issue of Catholic Identity, Practical Applications of the Ignatian Way, and More* for course participants. Although this additional resource required adjustments to the course modules to accommodate new readings from the text, the facilitators wanted to give participants a book for their further study and reflection after the course ended.

The second course started on July 31, 2017 with twelve participants from eight AJCU institutions and one from a public doctoral-granting university. Eight participants completed the course. Overall participant feedback from the second offering was positive. A key takeaway from participant feedback was the course was still offered too close to the start of the semester, which hampered some participants’ ability to focus on and complete the course. Most participants said they valued receiving a physical copy of *A Jesuit Education Reader*, although others felt the availability of many chapters online made it optional. The designers had hoped using one book would help consolidate the readings, but realized much of the content was outside the scope of this course. While the team would have
preferred purchasing and sending the book to future course participants, the cost and shipping of multiple copies without further grant funding made this unsustainable. In planning for the third offering, the team again assessed the resources and reduced the nineteen required resources to sixteen resources, removed the chapters from *A Jesuit Education Reader*, and reorganized the sequencing. The team also moved the course start to early July.

The Qualtrics form was again used for registration and in June 2018, another call went out to the AJCU VR librarians and to individuals at each institution who had expressed an interest in the class to the team members. The third course began with fourteen participants, one of whom was not from an AJCU institution. Eleven participants earned a certificate. Participant feedback suggested: begin the course in early July, as that was the best time for both the participants and the facilitators; drop the optional personal reflection questions; have better quizzes; and provide slides to sum up the week’s themes. For the next course offering, the team is considering how to incorporate these suggestions, for example by creating weekly reading guides to help unpack and highlight the important areas of focus.

Across the three course offerings, fifty participants enrolled and thirty-one participants completed the course to earn a certificate. The feedback from participants was invaluable and allowed the facilitators to make adjustments that have led to an improved course and a better participant experience from the initial pilot offering.

**Viewing Library Instruction through the Ignatian Lens**

It is unrealistic to expect a three-week course to impart a thorough knowledge and level of application skill that longer and more in-depth programs such as the Ignatian Colleagues Program, the Arrupe Seminar at Seattle University, or the Jesuit Leadership Seminar at Loyola University Chicago provide. However, even within this condensed time frame, participants enjoyed the rare opportunity to discuss and share instruction ideas with their AJCU colleagues. An online community of practice grew as participants made their initial posts, then engaged with each other in one or more follow up discussions. While acknowledging the many constraints inherent in the short, one-shot library session, they shared creative ideas on ways they might incorporate a Jesuit, Ignatian perspective into their teaching and other encounters with students. These might not necessarily be new techniques but rather new ways of viewing what they already are doing.

Participants read Andrew Battista’s 2015 “Seeking Social Justice in the ACRL Framework” from *Communications in Information Literacy* and were asked: “Are there ways the IPP can help address some of the issues of seeking social justice in information literacy instruction brought up in this article?” and to give an example of how to incorporate social justice into any form of library instruction. A sampling of their ideas includes:

- With an awareness of context (for this example, being a part of higher education), an experience (a library instruction activity, which results in an awareness of information as having value) and a reflection (what is the impact of information having value), students could then be propelled to discern a way to act in response to this awareness.

- Interrogate structures of power such as information organization, publishing, or information sourcing/funding in discussions and class assignments to raise questions about who has power and who is excluded from existing structures.

- If it fits with the class content, plan instruction to include a social justice assignment.

- Use the search term “social justice” when demonstrating databases and teaching the research process.

- Select topics related to racial justice, bias in classification and computing, and issues directly related to students’ lives and communities.

Finding ways to incorporate all components of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm—context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation—into one fifty-five minute session is the challenge. The
participants appreciated reading the insights in Scranton University librarian Donna Witek’s 2015 “Making the Information Literacy One-Shot Ignatian.” Many commented on how they might improve on gaining more context about their students as an obtainable goal, while finding it more difficult to come up with practical suggestions for all the other elements. Examples for context include the simple to the more complex. All the strategies inherently emphasize the importance of cura personalis, or care for the whole person, an important Jesuit value. Some of the practices the participants shared include:

- Before the class begins, chat a bit with the students to learn how they’re doing or quietly observe their interactions with each other: Do the students voice a lot of complaints about the faculty/class among themselves? Do they seem frustrated or confused? Are they respectful or a bit rowdy? Silent? Do they seem happy or at least neutral to be in the class? Do they talk among themselves, or sit in total silence waiting to begin? These observations can help shape the librarian’s approach and also gauge how the students might respond to the session.

- In the beginning of a class or library tour, ask students to introduce themselves and to share something (their hometowns, a personal interest, their major, etc.) with the class. The librarian can do the same about themselves.

- Some professors make name signs for each student that they can display at their seats, which allows each to be seen as an individual and helps the librarian personalize the interactions.

- Be careful not to assume that you know the context of your students. Graduate working adults may be adept at their jobs but not accustomed to contemporary library research tools and strategies. Their personal lives are also different from first-year freshmen living in the dorms, with different stressors and challenges.

- Participate in orientation week activities and find other ways to go where the students are (dorms, dining hall, common areas) so that students recognize the librarian as someone helpful and approachable.

- Learn as much as you can about your student population as a whole. Read reports from the Registrar, Student Services, and Psychological Counseling Services and attend campus administrators’ town halls and presentations. Attend campus programs focused on student issues, such as food insecurity and the cost of off-campus housing. Librarians may not know what can be distracting students in their personal lives before they even get to searching a research topic.

Understanding the core of the IPP—experience, reflection, action—and then imagining about how to transform the typical single library instruction session into one more Ignatian prompted the participants to examine their current practices and begin envisioning these in a new light. While the IPP might be defined as a kind of experiential learning model, one of the ways it differs from other similar models is the emphasis on the student as a whole person on a formative journey, with faculty and librarians as their guides. The actions taken after experience and reflection should demonstrate that the students are on their way to becoming people for others. An ambitious goal, but one core to the Jesuit tradition.

Many library instruction techniques—the flipped classroom, in-class database searching exercises, investigating a variety of research tools, and so forth—can be useful in the IPP model. Participants agreed that active learning strategies can involve students more directly in the research process, especially if they leave the class having made progress on their research assignments. Experience in the Ignatian sense is also more than the act of doing something. As described in the Jesuit Institute of London’s Ignatian Pedagogy: An Abridged Version, it involves “memory, understanding, imagination and feelings to grasp the essential meaning and value of what is being studied, to discover its relationship to other facets of human knowledge and activity, and to appreciate its implications in the continuing search for truth.” Some participants suggested trying multimodal instruction components that include visual, audio, and other techniques to stimulate alternative ways of experiencing research. The
affective aspects of information-seeking behavior are also important. Carol Kuhlthau’s 1991 “Information Search Process (ISP) Model” describes the emotional ups and downs we all may cycle through during the research process. Students might be experiencing library anxiety, feeling intimidated and their skills inadequate. Librarians can empathize with students, helping them recognize and normalize these feeling aspects of research.

All participants agreed building more opportunities for reflection into their classes would help bring more of the IPP into their instruction. Some also talked about wanting to reflect on how the class went either by themselves or in conversation with the faculty member. Finding the time is still the challenge but some ideas emerged:

- Ask questions geared toward reflection and critical thinking. If students are quiet and unresponsive, wait seven seconds. This pushes them to think to provide an answer to end the awkward silence.

- Give students the opportunity to stop “doing” and think about where they are.
  - Build reflection in after each activity, asking students to reflect on what was just covered or practiced and why it matters. Have them share their thoughts with the class.
  - Ask students to try a practice search and have them reflect on successful and less successful strategies. Have them share their thoughts with the class.
  - Ask students if they can imagine a real-life scenario of how they could use what they’ve just learned. How might it immediately improve something in their lives or their friends’?

After experience and reflection comes action. Returning to a problem with new insights after reflecting on an experience is a strategy many participants felt inspired action. Others noted that ideally students have selected a topic they care about and will be spurred to action because they see their research skills as meaningful and valuable to them.

The final stage of the IPP is evaluation. Here the participants had some ideas but many felt that true evaluation is best accomplished by the faculty member who sees the students throughout the semester. While some librarians attend student presentations, they rarely see the final papers or projects, so it is difficult to assess how well the lessons were learned and applied. Some institutions have strong assessment cultures, with pre-designed online tools for pre-test/post-test measures or library modules students are required to take. Other librarians meet with the instructor to evaluate how the class went and what could be improved. A few participants suggested using the elements of the IPP for themselves, reflecting on their own teaching experiences and actions, and evaluating how well they are modeling their lay person’s version of the Jesuit “way of proceeding.”

Conclusion

A short, asynchronous course such as this provides an accessible opportunity for a brief introduction to Ignatian and Jesuit history and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. Hopefully, this course will also build a resource network of like-minded librarian colleagues and inspire them to seek out additional formation and training at their home institutions. The many ideas contributed on how to incorporate the IPP, or at least some aspects of it, into the challenging one-shot library instruction session should prove valuable going forward.

The three-member facilitation team hopes to offer the course again to interested librarians who want to add a contemplative pedagogy to their toolboxes. The team also has begun collaborating with representatives from the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities to find ways to scale the course in a sustainable way to continue offering this enrichment opportunity to AJCU and other librarians. This is a project that can continue to be enriched and enhanced through the wisdom of the crowd in Jesuit higher education. The team invites those of you reading this article to build upon and offer feedback and enhancements to the course.
materials, which can be found in the *Practicing Ignatian Pedagogy: A Digital Collection of Resources* digital repository hosted by the University of San Francisco’s Gleeson Library/Geschke Center, by contacting the authors: Eric Kowalik, Instructional Designer (eric.kowalik@marquette.edu), Leatha Miles-Edmonson, Research and Instructional Services Librarian (leatha.miles-edmonson@marquette.edu), and Vicki Rosen, Distance Learning Services Librarian Emerita (rosen@usfca.edu).
# Appendix: Course Development Timeline

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>January-February</td>
<td>Pilot offering:</td>
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<td>- 4 dropped</td>
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<td>- 4 did not participate in the course</td>
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<td>- 12 earned a certificate</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Presented poster at the Wisconsin Association of Academic Libraries Conference. Began recruiting for next session.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Presented at AJCU CITM Conference at Seattle University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Received Simmons Grant from Marquette’s Office of Mission and Ministry to purchase 12 copies of <em>A Jesuit Education Reader</em> to be sent to participants of next course offering. Made refinements to the course based on pilot feedback and replaced some articles with <em>A Jesuit Education Reader</em> book chapters. Second course offering:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 12 participants enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 8 earned a certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January-June</td>
<td>Revised content, replaced <em>A Jesuit Education Reader</em> book chapters with other relevant resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January-June</td>
<td>Made minor refinements to content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Began recruiting for 3rd course offering from AJCU VR members and word of mouth at facilitators’ home campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July-August</td>
<td>Third course offering:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 14 participants enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 1 dropped midway through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 2 did not complete the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 11 earned a certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes


