

## **Active Methodologies in Higher Education**

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### **Introduction**

The 2015 III La Salle Forum was held on October 15-17 at the Tetela Center in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The III La Salle Forum aimed to invite experts from different regions of the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU) to continue the discussion about Lasallian teaching competences, more specifically, about active methodologies in higher education. Academic coordination was led by Brother Paulo Fossatti, FSC and José Alberto A. de Miranda of Unilasalle, Canoas, Brazil. Technical coordination was led by Joan Landeros of Universidad La Salle, Mexico City.

### **Purpose of the Forum**

The purpose of this international academic gathering was to promote reflection and systemization of teaching practices among professors of Lasallian higher education and tertiary training institutions around the world in order to generate spaces for recognition and debate. The call for proposals aimed to attract educational case studies focused on educational *active methodologies, meaning, and interdisciplinarity in a time of digital culture and research*. The symposium was guided by the following objectives outlined in the program:

- Mobilize the worldwide higher education teaching community around a reflection on educator's practices.
- Present a set of diverse and significant experiences of Lasallian higher education faculty.
- Motivate the exchange and debate around specific teaching practices in the field of Lasallian higher education.
- Promote alternatives for the recuperation and development of the pedagogical and didactic knowledge of Lasallian higher education professors.
- Identify focal points of Lasallian thought in the perspective of higher and tertiary education.
- Promote exchange networks between Lasallian higher education and tertiary training institutions around the world, based on their teaching practice and their pedagogical and didactic approaches.

### **Participants**

Over forty-five Lasallian educators representing eight countries of the IALU network participated in the forum including Brazil, Columbia, Andorra, Spain, United States, Philippines, Mexico, and France. Various educators from Lasallian universities in Brazil, United States, Mexico, Columbia, Spain, and the Philippines provided a total of seventeen presentations.

## **Program**

The La Salle Forum in Cuernavaca, Mexico originated in order to provide a space for Lasallian educators to gather, showcase, analyze, and explore teaching practices and experiences within the Lasallian higher education network. Given its initial success in 2013, the second forum was held virtually in October of 2014 to extend collaboration and the exchange of ideas throughout the IALU worldwide network. This virtual forum resulted in the participation of over 300 international Lasallians. The intent of the 2015 Cuernavaca III La Salle Forum was to promote continued international cohesiveness and networking by calling together educators throughout the IALU network to share and discuss effective, contemporary, and innovative teaching practices implemented within their educational setting. To advance this goal, the two-day forum consisted of introductory and closing keynote lectures, seventeen 15-minute case study presentations interspersed with small group breakout discussions, and general large group discussions to garner summarizations and recommendations.

### **Introductory Keynote Lecture**

Brother Paulo Fossatti, Rector of Unilasalle in Canoas, Brazil, provided an introductory lecture discussing the historical background and foundational aim of the IALU III La Salle Forum. He reminded us that the aim of the forum was to maintain a venue with varied communication endeavors to initiate, support, and sustain ongoing educational projects and cross-fertilization of ideas within our IALU network. Brother Paulo challenged the group to work towards developing one or two robust and integrated projects that could be put into action as a result of the conference.

In support of Brother Paulo's call to action, Carlos Coelho, Executive Secretary of IALU reminded us that we have a variety of programs around the world from which to learn; prompting us to see the IALU network as a facilitator for collaboration and international networking among our family of scholars and educators.

Lluís Vicent Safont, Rector of La Salle Open University and member of the IALU board, further advanced the call by bringing to our attention the various graduate programs offered to the IALU network through La Salle Open University explaining that the virtual online programs allow students from around the world to earn a certificate from Lasallian institutions in seven different countries.

### **Case Study Presentations**

Inspired to discover, explore, and exchange ideas, attendees listened to and discussed a variety of case studies presented by attending professors and scholars from within the IALU network. The following case studies were clustered into six presentation groups and were focal points for interspersed small group discussion and reflection.

<b>Presentation Topics</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Lasallian Institution and Country</b>
Contemporary Learning Needs	Augusto Niche Teixeira; Alexandre Giordani Andreoli	Unilasalle Canoas, Brazil
Effective Adult Learning	Susan Hines	Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, U.S.A.
Self-Directed Learning	Christopher Peckover	Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, U.S.A.
Physical Education Research Project	Mary Rangel; Moacir Juliani	UERJ; Faculdade La Salle de Lucas do Rio Verde, Brazil
Socio-constructivist Model for Teacher Training	Lilia Beatriz Navarro Fragoso	Universidad La Salle Noroeste, Mexico
Active Methods for Teaching Mathematics	Omar Hugo Hernandez Perez	Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca, Mexico
Teacher Training for Architecture Education	Carlos Alberto Escobar Otero	Universidad De La Salle, Columbia
Virtual Learning in Higher Ed; Research Project	Nuria Hernandez-Selles	Centro Superior de Estudios Universitarios La Salle Madrid, Spain
Competencies in Higher Education	Guillermo Londoño Orozco	Universidad De La Salle, Columbia
	Jenni Brand Barajas	Universidad La Salle Mexico, Mexico
Student Resiliency	Pamela Jessee	Lewis University, U.S.A.
Veterinary Medicine Learning Project	Margarita Rosa Rendon Fernandez	Universidad De La Salle, Columbia
MBA Service-Learning and Social Responsibility	Benito Teehankee	De La Salle University, Philippines
Using Edmodo for Teaching Reading & Writing	Leonardo Daniel Sanchez Rojas	Universidad La Salle Mexico, Mexico
Faculty Training Program	Teresa Gomez Tress	Universidad De La Salle Bajio, Mexico

Note: The above table may contain minor errors due to issues related to language translation.

### **General Discussion**

Upon completion of the various post-presentation small group discussions, a general discussion was facilitated to gather key takeaways and recommendations. From this discussion, the following themes emerged:

- Institutional contextual settings may be different, however, our experiences are the same.
- Realizing our similarities enables us to break our separatist thinking and seek out ways to work and communicate with each other.
- We, as teachers, are learners too and need to learn from each other.

- Our shared active learning methodologies need to be imported to our institutions to awaken our students' and teachers' creative processes.
- We have an essential need to not only know but also consistently share and implement these active methodologies.
- As Lasallian educators we need to shift from delivering products of learning to servicing and facilitating a learning experience.
- Instituting virtual meetings among our IALU network could support ongoing conversations and sharing.
- We, as a group, need to pass on our new knowledge, so we can help move others from product-oriented to experience-oriented learning.

### **Closing Keynote Lecture**

Brother Paulo Fossatti encouraged us to reflect upon the challenges we have faced and go back to our universities to do our work as Lasallian educators, noting now is a time of consciousness. We need to ask ourselves: *What changes have occurred in us? What would we like to change in our practices and universities?* Brother Paulo reiterated that the III La Salle Forum was born with the intentions of being a project to probe into matters of teaching. However, we do not just want a project, we want an environment in which IALU can be a place for an ongoing process that allows us to see how we do what we do and how we position ourselves in the Lasallian higher education world. Collectively, we can move our Lasallian universities forward with new ideas, research, and innovations in teaching.

### **Forum Conclusion**

Brother Paulo reminded the group that the 2016 forum, similar to the 2014 forum, will be virtual to expand our capacity to reach throughout our global university network. In this spirit, it was put forth to recommend two to three projects to move forward in order to enhance the value of the forum. The following recommendations came forth:

- Invite others to support the continued work on creating a document articulating what it means to be a Lasallian educator to answer the question: *What is the identity of a Lasallian professor?*
- Consider developing regular meetings to maintain and expand the sharing of pedagogical practices, research, and projects.
- Develop a method for evaluating the virtual forums to monitor the effectiveness of this type of delivery format.
- Consider restructuring the forum to allow time to share innovative teaching practices and working on collaborative projects.

The forum ended with an invitation to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> International and 4<sup>th</sup> Institutional Symposium on Teaching in Bogotá, Columbia July 14 – 15, 2016.

## **Endnotes**

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