
The *Hara Project*: Education in the Practice of Interiority in Lasallian Schools

Lasallian District of ARLEP²

Translated by Frances M. Sweeney, PhD³

1. Origin and Scope of the Project

The motivation for establishing a *Hara Project* for education in interiority in the ministries of the Lasallian District of Spain and Portugal (ARLEP) emerges from the concern for giving our students an education that is integrated and holistic, one that encompasses all dimensions of the individual. From its initial beginning, this has been perceived as a project that is eminently pedagogical, which – like a collection of useful tools for personal development, from without and from within, as part of the anthropology of Christian faith – prepares each student for a personal encounter with God (opening to the transcendent) through body work, silence, and emotional integration.

The *Hara Project* began to be developed in 2009 and has been fully integrated in each of the Lasallian educational ministries and in all the areas of Spain and Portugal since 2011. The name *Hara* was selected for the title of this project. *Hara* is a Japanese word that means "abdomen," which is considered the nucleus of physical, psychic, and spiritual equilibrium for a person.⁴

The *Hara Project* is the instrument that concretizes what we can understand about the character itself of every Lasallian center. Referring to our Lasallian educational approach, we make salient a series of traits, among which we point out the following:

The Lasallian school cultivates interiority. We are convinced that in the most profound place in each person there should be developing a plan for living in which there is a full harmony of ideas as well as the bodily dimension, emotions, beliefs, values and behaviors. We want our young children and teens to develop skills of learning, to be more and more reflective, to make decisions based on ethics, and to read reality from perspectives beyond the merely anecdotal. Through this they should gain a symbolic dimension in being able to integrate silence in their lives, cultivate commitments, and unify every dimension of their self.

For the development of these skills, we prioritize self-esteem; the authentic expression of lived experiences and emotions; the capacity for empathy, admiration, quiet and silence; the desire for authenticity, gratitude, sincerity, and reflection.

With all of this, we want the school to be a happy and joyful experience for all of our students.

From its very naming, the *Hara Project* positions itself as an answer for a society in which there exist a great variety of competing opportunities and attractions that demand our attention, especially for the youngest children. For many, the present time is cloaked in a series of diverse and disconnected realities. This lifestyle challenges one's ability to study and fully understand the past and the future. Expressions like "the prison of the present moment" or "living without memory" indicate that everything can change with an unpredictable speed. These impressionable habits contain a dearth of dreaming, of hoping, and of lifelong planning. In this type of "present," persons can enclose themselves in the monotony of daily life, broken only by the call for free-time lived with intensity, what some sociologists have named the "weekend outlook." They look for immediate gratification and short-lived solutions, with a key priority being the image of self they project. Social networks and the habitual use of social media platforms accentuate even more this "superficiality," from which it is difficult to develop one's genuine personhood.

However, spiritual searching continues in a very real way in this society, even as traditional answers for such searching are changing: our students, educators, and families continue asking questions about the sense and purpose of life, about values, ethics, hopes, needs, experiences, and about ways of living.

The educational system finds itself immersed in this whirlwind. The school, that is not removed from what is happening in society, is capable of teaching "the dream of being human": a human being who is unique and irreplaceable, responsible for his/ her own freedom and who is asking questions about loving and being loved. The school puts special emphasis on the integration of all of the dimensions of personhood – ideas, experiences, feelings and dreams – by creating a context that prioritizes the relationships among all, encouraging commitment and social participation. It is, at the same time, a school with an outlook for developing a passion for life, for a life with meaning beginning with the awareness of and openness to the God of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Lasallian *Hara Project* for education in interiority is inserted in a "new learning context" that includes evangelization in all its activities, personnel, and spaces. We want to educate by evangelizing and evangelize by educating. We want to give importance to the relationship with others: justice, solidarity, peace, cooperation, and group sharing. We place our trust in the transcendent dimension: reading of our own history, reading of events, celebration and sacramentality. From here we place, finally, the dream for a developed personal identity as a process of maturation – balance, responsibility, confidence, self-esteem, interiority and silence – under the umbrella of a "vocational culture" in which all people can find their own vocation and way of life in a personal relationship with Jesus.

When the theologian Karl Rahner spoke of the Christian of the twenty-first century, he said that he /she would be the one who has had a profound experience of faith. And when we speak of living one's deepest self, we speak of risk. The risk of being able to face the experience of a meaningful life: of risking the experience of looking at oneself, seeing all of one's limitations and possibilities. The Lasallian school proposes an "experience" such that each child, young person and adult can face the risk of examining themselves about their own life, their values, feelings and beliefs. The main lines of the global project – such as cooperative learning (the opportunity to learn in a group), personalized tutorial activity (which favors self-knowledge,

values personal nearness and seeks to foster all of one's abilities), awareness of the reality of the world (including situations of poverty and exclusion and their causes), and the offer of daily spaces for reflection and prayer (to look at the deepest part of each person and thus encounter oneself, others, and God) – are all facets of the same proposition: an integrated and holistic development of the person.

We are convinced that in each of the people who are in relationship with the Lasallian school there is a desire to build a life with deep meaning by uniting ideas, values, attitudes, beliefs and ways of acting. We are convinced that this is present in every student, every teacher, every mother and father. In the *Hara Project* – as in all of its projects – the whole educational community is involved and wants to be a “springboard” to develop in the inner life, to collaborate in the challenge of giving meaning to life. To this end, both students and educators – and teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as families – are committed to the existence of creating spaces in which there are experiences that help us to discover our own vocation. We dream of an education that attends to interiority, so that our students can read and understand the reality in which they live and can be open to a Transcendence that surpasses us and, at the same time, completes us.

In this way, the objective of the education in interiority project is that our students, gradually:

- be increasingly reflective.
- discern and choose with ethical criteria.
- read reality from a plane that goes beyond the anecdotal.
- grow in the symbolic dimension being able to integrate silence in their lives, as a platform to open themselves to otherness and transcendence.
- cultivate an interiority that moves them to commitment.

This “end result” cannot be reduced only to a series of activities. It has to be “packed” throughout the entire educational experience with specially dedicated moments and, above all, through the creation of a context wherein interiority is nurtured.

2. The Challenge of Interiority

The concept of interiority at the heart of the *Hara Project* should be made explicit. As we have indicated, it is premised on the essential belief in the human person as a creature called, summoned, and sent by the God of Jesus of Nazareth. In the Lasallian tradition, the child is the protagonist of God's action; and the educator is the one called to rise

every day to God through prayer, to learn from Him whatever you have to teach the disciples; and then to descend to them, adapting yourselves to their capacity, to make them sharers in what God has communicated to you about them.⁵

The dictionary defines interiority as the “action and result of interiorizing (taking ownership or settling deeply and intimately in the mind, especially a thought or a feeling).” It seems to us an insufficient definition, since it reduces interiority to the psychological and mental aspect, missing

the meaning we want to express: the interior life, that sphere in which all people recognize themselves as such and in which they construct the meaning of their life.

In antiquity, with the birth of Western thought about the world and the human being, interiority expressed a preparation for wisdom beyond reason, that is, the wisdom of the soul or spirit. This inner preparation involved initiation into words and symbols aimed at the inner contemplation of truth. Knowing oneself was something more than a psychological introspection or a reasoned reflection on oneself; it was a preparation for the “mysteries” (the “total silence”) where the human being encountered him/ herself and acquired self-knowledge. Thus, all real knowledge was acquired through personal understanding.

This understanding of interiority declined, paradoxically, with the notion of “person” at the birth of Modernity. Henceforth, the person is viewed fundamentally in terms of individuality, autonomy, and rationality. The distance with the rest of the things of the world – the animal and the vegetable – makes the person the judge and measure of everything. All reality remains on the outside of the sovereign person and, when he/ she looks at themselves, they can only contemplate something external that they must know, measure, control and manipulate. The inner world is the mirror that reflects it, and only a reflection. Everything remains under the scalpel of science, which dissects, separates, classifies and uses. Outside of the scientific encyclopedia there is nothing now; and the human being him/ herself is part of it. Even that which is most proper to the person, such as ethics, is sought to be measured. Although there are always those, like Blaise Pascal, who see beyond: “the heart has reasons that reason does not understand” or “man infinitely surpasses man”

Nowadays, often thanks to the knowledge and appreciation of Eastern religions, but also by rediscovering the value of the Western Christian tradition, this utilitarian reduction has lost its meaning. It is nothing but the pretension that science can do everything, embrace everything, construct everything. Everything that does not serve it is useless and is relegated to the margin, to meaninglessness. The exclusion of interiority, its oblivion, does not come directly from science, but rather from its claim to be the only path to follow if we want to achieve the liberation of the person. However, oblivion also cries out. When the high edifices of this kind of science, the ones that claimed to reach heaven, collapse, and when the dream of freedom based on it explodes, the person is left in solitude.

In our conception of interiority, the opposite is not exteriority, but superficiality. To enter into one’s own interiority is a great challenge, positive and stimulating: a crucial problem that must be solved to ensure life, but which, nevertheless, has more than one possible solution. Accepting a challenge implies taking a risk in the need to choose among several feasible ways out. However, the challenge is animated by a sense that encourages it and, if necessary, allows us to change the direction and the means used to preserve or promote this sense of direction. The challenge of interiority points to the urgent need that people feel to give meaning to their lives, to equip themselves with personal resources to orient themselves in the midst of the accelerated and changing world that we are experiencing and which, nevertheless, is not falling apart. Thinking about interiority as a challenge implies that, within this changing world, we can live healthy and hopeful lives.

This challenge of interiority does not mean going back to the past but, rather, rediscovering its meaning in the conditions of today's society. The challenge consists in reinventing the meaning of interiority within totally new ways of being, thinking and acting, loving and working, having fun and being moved. The radical changes in our culture have transformed our concept of time and our relationship with it. The idea of one's own personal space and that of the world has been altered; the way we deal with our own body and our contact with the bodies of others has been modified; the bonds of social union and membership in institutions or identity-creating groups have been disrupted; the importance of language has been modified by the primacy of images and diverse communication systems . . . In this society, as it is, the challenge remains of recovering the space of interiority.

Every person has the task of constructing his/ her identity in the midst of the social references with which they have had to live. In other times, these identity markers were more or less clear; today it is not the same. The person is bewildered and without points of reference for this task. Moreover, people must find them for themselves, they need to give meaning to their life, they need to choose among the infinite number of options that are offered to them . . . To do so, they are obliged to equip themselves with a set of values and ideals, a life project to guide their decisions. Finally, the human being can be endowed with the capacity of interiority where the promises coming from the outside resonate, where vital convictions are echoed, where one finds oneself as one is: with all one's capacities, with one's potentialities and also with one's weaknesses. Self-acceptance is a fundamental part of interiority.

Interiority, however, is not reduced to personal isolation from the self. In the search for the meaning of life that characterizes every person, the vocation of the human being is born, on the one hand, to unification and singularity and, on the other, to the experience of the other and to communication. The primordial experience of interiority is "the second person."⁶ The fundamental meaning of life, the meaning that life is worth living, is not only to make myself, but also to orient myself toward the other, toward others.

The search for identity is the challenge of interiority. Interiority is the sphere where the person is constituted as an actor in his/ her own life. The tension between interiority and society marks a double call: the call to be carefree individuals, adaptable and available to adjust to changing situations and to consume life without limits; and the call to provide oneself with a solid capacity to orient oneself and to possess oneself in every change in order to provide oneself with a creative space of meaning and to continue to be oneself.

3. An interiority That Teaches

The Report to UNESCO by Jacques Delors, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, published in 1996,⁷ identifies four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live with others, and learning to be. Education is not limited to the transmission of technical and scientific skills; it aims at developing a type of man and woman who knows how to develop in society. It is not so much a question of delivering knowledge as of mediation that favors the growth of all the capacities of the person, so that he or she can develop him/ herself by developing, at the same time and together with others, the world and society. This call to the holistic education of the person has two basic aspects: on the one hand, the idea that the meaning of education is not

reduced to the teaching of simple routines, nor to the acquisition of a suitcase of technical or cultural knowledge, and, on the other, the idea that the person is not limited to their own logical intelligence, but that different forms of intelligence are brought into play when it comes to developing oneself in relation to the cultural environment, when it comes to living together with others in society and when it comes to establishing oneself as a citizen, as a person endowed with dignity.

The holistic education of the person reinforces all areas, all types of intelligence, and all human capacities. The proposition of values and the education of the emotional, imaginative and symbolic dimensions are already education in interiority. Education prepares and enables interiority by preparing for action, by offering fields of decision, by proposing choices according to different options . . . and, above all, because education invites practice and initiates the awareness of interiority.

If we take into account that “to educate” is not the mere transmission of content, but “to bring out,” as its etymology suggests, the educational task refers to the relationship established across three axes: the learner, the educator, and the proposed message. The mediation across the three alludes to a pedagogical activity of accompaniment and proposition (initiation). We cannot fall into the deception of a school-based education that limits itself only to the integration of young people and children into the existing social order. To educate is to be at the side, guiding and advocating, while the person is developing oneself at the same time one is developing society together with others.

Education is thus the art of proposing to the learner problematic situations that he/ she will only be able to solve by mobilizing all of his/ her cognitive, psychomotor and socio-affective capacities and strategies. That is to say, by risking oneself and by risking what one is: by modifying oneself in the tension between the apparent understanding of what one knows close-at-hand and that of critical distance, between showing empathy and distancing oneself. Educational mediation also concerns the intersubjective relationships that allow one to enter the symbolic universe to which one belongs. This gives meaning and value to every construction that is integrated in this framework of interpretation that the person builds: the affective and emotional sphere, feelings, ideals, values, desires . . .

Today, we accept without any suspicion that education at school should promote logical intelligence: mental operations (identify, deduce and induce, differentiate and classify . . .); and we provide programs in self-esteem.⁸ We also accept the development of lateral intelligence, creativity, taking multiple approaches to solving problems . . .⁹ We integrate in all levels and subjects the notion of cooperative learning. With the *Hara Project*, we want to provide an education that initiates the ability to ask oneself about one’s own life, to find horizons of meaning, to be able to choose and clarify one’s own values, to be discriminating and freely decide one’s own answers . . . a whole educational field that refers to the development of autonomous people in a complex and multi-referential society. This dimension of the person, in which it is urgent to educate, frees us from projects, content, programs, quality assessment processes and even from campaigns and value plans. This dimension of interiority, which is the profound sphere of the human being, transcends self (goes beyond) and constitutes the core of meaningful existence.

Our own experience tells us that we are capable of asking ourselves about the meaning of our life, of our actions, of our desires. A meaning that affects us deeply when we live the experiences of love, of death, of the reality in which we exist and of the world. All our vital experience configures a world of values and meanings, of choices and ideals that energize our life from the deepest, transcending the bodily and psychic reality that we are.

This experience of our existence is revealed to us as a question about ourselves: is the human being a limited being in search of happiness? It is revealed to us in the tension between withdrawal – closing in on ourselves – and unfolding – opening ourselves to a transcendent interiority of the here and now. Interiority constitutes what we can call, without any misgivings whatsoever, the spiritual capacity of the person; a capacity that presents itself to us as an invitation or a proposal to enter, to take the risk of launching oneself into a silence, into a mystery; a spiritual capacity that is a path with someone who accompanies us on the path – which they have already traversed – in the sense of initiation and who re-does it at our side.

Spirituality is an existential experience, that which is lived inwardly: to recognize oneself in one's own experience. Spirituality becomes our capacity to experience the deepest part of ourselves: our ultimate motivations, the passions that animate us, our most intimate ideals. Spiritual capacity is the opposite of living in an inconsistent, empty, and automatic way. Any person who lives their existence with depth and quality, who consciously motivates their life, who inspires their behavior in ideals, who shapes their values and configures the horizon of their being . . . that person lives their spiritual capacity. Any person who becomes aware of, comes into contact with, and relates to the deepest and most immaterial realities . . . that person lives his/ her spiritual capacity.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify some misunderstandings that may have arisen from what has been said so far. The first point consists in considering that interiority is something hidden and concealed, difficult to access. This misunderstanding places interiority in some dimension outside the body, the psychic life or the realm of emotions, as if to access it we had to make everything else disappear. In reality, it is quite the opposite. The path to interiority, as a spiritual capacity, passes through awareness of the body, thoughts, emotions, and feelings.

The second misunderstanding lies in believing that educating in interiority requires specific, difficult, and complicated techniques and strategies. In reality, it is a matter of recovering paths that we had forgotten. We educate in interiority when we ask questions about reading comprehension and when we reflect on a problem in mathematics. We educate in interiority when we deal with self-esteem in tutoring and when we work on body coordination in a sport. We educate in interiority when we analyze the meaning of a poem and when we are in laboratory practice. Perhaps, the only thing that education in interiority requires of us is, on the one hand, to be aware of it and, on the other hand, to recover the practices to initiate the spiritual capacity.

A third misunderstanding arises from the fact of not taking into account the principle of “simultaneous pedagogy,” i.e., the fact of working on the different elements of the person to access interiority (body, relaxation, emotions, transcendence . . .) does not mean that these different levels have to be progressively crossed to reach transcendence or deeper levels of

interiority. Some people, by performing an exercise that in itself has not been specifically programmed for it, can immediately access the spiritual or transcendent level.

On the other hand, it could easily be understood that working on interiority means “bringing something out,” “making it emerge,” “coming to the surface.” It is rather a matter of making it vibrate, of moving it, of “touching hearts” . . . Otherwise, the very roots of interiority could dry up, like a plant with its roots in the air.

We summarize education of interiority through the following table:

I N T E R I O R I T Y	LOGICAL INTELLIGENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognition: mental operations • Learning to learn • Subject matter techniques and strategies • Programs of educational innovation: Optimis, IDEAL, IRATI, Cooperative Learning, ARPA, • Study techniques • . . .
	LATERAL CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic creation: plastics, literature . . . • Activities that require creativity: sports, hiking, social commitments • Programs: CREA, Cooperative Learning • . . .
	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of emotions • Regulation of the intensity of emotions • Emotional Triangle: physical level – conduct – a thought level • Interpersonal emotions • Tutoring • Active and Passive Meditation • Programs: CREA, Cooperative Learning • . . .
	SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and Passive Meditation • Silence • 4 basic learnings (<i>limitation, gratitude, conscience, and human dignity</i>) • Values proposition • Opening to transcendence • Personal encounter with the God of Jesus of Nazareth • . . .

4. Project Content

In the *Hara Project* we propose, without pretending to exhaust possibilities, the following essential content for education in interiority: corporeal (body) work, emotional integration, silence, and openness to transcendence.

Corporeal (Body) Work: The word interiority carries in itself the idea of something non-visible, hidden, difficult to reach and, of course, if not alien to the corporeal (body), at least distant and to a certain extent opposed to it. Mastering the body, controlling the senses, subjugating the passions have been expressions that, until not so long ago, formed an inherent part of the spiritual path.

This dualistic conception of the person has meant that over the centuries the body, although necessary, has been considered an obstacle to the development of the person and to the encounter with the transcendent. This has not been the case in Eastern traditions, where the body is considered not only a vehicle of growth, but growth in itself within the unity of the human being.

Thanks to this thousand-year-old culture, breathing, relaxation, contemplation through the senses, awareness of movement, work with sensations – exteroceptive, proprioceptive and interoceptive – eutonia, meditation . . . are nowadays associated with the balance of the person. And in this sense, a large part of current psychotherapy uses these types of tools to promote the healing of so many individuals affected by a society that often appears sick and disturbed.

Therefore, working with different body techniques allows us to become aware of the most intimate part of ourselves, enables us to live with more serenity in the “here and now,” gives us the opportunity to communicate with greater warmth and quality with those around us and, above all, facilitates the encounter with the deepest self where the most significant and transcendental dialogues of the human being take place.

Emotional Integration: Through practices – personal reflection, dialogue and individualized accompaniment – the aim is to provide tools that allow self-knowledge, but also the discovery of the other’s individuality. Learning to express our feelings, our emotions. Learning to share our doubts, our fears. To value our potentialities, to accept our shortcomings . . . will be some of the aspects to work on in this section.

Silence: Silence is an indispensable space for inner monologue, listening, personal integration, and the encounter with the other/ Other. It is of fundamental importance to begin a discourse on emotional education and on the harmonious development of interiority with silence. Cultivating interiority, intimacy, and not so much internal stimulation, new persons are formed. This is also the great insight of the religious message.

Opening to Transcendence: Starting from the inner experience generated through practices – experiences of silence, aesthetic admiration, cultivation of the attitude of gratitude, curiosity, mystery, simple exercises of initiation to meditation – we try to lead girls and boys, adolescents and young people toward the opening to transcendence:

- transcendence with a lower case: to raise questions of substance and meaning, to accompany human experiences that escape the most immanent comprehension, where words are not enough to express them (falling in love, painful, aesthetic, solidarity, human experiences . . .).
- Transcendence with a capital letter: the experience of the Absolute that also cannot be explained, in the language of the mystics “more intimate to me than myself.” Our proclamation is of the God who “is in all and beyond all,” revealed as a Person by Jesus of Nazareth and lived in the community of the Church, the People of God.

5. Techniques and Tools

- Education in interiority supposes an eminently active methodology, in which the students are the protagonists, they make experience, they feel their interior that emerges. For it, we use techniques that can help us in this process. Some of the tools of education in interiority are:
- *Relaxation*, one of the techniques used as an aid to introspection and the beginning of meditation. Nowadays, relaxation and meditation courses proliferate everywhere. This tool used by all of us – educators and students – can become an enjoyable school of silence to help them go deeper into themselves and prepare them for transcendence.
- *Breathing*, linked to the perception of one’s own body, muscular resolution and progressive relaxation. In many cases, respiratory alterations are linked to psychomotor alterations. Breathing is a biophysiological phenomenon of which it is easy to become aware, if the will intervenes. Breathing education also helps to make the phonation process more efficient. It increases the elasticity of the vocal cords, and their correct functioning increases the agility and elasticity of the organs of articulation and of the resonance cavities. But, in addition, being aware of “how” and “when” we breathe helps us to relax in certain circumstances . . . Paying attention to our breathing helps us to deepen our silence . . . Learning to harmonize movement and breathing harmonizes us.
- *Creative visualizations*, a psychological technique to reach a desired emotional condition through imagining a concrete image. It offers a suitable channel for the unconscious to express itself and also helps to send positive and potentially rich messages to the interior and the best that is in our students. Relaxation combined with visualization becomes a path of meditation that can open adolescents to the meaning of meditative prayer.
- *Artistic expression*, where it is not about making beautiful works to exhibit them later. It is about finding different ways of expressing many things for which words fall short.
- *Music and voice work*, taking care of both aspects, are fundamental to create a pleasant atmosphere. From simple exercises, we can help children get in touch with their voice. Discovering the possible modulations of the voice, recognizing one’s own voice is a powerful exercise for teenagers and adults, an exercise that puts us in contact with our “inner music.”

- *Games*, which allow us to help the group to get rid of accumulated energy and prepare them to enter into a quieter work; games that will give us the clue of where the group relations are going: isolated kids, leaders, angry ones, etc.; games that, in a soft way, help everyone to be with everyone and no one is left out; in short, the game as a means to create a good atmosphere and to know each other and relate better without realizing it.
- *Other dynamics* and experiences that evoke different realities lived by the adolescent or young person, where there may be a protagonist who lives the experience in a certain way and a group that lives it in another way, allowing different reactions to emerge, which are commented on and allowed to flow.

6. Historical Development of the *Hara Project*

The origin of the project dates back to 2009 in the Bilbao Sector of the Lasallian District of ARLEP, which groups together the educational works of the autonomous communities of the Basque Country, Aragon and La Rioja. There, in some centers and in an experimental way, some practices of education in interiority were implemented and organized in the curriculum. Once the project was taken on by the whole District, during the 2010-2011 school year, a key step was taken. A group of five people from each of the six Sectors of the District began an intensive formation process. The objective was to set up groups of formators who would then act as a transmission belt for what they had experienced. The formative leadership of this first effort kept in touch with Elena Andrés, the true introducer of education in interiority in Spain.

The process of implementation in the District began in September 2011 with a two-day course for school directors and a three-day course for pastoral delegates. In the midst of the process of convergence of the different zones in a single District, a common project was introduced to be present in all of our centers. At this time, the testing and experimentation phase began with small sessions in curricular and community activities, both inside and outside school hours. The evaluation, which was continuous, was always very positive. All the staffs received a basic level of training in the *Hara Project*.

In this way, each school began, little by little and without making much noise, a project for the implementation of education in interiority. As a district option, all the educational works had to have a room dedicated and conceived for the project. In each center there was a teacher in charge of developing the project. With them an “intermediate formation” was carried out, thought at first to be repeated every two years, but eventually carried out annually at the request of the teachers themselves. At the pastoral level there was also a real revolution, not only, but to a great extent, because of the *Hara Project*. The District’s “Framework Document for Evangelization” was being released, where the person, vocation, and personalized processes were given special importance.

A “driving group” received the evaluations and requests to adjust the sessions to the reality of each school (the diversity of the subjects, the duration of the class periods, the number of hours of each subject in the weekly schedule, the possibility of having a suitable room . . .), keeping the project as intact as possible. A systematic review of all the sessions was carried out – there was concern that some sessions were not being held because they were too long or too short, the

“interiority notebook” had been put on the back burner – and some decisions were made. So, in July 2014, the *Hara 2.0 Project* was published through its own Internet platform, with the entire project computerized on a common server where all the files and all the music necessary for the sessions and workshops were hosted.

Parent groups were also started (at the beginning on a quarterly basis, but always with increasing demand and tending toward bi-weekly patterns), following the example of the Bilbao Sector that made a two-year training plan possible. A basic training module was introduced for new teachers who were starting to join school staffs. After much effort and investment, the project was consolidated.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, a formative effort was again made to have another good number of people with a high level of formation in education in interiority (not only from the *Hara Project*) and to reinforce the formation teams in each Sector. Thanks to the collaboration of Centro Universitario La Salle of Madrid, a scientific and systematic formation in the key elements of education in interiority was promoted, in the form of postgraduate courses and annual symposiums that develop concrete aspects of the project. This formation is open to students from outside the Lasallian environment.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, a new District team for education in interiority was formed, under the leadership of the District Delegation for Pastoral Ministry, with the objective of reflecting on the future of the project, as well as helping to follow up on it in each educational work. Beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year, this team works together with the teams that are developing the “New Learning Context,” where education in interiority is a fundamental key.

7. Interiority and Accompaniment

The *Hara Project* develops a high percentage of its sessions in physical education and tutoring classes, although the sessions are increasingly distributed in more subjects, with the healthy intention of involving as many teachers as possible in the project. The project remains fragmented if the support and accompaniment in the experiences does not go beyond the teacher’s dedication to the group/ class. For this reason, the development of the project of education in interiority is intimately related to the accompaniment of the students.

The role of the teacher becomes “witness to the student’s experience.” A witness is someone who is present and can narrate an event he or she witnessed. Therefore, a first and intuitive definition of accompaniment is to keep company. Author Lola Arrieta repeats an expression – “welcoming life, accompanying life,” which is the title of one of her works¹⁰ – which summarizes this task of accompaniment.

For us, Dolores Aleixandre’s definition in *Bautizados con fuego* [*Baptized with Fire*] is very evocative: “to accompany is to attend a long process of gestation of new life.” Also, the etymological meaning of “to accompany” finds its origin in the Latin *cum* (“with”) and *panis* (“bread”); and we could translate it as to eat of the same bread.¹¹ Sharing the same destiny, the same fate. In fact, the opposite of accompaniment is abandonment. If we do not accompany the students’ experiences, our context of interiority will remain a mere consumption of experiences

that will lead nowhere; and no matter how much we implement the *Hara Project*, genuine processes of personal maturation will not be generated.

A careful design of accompaniment (in all its variants) will be an ally of the *Hara Project*, of the pastoral aims, and of the advising goals; and such accompaniment will take on its full meaning from the context of education in interiority.

8. The Future: Educational Innovation as Key to Interiority

We have made it clear that education in interiority is not only the fruit of one project. It is a “context” that makes it possible to ask oneself questions, to integrate all the dimensions of the person, and to develop one’s own capacities. At present, having overcome the challenge of integrating interiority and pastoral care (both necessary and complementary), the most important challenge facing interiority projects is that of educational innovation. In schools, we have opted for active pedagogies as a methodology for the teaching-learning process (gamification, cooperative learning, projects-PBL, problems-ABP, the flipped classroom . . .); and we have put a digital device in the hands of students to enhance motivation and attention.

More concretely, current methodological options are moving in the direction of project-based learning (PBL), which means that the doors are definitely open to interdisciplinarity. The execution of a project has at least the following phases: (1) justification, (2) reception, (3) seminar, (4) project, and (5) closing. It is especially important to have the explicit presence of education in interiority in the justification phase, so that the competence of learning to learn is worked on. In addition to knowing how to do, we deal with knowing how to live together and knowing how to be.

Therefore, we have to look for the harmonious fit of the *Hara Project* in the curriculum beyond the sessions and workshops. We have a unique opportunity, since the “New Learning Context” that we have proposed for our Lasallian network of ministries has at its core the interiority of the person. There are two moments in which the *Hara Project* can (and should) be present: in the welcoming or activation phase and in the closing or recapitulation phase. It can also be present in the seminar or project phase, where relationship conflicts may arise in the base team itself, which may lead to the use of some type of tool learned in the *Hara Project*, especially in relation to the relationship with peers, leadership, stress management . . .

What motivates learning in a project must be an experience, if we want to educate in key competencies and if we want learning to be truly meaningful. These experiences may or may not be part of the *Hara Project*, but they must be in the key of education in interiority. There are a series of interiority routines – ranging from relaxation, breathing, massage, positive reinforcement, active listening, the “magic minute” and others – which should be in the “backpack of resources” of a teacher working in the paradigm of educational innovation in the context of interiority and which he/ she can use at any time. In exactly the same way, in the closing or recapitulation phase we can use routines of artistic expression and aesthetic taste in the product presented, the celebration of success or the management of failure, the narration of the experience in a personal way and many others.

It is clear that there may be sessions of the *Hara Project* that, because of their special fit in the course and in the project, can be taken out of the plan and carried out in the structure of a PBL, but always carefully respecting the coordination, the timing of the sessions and the maintenance of the integrity of the workshops. In any case, if we want education in interiority to have a presence in the curriculum, we must remind ourselves that practically any PBL can carry out its final phase as a service-learning project, so it will be easy to establish connections with the projects of education for justice, peace, and solidarity and to narrate the experience in a personal way, because this is the key to initiate processes.

Up to this moment, education in interiority, for the most part, has attracted the attention of those who want to recover the pastoral aspect of their Catholic schools and have seen in education in interiority their salvation plank. And, indeed, in many educational centers it has had that effect. However, this cannot be the only aim of education in interiority, which must walk with a firm step toward the world of educational innovation. Current developments in neuroscience applied to education prove us right in affirming that: first, the worst enemy of our brain is stress; and second, thought and emotion are intimately linked in our brain. Thus, we have to educate for interiority so that there can be learning, a real learning that makes us competent and autonomous for adult life.

That the *Hara Project* grows toward a sense of context for the whole school does not necessarily mean growing in the number of activities, but growing in understanding, purpose, and meaning of the educational action that is already being carried out. Education in interiority will always ensure a holistic vision of the student. For example, the management of community conflict can be a magnificent experience of mediation and encounter with the other or, on the contrary, a mere application of disciplinary regulations in a punitive tone. In an excessively normative environment, it is impossible for experiences of interiority to take place with a minimum of naturalness.

Finally, although the length of this paper prevents us from going deeper into the subject, the most important element of the *Hara Project* is the role of the educator. The figure of the teacher no longer fits the role of a mere transmitter of knowledge, since educational innovation places him/her as a mediator in a learning community. Does this situation make it possible for the teacher to be an educator of interiority? Certainly, yes. Evidently, yes. If the educational context is the framework of education in interiority and if there are explicit elements of interiority work with routines, sessions and workshops, it will be easier for students to achieve real, meaningful learning.

APPENDIX
LA SALLE PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY. DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES.
LONGITUDINAL VISION
DEVELOPMENT OF INTERIORITY

Phase	Didactic element	Description
Infancy	<i>Psychopedagogical frame of reference</i>	<p>The child's inner life is immersed in a world of sensation. The representation of the self is still in the process of construction.</p> <p>Infants connect with their bodies. We talk about the relationship between the exterior and the interior.</p> <p>We take special care of feelings, as elements of subjective perception of emotion, which give us back references of what we are.</p> <p>We recover and use external referents on characteristics of other people close to us (my family, my friends) to identify personal states.</p>
	<i>Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops awareness of one's own body, in play with others. ▪ Enjoys short moments of silence and simple thoughts. ▪ Has a sense of admiration for the beautiful: colors, music . . . ▪ Appreciates moments of relaxation.
	<i>Criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Differentiates her body while maintaining her egocentric stage: she as a reference. ⇒ Keep attention on an object, story . . . ⇒ Respond to the analogy: "This is like . . ." and feels free to express ⇒ In case of anger is able to reflect and return to calm. ⇒ Differentiate personal moods with respect to contextual situations ("I am happy; this makes me sad").

Phase	Didactic element	Description
Primary (First Cycle)	<i>Psychopedagogical frame of reference</i>	<p>The child opens up to his inner self. The principle of identity emerges around the representation of the self. The awareness of emotion is consolidated, in relation to relationships with others. Friendship emerges as a manifestation of the representation of the inner world. Consciousness of value. The concept of “being a person” is manifested in relationships, through personal reflection on values and social principles. Religious consciousness. The inner life of the person as a space of inner discovery.</p>
	<i>Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies his emotions. Approach and enjoyment of the aesthetic dimension. Enjoyment of nature and the environment. Experiences of gratitude. ▪ Becomes aware of his own body from its possibilities of relaxation, silence. ▪ Is aware of the body reality and how it generates moods. ▪ Is aware of the emotional state and wonders what he can do with it. ▪ Is aware of the needs of other people and is consistent with this perception. ▪ Understands that he/ she has to take care of him/herself and the reality around him/her. ▪ Recognizes and values beauty in its material expression and personality.
	<i>Criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Show ability to concentrate to follow more detailed instructions. ⇒ Able to inhibit his primary impulses. ⇒ Able to express his emotions through words, writing, music, plastic arts. ⇒ Recognize himself, his qualities and defects. ⇒ Analyze simple behavioral patterns and their repercussions in daily life. ⇒ Express and lives his appreciation of the reality that surrounds him. ⇒ Able to stop his activity when asked to do so. ⇒ Able to maintain moments of silence

Phase	Didactic element	Description
Primary (Second Cycle)	<i>Psychopedagogical frame of reference</i>	<p>The representation of the self is consolidated. Personal traits appear that differentiate the subjective self from external experiences.</p> <p>Friendships are reorganized on the basis of the principle of personal affinity.</p> <p>The consciousness of the self is affirmed on individual principles and values.</p> <p>Emotions regulate collective action. We feel part of a shared feeling.</p> <p>Spirituality becomes present from the incipient experience of the self, which participates in liturgical acts.</p> <p>Pastoral participation supports the recognition of individual identity.</p> <p>Social and civic awareness.</p>
	<i>Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved capacity for relaxation and silence for longer periods of time. ▪ Becomes more aware of her own and others' body reality. ▪ Improvement in the control of her primary impulses. ▪ Expresses and lives her appreciation of the reality that surrounds her.
	<i>Criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Is grateful and expresses appreciation frequently. ⇒ Able to pay attention and follow instructions in a systematic way. ⇒ Differentiate her emotional states and those of other peers. ⇒ Distinguish other people's feelings and is consistent with this perception. ⇒ Recognize in herself her qualities and defects. ⇒ Able to maintain moments of silence
Phase	Didactic element	Description
Secondary	<i>Psychopedagogical frame of reference</i>	<p>The interior of the person is defined as a space of identity.</p> <p>The psychic experience of "encounter with oneself" is born. The inner reality is constituted as a space of real personal growth.</p>

		<p>People learn to relate to each other, considering the inner identity as an element of reference, although it is still conditioned by physical grouping models. The interior begins to regulate preferences in personal decisions.</p>
	<i>Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He is curious and observant to what arouses his interest and concern. ▪ Contributes to create and maintain an atmosphere of peace and serenity. ▪ Discovers the existence of diverse emotional contents, explained from his own subjective perception. ▪ Values the existence of inner realities that favor social life and promote the disappearance of differences between people. ▪ Integrates individual values in collective action, as a principle of group identity.
	<i>Criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Know how to appreciate the power of silence as an opening to transcendence. ⇒ Concentrate in an environment conducive to it. ⇒ Maintain attention and interest in class topics, without distractions. ⇒ Differentiate the relevant from the irrelevant according to the situation. ⇒ Correct mistakes spontaneously. ⇒ Able to maintain silence and internalization in the activities. ⇒ Capable of astonishment, admiration . . . in front of the beautiful.
Phase	Didactic element	Description
Bachelor	<i>Psychopedagogical frame of reference</i>	<p>The representation of the world is built from the inner filter.</p> <p>Critical and reflective consciousness. The person becomes aware of her possibilities for personal change. The possibility of improvement emerges as a challenge that arises from the recognition of intimacy. Reflection is a means for growth. Critical awareness is a means for discernment.</p> <p>The sense of transcendence is included as an existential value and is incorporated into life as an</p>

		<p>element of reference in daily actions. The future appears on the existential horizon as a concern that emerges from personal identity.</p>
	<i>Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ She is active in the development of interiority in its Lasallian aspects: faith, fraternity (community), and service. ▪ She wants to deepen her self-knowledge and to acquire the capacity and the habit of metacognition and metabehavior. ▪ Accepts the challenge of making the decision to be herself, without cuts or fear (or error). School: Attention to the free and respectful participation of young people
	<i>Criteria</i>	<p>⇒ Know how to appreciate the power of silence as an opening towards transcendence. ⇒ Show attitudes of reflection and interest in the great subject of study that is life. ⇒ Able to talk to oneself about everything that goes on in one's mind (consciousness and interiorization). ⇒ Show oneself positively in relation to the possibility of expanding the field of interests for everything that is learning to live. School: To create an environment of mental discipline and reflective silence.</p>
Phase	Didactic element	Description
University	<i>Psychopedagogical frame of reference</i>	<p>Personal and spiritual transcendence is integrated as a dimension of the personality. The person is realized from within. External agents modulate the personality, but do not determine it. Critical and reflective consciousness is based on the principle of identity. The democratic and social conscience is combined with the sense of belonging to the community (“to be part of a common project without undermining personal identity”). People begin their journey as role models and as teachers of the younger ones. Support for the construction of the inner life of others.</p>

		Identity and freedom. Duality is configured as a singular element of personal richness. Interiority is the path to discernment.
	<i>Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People show their social conscience and their determined spirit to contribute positively to human development. ▪ Happiness shows examples of the internal construction of the adult “I” self. ▪ The taste for the aesthetic and artistic sense of the representation of the world is a means of external expression of an inner state. ▪ The religious experience gives a complement of fullness and free choice to the person. The Christian experience, of faith, as a possibility of constant and vital growth.
	<i>Criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Able to discern the ultimate meaning of one's actions, decisions and the consequences of one's actions. ⇒ Recognize those elements of interiority that can be used for the betterment of the world and contribute to the positive realization of others. ⇒ Contribute social value from the individual being. To generate opportunities for the solution of inequalities and barriers to the growth and development of individuals. ⇒ To be teachers in the construction of free and own identities. To serve as support in the process of change and positive personal transformation of those who need it most. ⇒ Take leadership attitudes toward change and personal improvement of individuals in a community.

Bibliography

- AA.VV. *La interioridad: un paradigma emergente* (Madrid: PPC, 2004).
- Andrés, E. *La educación de la interioridad. Una propuesta para Secundaria y Bachillerato* (Madrid: CCS, 2009).
- Bautista, J. M. [coord.]. *10 palabras clave en la pastoral con jóvenes* (Navarra: Verbo Divino, 2008).
- Cautela, J., & J. Groden. *Técnicas de relajación para adultos, niños y educación especial* (Barcelona: Martínez Roca, 2002).
- Dürkheim, K. G. *Hara, centro vital del hombre* (Bilbao: Mensajero, 1987).
- Elzo, J. *Los jóvenes y la felicidad* (Madrid: PPC, 2006).
- Esteban Garcés, C., & E. Andrés Suárez. *La interioridad como paradigma educativo* (Boadilla del Monte, Madrid: PPC, 2017).
- Esteban Garcés, C., & E. Andrés Suárez. *La interioridad como oportunidad educativa: algunos fundamentos y buenas prácticas* (Madrid: PPC, 2018).
- Esteve, H., R. Galve, & L. Ylla. *Estar en la escuela: pedagogía e interioridad* (Madrid: PPC, 2016).
- Fuster, V., & L. Rojas Marcos. *Corazón y mente. Claves para el bienestar físico y emocional* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2008).
- Gardner, H. *Inteligencias múltiples* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1995).
- Hernández, V., & P. Rodríguez. *La expresión corporal con adolescentes* (Madrid: CCS, 2000).
- Kolvenbach, P. H. *Decir al "indecible." Estudios sobre los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio* (Bilbao: Sal Terrae-Mensajero, 1999).
- Lantieri, L. *Inteligencia emocional infantil y juvenil. Ejercicios para cultivar la fortaleza interior en niños y jóvenes* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2009).
- López González, L., J. M. Bautista Guadalupe, & F. Torralba. *Maestros del corazón: hacia una pedagogía de la interioridad* (Madrid: Wolters Kluwer, 2014).
- Melloni, J. *Hacia un tiempo de síntesis* (Barcelona: Fragmenta Editorial, 2011).
- Otón Catalán, J. *El inconsciente ¿morada de Dios?* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2000).

Otón Catalán, J. *Interioridad y espiritualidad* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2018).

Peno, Ó. *Acompañar, el acompañamiento pastoral a los adolescentes en la escuela* (Madrid: PPC, 2008).

Piera Gomar, M. *La sesión pastoral de interioridad: claves y propuestas para alumnos, profesores y familias*. Boadilla del Monte (Madrid: PPC, 2014).

Rubia, F. *La conexión divina: la experiencia mística y la neurobiología* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2002).

Endnotes

1. This presentation on the *HARA Project* recognizes the great work realized by Lasallians in Spain and Portugal for its school planning over the past number of years. The project prioritizes the development of skills in the areas of: self-esteem; the authentic expression of lived experiences and feelings; empathy, admiration, quiet and silence; a desire for living genuinely; and gratitude, sincerity, and reflection. Brother Jesús Félix Martínez, the auxiliary visitor/provincial of ARLEP and director of its network of educational works, is thanked for making this text available for publication in the *AXIS* journal.

2. ARLEP, the Lasallian District of Spain and Portugal, is one of the geographical units of animation and government of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

3. Frances M. Sweeney, who serves as the vice president for mission at Saint Mary's College of California, earned her doctorate in Hispanic linguistics from the University of Texas.

4. While also translated as “womb” or “stomach” or “belly,” the Japanese word *hara*, in a holistic sense and in Eastern martial arts traditions, actually refers to a particular energy field of the body; and at a deeper level, the word is understood to suggest one's true nature, i.e., who one truly is as a human being.

5. *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*, translated by Richard Arandez FSC and edited by Augustine Loes FSC and Francis Huether FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994), #198.

6. Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950).

7. Cf. Jacques Delors, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, 1996).

8. In the Lasallian District of ARLEP (Spain and Portugal), this early stimulation (development) project is called “Ulysses” (*Ulises*).

9. The project to promote creativity is called “Create” (*Crea*).

10. Cf. Lola Arrieta, *Acoger la vida, acompañandola la vida* (Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa, 1999).

11. Cf. Dolores Aleixandre, *Bautizados con fuego* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1997).