



BROTHER ANDREW GONZALEZ'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY THROUGH A RECONSTRUCTIONIST LENS: A PHILIPPINE LASALLIAN INTERPRETATION

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This paper argues that Brother Andrew Gonzalez articulates a distinctively Philippine and Lasallian philosophy of educational reconstruction. His educational thought can be interpreted as Reconstructionist because it understands education as an instrument of social transformation, assigns schools responsibility for examining social injustice, and connects curriculum and institutional mission with the construction of a more human future. The paper does not claim that Gonzalez formally identified himself as a Reconstructionist philosopher. Rather, it uses seven interrelated criteria derived principally from George C., Theodore Brameld, and Paulo Freire: social transformation, education as an instrument of change, critical consciousness, democratic participation, curriculum reform, future orientation, and social responsibility. Gonzalez reformulates these concerns through a threefold hermeneutics of retrieval, the present, and the potential or future. Retrieval critically appropriates the cultural and historical resources of Philippine society; interpretation of the present confronts structural inequality and institutional responsibility; and future-oriented hermeneutics directs values, curricula, research, and reform toward a preferred social order. Gonzalez further integrates this movement with the Lasallian commitments to faith, zeal for others, communion in mission, human dignity, and integral human development. His contribution therefore lies not in reproducing Western Reconstructionism but in developing a culturally grounded, historically conscious, institutionally embodied, and religiously informed philosophy of Philippine education. Methodologically, the study uses a criterion-guided philosophical interpretation of Gonzalez's educational texts and concludes by proposing comparative case-study, mixed-method, longitudinal, and participatory research capable of examining the framework across educational sectors. This extension clarifies the article's international relevance and its implications for curriculum, professional practice, leadership, and institutional evaluation.

Keywords: *Lasallian education, reconstructionism, Philippine philosophy of education, social transformation, hermeneutics*

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Societies continually confront conditions that require critical evaluation and responsible transformation. The change is intended to make life easier for every individual. The challenge for every individual is how to respond in the near future. This approach is the philosophy of Reconstructionism, which addresses two important challenges: first, for society to be effective, it must allow the reconstruction or change of any structure; second, education must be used as an effective tool for reconstruction or change. Its main concern is the broad social and cultural context on which it all depends. Now and then, our society is faced with bewildering concerns about poverty, race, war, ecological destruction, and the limits of new technological breakthroughs. Ideas and values of every religion and philosophical system are no longer as viable as before. Reconstructionism has existed throughout human history. However, George Counts, the most influential figure, believes that educators must envision the prospects for radical social change and implement those projections. This process in society is the dream of every individual for peaceful unity, born out of respect for individual values that coincide with freedom and social change. The reconstructionist believes in critically analyzing and reconstructing an integral part of social values.

Education has been a process that has always been part of society. In nineteenth-century education, the school generally became a rigid system. Students were subjected to discipline, and it was compulsory to master the lessons, so their success depended on their school records. It was at school that the destiny of students was drawn out. In the nineteenth century, the school accumulated prestige and became a powerful institution. On the contrary, St. John Baptist De La Salle, a seventeenth-century educational innovator, made instruction the center of school operations. He claimed that educational

institutions must be student-centered; in this direction, the students must master the lesson with the accompaniment of the teachers.

Education is presumed to be a primary means of understanding society because it seeks more valid approaches to knowledge and human development. In this regard, Alvin Toffler emphasized the importance of futurism in education to prevent what he termed future shock. According to Toffler (1971), educational systems must develop “successive, alternative images of the future” to anticipate changes in occupations, family structures, ethical issues, technologies, and organizational systems (p. 201).

There are problems that are beyond our control. The future lies ahead of us. Humanity can intervene to prevent a less desirable setback in the future. To picture future reality enhances our understanding and gives us a better grasp of the future. So, Toffler believes that making such assumptions, defining them, debating them, and systematizing them can help people survive such disasters. Our initiative is that no one can claim a monopoly on the truth; truth can be observed. There have been too many assumptions that create opportunities for undesirable outcomes to intervene.

The educational system proposed in this study reflects Toffler’s “alternative images of the future,” and this approach is not wrong. The vertical alignment in the emphasis on globalization nowadays is challenging and a pivot for every school institution. The world understands continuity and unity across the expanse of governmental duties. Thus, we are tasked with constructing a minimal but substantive system in education that effectively confronts the challenge of future educational commitments, as Toffler claims that industrial education is reflected



in today's educational system. The structure of "assembling masses of students (raw material) to be processed by teachers (workers) in a centrally located school (factory)" was a stroke of industrial genius. Regrettably, our conceptions of today have not revealed anything truly new, as people remain under the direct command of a place called authority. In the same manner, Johnson & Thane observe (1998, p. 31) that it is "not only the evident physical shortcomings of old age that had to be feared but also the social liabilities that such negative attributes entailed," and the idea of negative possibilities in the human scenario is likely to happen. The social scene results from "social liabilities" that society has never directly examined. Society must insist that the change is the result of past accountability. Remodeling an educational approach with an emphasis on well-being and learning can result in a new paradigm. (Fullan, 2021). For Thomas Kuhn (1962), the paradigm must present an alternative to the old failing system.

The super-education of Toffler is John Dewey's "progressive measures," which made a remarkable shift from the "here-and-now" and oriented toward the future. In a clearer position for Hussey and Smith (2010, p. 57), it stands that "amidst all this change and in a situation where we cannot readily develop operational competence in all that is available, we must ensure that we are aware of what might be possible, always accepting that further changes will render what we know provisional," and similarly stands for committing to and preparing for the global scenario of social change. For this process to take place, however, every academic institution or educational system of any country permits the recognition of desires and values. It enables us to question any value without undermining a wholesale loss of identity and is not constituted based on the affirmation of a single value, desire, or belief. In addition, Anthony Giddens (1990, p. 8) argues that

industrial work had degrading consequences, subjecting many human beings to the discipline of dull, repetitive labor, a consequent reflection of strong authoritarian creation in which the human conditions are most vulnerable. Thus, creating "super-education" permits an individual to adopt change and may revisit her values in light of new knowledge, because one must have a paradigm from which to critique (i.e., accepting pluralism of the world) that is not grounded solely in nationality. This attitude is oriented toward the future. Thus, according to Toffler (1971, p. 201), men "learn to anticipate the direction and rate of change" because any kind of change can be both undesirable and desirable. The emphasis on becoming recalls the philosophy of Heraclitus, particularly the view that reality is characterized by continual change. The word "becoming" foresees the world. The change is becoming a reality.

Brother Andrew Gonzalez (2003, p. 8), a Lasallian educator, gives a systematic outlook and considers an academic institution a vital instrument in social change. He aims to respond to future education by introducing reforms through the school's curriculum. It is the importance of the school curriculum that will eventually form productive individuals. The curriculum sets the goals for every individual to internalize the ideal society. For him, the philosophy of education should start with a 'mission statement' or 'mission-vision' that highlights the importance of promoting values in every school system. Thus, the educational process through institutions should help individuals mature. There is also a need to pass down cultural traditions that embody the nation's rich heritage and to provide children with training in skills and intellectual abilities to prepare them for society; this is, in some way, the school's internal commitment.



RECONSTRUCTIONISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Reconstructionism regards the school not merely as an institution for transmitting inherited knowledge but as an active participant in the interpretation and transformation of society. The original statement, "Reconstructionism's philosophy is that every individual makes life better than it was," expresses the ethical aspiration of the tradition but fails to adequately explain its educational and philosophical grounds. A clearer account must show how Reconstructionism understands society, education, knowledge, curriculum, teachers, learners, and responsibility. In this study, the Reconstructionist framework is organized around seven interconnected principles: social transformation, education as an instrument of change, critical consciousness, democratic participation, curriculum reform, future orientation, and social responsibility. These principles are analytical criteria, not labels imposed in advance upon Gonzalez. They indicate what his texts must demonstrate for the Reconstructionist interpretation to be persuasive.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The first principle is the conviction that existing social arrangements are neither permanent nor immune from criticism. Institutions are historically formed and may be reconstructed when they perpetuate poverty, exclusion, discrimination, violence, or other forms of human suffering. Reconstructionism does not identify change itself with progress. Transformation becomes educationally and morally meaningful only when it is guided by a defensible vision of a more democratic, equitable, peaceful, and humane social order. The learner is consequently formed not only to accommodate existing

structures but also to judge whether those structures serve human dignity and the common good.

Counts (1978) challenged educators to confront concrete social conditions rather than rely on an abstract faith that schooling automatically cures society's ills. The growth of organized education had not by itself eliminated poverty, political corruption, racial hatred, class conflict, or war. Education becomes socially consequential when teachers and institutions examine these realities and accept responsibility for directing change. Brameld (1956, 1965) gave this position a systematic cultural and philosophical form. For him, the criticism of social, economic, and political structures should lead to constructive proposals for a new social order. Philosophy therefore connects with real problems and informs action upon values. Social transformation, on this account, is not an accidental benefit of schooling; it is one of education's central purposes.

EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE

The second principle concerns the social function of education. Schools are not neutral because they select knowledge, organize relationships, distribute opportunities, and communicate values. They also form expectations about society. Education may reproduce inherited arrangements, or it may enable learners to examine and transform them. Counts does not suggest that schools can reconstruct society by themselves. His stronger point is that schools can provide intellectual preparation, ethical orientation, public imagination, and leadership for collective change. Teaching is thus a socially consequential vocation, while institutional decisions concerning access, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment embody judgments about the kind of society education should serve.



Brameld likewise regards schools as institutions of personal and cultural transformation. Controversial public problems should not be excluded from learning merely because they are difficult. Students must encounter evidence, competing interpretations, reasoned disagreement, and possibilities for common action. Education, in this Reconstructionist sense, is not a mechanical remedy but an organized process through which learners acquire the knowledge, habits of judgment, moral commitments, and participatory capacities required for informed social action. This principle makes Gonzalez's treatment of the mission statement philosophically important: the mission statement should connect institutional identity to curriculum, research, governance, community engagement, and graduate formation rather than function as ceremonial language.

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The third principle is critical consciousness. Freire (1973) clarifies how education may reproduce domination or contribute to liberation. His criticism of the banking model concerns a relationship in which teachers are treated as possessors of knowledge and students as passive recipients. Such an arrangement trains learners to receive established interpretations rather than question the historical and social forces shaping experience. Problem-posing education offers an alternative by beginning with realities meaningful to learners and making them objects of shared inquiry. Learners identify contradictions, ask whose interests are served, and imagine alternatives. Critical consciousness is therefore more than awareness that problems exist; it is the capacity to understand how apparently natural conditions were historically produced and how collective action may alter them.

Freire's concept of praxis joins reflection and action. Reflection without action can become verbalism, while action without critical reflection can become unprincipled activism. Transformative education must connect interpretation with responsible practice. This criterion is essential in reading Gonzalez. References to poverty, structural injustice, colonial history, cultural identity, and unequal educational opportunities must not remain mere descriptions. The analysis must show how his educational philosophy enables institutions and learners to interpret these realities, evaluate them through moral principles, and formulate appropriate action. Gonzalez's hermeneutics of the present therefore engages in dialogue with critical consciousness while remaining grounded in Philippine institutional life and Lasallian moral discernment.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

The fourth principle is democratic participation. Reconstructionism cannot consistently seek a democratic society through wholly authoritarian educational practices. Learners who are expected to participate responsibly in social reconstruction must experience inquiry, deliberation, cooperation, and shared responsibility within education. Counts emphasizes educational leadership toward public purposes, while Brameld places democracy and reasoned debate at the center of cultural reconstruction. Freire deepens this principle through dialogue: teachers and learners become participants in inquiry about a world they seek to understand and transform. Dialogue does not erase the teacher's competence or responsibility. It prevents authority from becoming domination by recognizing learners as individuals capable of interpretation, judgment, and action.



Democratic participation includes freedom of inquiry, precise communication, respectful disagreement, cooperation, evidence-based judgment, and collective decision-making. In Gonzalez's Lasallian context, these practices relate to the school as a community and to communion in mission. Teachers, students, administrators, families, alumni, researchers, religious communities, and partner communities share differentiated but real responsibility for education. Participation also guards against social reconstruction becoming a project imposed upon communities without their voices. The people most affected by educational and social problems should participate in naming those problems and in evaluating the proposed responses.

CURRICULUM REFORM

The fifth principle is curriculum reform. Reconstructionism rejects a curriculum confined to the uncritical transmission of settled content. Historical, cultural, economic, technological, ecological, political, and ethical problems should become contexts in which disciplinary learning acquires public significance. Learners investigate social questions, examine evidence, compare interpretations, test values, and design responsible responses. Yet Reconstructionism is not simply about engaging in activity for its own sake. Brameld insists that educational activity requires criteria explaining what it is for. Curriculum reform must therefore be guided by explicit commitments such as human dignity, justice, democracy, equality, peace, solidarity, and responsibility.

This criterion illuminates Gonzalez's emphasis on mission statements and philosophies of education. A mission statement names the institution's view of the person, society,

knowledge, value, and the future. Curriculum translates those commitments into organized educational experience. If a school declares service to marginalized communities while its curriculum ignores structural inequality, or if it praises critical thinking while allowing no serious inquiry into contemporary problems, the mission remains disconnected from practice. For Gonzalez, philosophy should inform teaching, research, student formation, management, and institutional policy. The reconstruction of education is therefore both curricular and organizational.

FUTURE ORIENTATION

The sixth principle is an orientation toward the future. Reconstructionism begins with present problems but refuses to assume that present conditions define the limits of possibility. It asks what kind of society education should help construct and what capacities students need to participate in that work. Future orientation includes anticipation, ethical imagination, planning, institutional experimentation, and the formulation of alternatives. Learners and institutions should distinguish merely probable futures from morally desirable ones and assess technology, work, governance, and cultural change according to their consequences for human dignity and community.

Toffler's (1971) call for alternative images of the future helps clarify the anticipatory dimension, but Gonzalez gives it a more explicitly institutional and moral direction. Philippine educational institutions cannot determine every future condition, yet they can analyze emerging possibilities and prepare learners to respond critically. The future is not something to which education merely adjusts. It is a social horizon that educational communities help



construct. Gonzalez's attention to scientific research, technology, lifelong learning, flexibility, internationalization, critical thinking, and the university as a producer rather than a consumer of knowledge becomes Reconstructionist when these capacities are directed toward national development and a more human social order.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The seventh principle is social responsibility. Critical understanding remains educationally incomplete when it does not lead to responsibility for others and for the common good. Education should form individuals who can connect personal development and professional competence with participation in community life. Counts associates leadership with the willingness to confront public problems. Brameld requires that values be transformed into intelligent action. Freire understands liberation as a participatory process rather than a gift bestowed upon passive recipients. The Reconstructionist learner is thus not simply a person who understands society but a person prepared to participate responsibly in its improvement.

This principle provides an important point of convergence with Lasallian education. Faith, zeal for service, and communion in mission link intellectual formation with solidarity, compassion, human dignity, and responsibility toward the poor and excluded communities. The convergence should not be confused with identity. Reconstructionism usually justifies reform through democratic criticism and social welfare, whereas Gonzalez's Lasallian framework also understands transformation as a response to God, the Gospel, and the integral vocation of the human person. Lasallian education becomes the theological and institutional foundation through

which Gonzalez appropriates and transforms Reconstructionist educational aims.

ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS AND METHODOLOGICAL POSITION

Counts, Brameld, and Freire make complementary but non-identical contributions. Counts emphasizes the public responsibility of schools and teachers in a social crisis. Brameld systematizes Reconstructionism as democratic cultural transformation. Freire (1970/1973) explains how learners become critically conscious participants through dialogue, problem-posing education, and praxis. Together, their work yields seven questions for the analysis of Gonzalez: Does education have an explicit transformative purpose? Are institutions understood as agents of change? Does learning cultivate critical consciousness regarding Philippine realities? Does education foster democratic and communal participation? Do mission and philosophy produce curricular and institutional reform? Does historical interpretation open a morally evaluated future? Does education form socially responsible individuals?

This paper does not claim that Brother Andrew Gonzalez formally identified himself as a Reconstructionist philosopher. It investigates the extent to which his writings display a coherent Reconstructionist orientation while also differing from classical formulations. Gonzalez should be interpreted through primary evidence from his account of mission statements, educational philosophy, cultural retrieval, present realities, and future possibilities. His thought is not reduced to a Philippine repetition of Counts, Brameld, or Freire. He brings comparable transformative concerns into dialogue with colonial history, cultural and linguistic plurality, Catholic education, institutional mission, and



the Lasallian vocation. The resulting philosophy is best described as a Philippine Lasallian formulation of educational reconstruction.

THE PHILIPPINE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION BASED ON THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Gonzalez considers the “process of indigenizing” educational philosophy by tracing concepts and principles embedded in Philippine culture. This body of knowledge provides a distinctly Philippine basis for interpreting and transforming socio-political conditions. He proposes an interconnected framework for formulating the philosophy and mission statements of educational institutions (Gonzalez, 2003, p. 14).

The philosophy of education is based on the hermeneutics of retrieving the past (or distant past) in Filipino heritage. This perspective refers to the pre-Hispanic educational system, the earliest community lifestyles, traditions, beliefs, values, customs, or strong socially approved norms and practices. This activity is the planting of rice by both men and women. The circumcision of a young boy, the boy’s engagement in hunting to signify his warrior spirit by bringing the head of the enemy as a war trophy, and the tribe’s festivities in harvest, death, old age, and the rituals to the ancestors. In the girl, it is her participation in women’s labor and work and her role in motherhood. In this kind of community, education is purely the handing down of traditions, beliefs, values, customs, and approved behavioral patterns according to the community’s norms, as well as the means of learning through actual participation (Gonzalez, 2003, p. 19).

The learning tradition and education integration sustain and give meaning to community members’ lives. The traditional wisdom of the elders forms the basis of education, and the limitations of the existing lifestyle serve as a strong basis for the community paradigm. The beliefs of Bathala and Anitos constitute spiritual significance in the community. The values of individuals are a general reflection of the community’s importance, including not violating the taboos and active participation in social and spiritual practices. This education of the past emphasizes the richness of community-rich practices. For Gonzalez, this education is a “treasure trove for the humanities” and the richness of natural practices like indigenous medicine and the local ingenuity of technology to make the community survive. Thus, education aims to promote consciousness in every community member or barangay.

Emerita Quito (1990, p. 78) emphasized that for any education to succeed, it should be a nationalistic-oriented education that traces the historical, behavioral, and axiological contexts. Historically, our ancestors were under Spanish rule for more than 300 years, which resulted in a “subservience” attitude among Filipinos, characterized by a master-slave dynamic. She adds that culture is the first expression of a nation, the total of people’s past, and is untouched by any foreign influences.

As hermeneutics of retrieval emphasizes, the immediate past is the people’s beliefs in God, man, and society. It is about the Filipino’s linguistic artifacts, or folklore, that can be retrieved based on the available documents or proofs of history. This process refers to the Spanish, American, and other factors that developed Filipino culture. For Gonzalez, the available sources “can be both positively and negatively critiqued” (2003, p. 29). The immediate past describes Filipino beliefs



in Bathala, which were later identified as the Christian God. This concept was introduced during the presence of Spanish religious exploration. Later, the Americans emphasized that God sent his beloved Son to save mankind from sins. For every Filipino, the God of the Christians is forgiving, making their lives more meaningful in the face of individual problems. This love of God, neighbor, and other internalized virtues obliges one to serve one's nation for the common good. The nation depends on virtuous citizens who embody a Christian perspective. The Filipino way of life—*pakikipagkapwa*, *pagmamahal sa bayan*, and *pagmamalasakit*—was common and consciously adopted. So, the old values and virtues continued as they integrated a whole new religious character, which would describe the philosophy of the past.

According to Gonzalez, emphasizing the past or the return to studying history would help acquaint the citizens or the students with the traditionally accepted values, beliefs, and practices. For him, “values are caught, not taught,” so the role models of these values must be exemplified specifically in the school environment.

The hermeneutics of the present are the implications of day-to-day scenarios or the emphasis on the school setting. This section is a call to examine the global scene and society's present realities or issues.

The social injustices in a vivid picture should always emphasize the moral development of all stakeholders. In the case of “structural injustices,” according to Gonzalez, the school must set them aside as a means of social action. Empowerment brings social awareness and evaluates social order through the school system. Such empowerment means giving rise to traditional values, gender equality, awareness, equality, and respect for human rights. This process is considered the

“provision of affirmative policies” in all school systems. For Gonzalez, it is equalizing and extending privileges and positions to all social classes. So, school should be the fountain of social awareness and will lead to social responsibility for any specific concerns. The philosophy here shows that all human beings are created equal, and society must fully take responsibility for protecting this measure.

The last type of hermeneutics is geared toward the future. God, man, and society will be of primary importance in the discussion. The approved values are examined, and all-important values will be characterized. For Gonzalez, the philosophy of the future is entirely aspirational in character and futuristic in its interpretation. This approach is an integral part of the planning process for the future of the educational system. The emphasis is on futuristic concepts and principles that serve as the working philosophy. For Toffler, assumptions about jobs, professions, and vocations define the future. In this scenario, we need deliberate and carefully planned interventions to maintain social conditions through concrete reforms.

The Philippines, for example, is a ‘knowledge economy’ and will become a culture of science and technology in the twenty-first century. This involves “reengineering or restructuring” and “searching for a new instrument of delivery” in the higher education system. The positive view of the future is the sustenance of peace, internationalization of education, globalization of universities, continuing education, and the expected challenges and changes in the educational landscape. For Gonzalez, these values will include self-learning, lifelong reading habits, critical thinking, openness to change, flexibility, and even humility. So, the university will equip its research functions to create a discovery trend. He emphasized that the university should not be



a knowledge consumer but a producer. The solid core of scholars is crucial to the hermeneutics of the future. They are immediately the core of the university system, aspiring to innovations for social restructuring.

Gonzalez claimed that an ideal educational institution is the center of social consciousness. Society has clearly shown human ingenuity, like the discovery of science and technology. It also shows the major human conditions like poverty, injustice, inequality, and other major social problems. Humans, as we are, still suffer from as many ills as they always have. It offers us endurance as the call of our faith or resignation as the call of our weakness. What we need in our democratic society is not a blasphemous leader but peace, stability, law, order, and relief from poverty and disease. And if there is a solution to human problems, there is no tragedy.

GONZALEZ AND RECONSTRUCTIONISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Reconstructionism's philosophy is that every individual makes life better than it was. Gonzalez emphasizes the role of an educational institution as the primary holder of social capital and the agent of change. Education oriented toward raising social consciousness would enable individuals to be an end, not a means. Our so-called social and cultural conditions best manifest in human activity. Hence, the philosophy of reconstructionism signifies the individual's "irrational factors in life" to make them conscious and "release," according to Theodore Brameld (1965, p. 39).

The "reality," "knowledge," and "value" are centered on the philosophical beliefs of reconstructionism. Therefore, education is culturally attached to it. The curriculum must consider social issues.

Gonzalez's proposal and the Reconstructionist perspective emphasize that educational planning must be future-oriented. Every student shares a concern about the historical vis-à-vis the contemporary world. The analysis of problems and awareness penetrates the sensitivity of social discourse. It seeks details and aims to dismantle cultural structures.

The first formulation of Reconstructionist educational theory is social self-realization, which asks, "For what goals shall we learn?" It emphasizes participation as an educational experience and values community activity, belonging, and appreciation. Individuals share in the life of the social environment, while educational activities provide opportunities for planning and cooperation.

Each school is challenged to ensure that no component of social self-realization is neglected and that its elements remain mutually reinforcing. Social consensus is another important Reconstructionist formulation. It emphasizes learning through evidence, free and precise communication, majority agreement, informed action, and social dynamism.

De La Salle University is among the institutions that call for a total overhaul of its system. As the founder's spirit, St. John Baptist de La Salle embodies "a suitable Christian education to youth." At the same time, it seeks to inculcate in male and female students the values of Religio, Mores, and Cultura. The preparation of the youth is for the "larger community of the country and the Church" and for the "process of social transformation." This component of the La Salle institution, the system, reflects Gospel values, as Gonzalez validly captures its essence through innovative management.





According to De La Salle University (2016), the Lasallian Philippine District is guided by three core values: the spirit of faith, zeal for service, and communion in mission. These values guide Lasallian education in forming individuals committed to Christian development, service to others, and collaboration toward a more human, just, and inclusive society. Ultimately, Lasallian education seeks to develop disciples, citizens, prophets, and professionals who promote truth, justice, love, and peace.

Based on these principles, Lasallian schools can be understood as reconstructing education in the service of social development. They participate in the Church's mission and commit to improving conditions for vulnerable and marginalized communities in the Philippines. Social awareness should therefore shape the curriculum. Integral human and Christian development respects the uniqueness and diversity of all learners. Students must be prepared for practical and socially significant roles in changing the future. Lasallian institutions are also responsible for cultivating environments conducive to genuine learning, character formation, and fraternal solidarity. Continuous renewal and collaboration enable members of the educational community to pursue a common mission. Reconstructionist education similarly encourages every member of the community to participate in identifying historical problems and developing responsible solutions.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

For Harkins (1992), Lasallian school management integrates pedagogical tradition, communal relationships, and biblical values by placing effective teaching, curricular coherence, criterion-based assessment, teacher formation, parental participation, and collaborative

leadership at the center of institutional life. Within Gonzalez's educational philosophy, these principles demonstrate how school governance can embody the Lasallian mission and serve as an institutional instrument for personal formation, social responsibility, and educational reconstruction.

The De La Salle tradition emphasizes the teacher's role in touching students' lives. As Harkins' indicate the school management should place teaching and learning at the center of institutional organization. Teachers are as important as other school structures in guiding learners toward individual maturity, life in God's love, and responsible participation in society. In this sense, the organization of the school supports students' formation as agents of reconstruction.

Gonzalez's hermeneutical approach expresses itself through teaching and community culture, which together embody the Lasallian value of faith. The De La Salle tradition recognizes cultural consciousness as a foundation of sound Christian education.

Accordingly, the De La Salle educational tradition has continually renewed itself to meet the needs of contemporary society. Gonzalez identifies three orientations: the hermeneutics of retrieval, the present, and the potential or future. Together, they constitute a Reconstructionist philosophy. The De La Salle tradition calls for the full development of human gifts in the service of God's love, with Scripture serving as a fundamental source of value. Interpreting this tradition with intellectual rigor helps educate and direct human aspirations. Educational activity is conceived as an integrated whole, inspired by Scripture and embodied in a coherent institutional system. This philosophy provides a general direction for education while requiring adaptation to the realities and needs of particular societies.





Reconstructionism, as the philosophy of education, is integral, whole, and works as a system. A world of constant change calls for flexible education systems. Education must remain constantly in movement and resort unceasingly to innovation; this approach is what Gonzalez calls the hermeneutics of the future. It is not so much the knowledge itself that counts, but rather the process of acquisition, which becomes decisive. It is, therefore, neither 'having' nor 'being' that the decisive factors are, but 'becoming.' In this context, it will be the responsibility of the schools to prepare young people not merely for private success but as agents of social transformation. This is De La Salle's primary role in educating its students.

By their very nature, school systems tend to be rigid, full of religious indoctrination, and even resistant to change. Their traditionalism and super-conservatism explain why many sectors of society call for school reforms. The schools must be dynamic, possess imagination, and be creative. In practice, schools presuppose a new pedagogy adapted to the needs of our time. What is needed is to awaken the pupil's motivation, curiosity, and individual enthusiasm.

THE PRINCIPLES OF LASALLIAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Lasallian education forms graduates who are socially responsible and committed to promoting human dignity and the common good. It recognizes poverty, environmental degradation, discrimination, unemployment, landlessness, and the denial of human rights as major causes of suffering. Thus, Lasallians are called to protect the integrity of creation and help build a humane and just society (De La Salle University [DLSU], 2021).

Social development begins with awareness, which enables individuals to understand social problems and recognize their moral responsibility toward others. Immersion in marginalized communities strengthens this awareness, as students encounter social realities beyond the classroom. Following the example of St. John Baptist de La Salle, immersion encourages Lasallians to move beyond personal privilege and develop genuine solidarity with the poor (DLSU, 2021).

The integral development of Lasallian students begins with formation and conscientization, especially the formation of their consciences. This process starts with self-awareness and recognition of one's responsibility for social development. It strengthens the human foundation of education by encouraging learners to ask questions, reason carefully, identify their interests, and pursue creative self-fulfillment.

Freire (1973) cautions that education functions within and is shaped by the society that created it. Schools transmit systems of value to future generations and may thereby preserve existing social arrangements. Their substantial responsibility is therefore to cultivate critical cultural awareness. Education is shaped by existing social structures and may be organized to serve the interests of dominant groups. Education must therefore develop learners' capacity to understand and transform their social conditions.

Freire warns that when elites control education, they make it dangerous by seeking to shape society according to their interests. Education should instead serve the common good. Young people need guidance in interpreting the world and in preparing to transform it responsibly. Such guidance emerges through a school system that exposes learners to social concerns.



Education should not simply fill the mind with ideas; it should develop the capacity for liberating action. Graduates contribute to social development when they respond critically and responsibly to the issues they have encountered through education. George Counts (1932/1978) argues that Progressive Education must “face squarely and courageously every social issue” (p. 9). Because society is dynamic, schools must accept responsibility for social development. This position parallels Gonzalez’s emphasis on cultural interpretation in his hermeneutical framework. Deeper cultural understanding can help learners engage social issues directly. The arts and critical thinking can likewise contribute to reform (Villareal et al., 2023).

Reconstructionism is strongly oriented toward the future. The De La Salle mission envisions a world free from hunger and inhumanity and grounded in surrender to God. It seeks integral human and Christian development and liberation in the light of the Gospel. Reconstructionists such as Gonzalez regard curricular planning and future-oriented thinking as practical means of preparing learners to confront what Toffler calls “future shock.” Reconstructionism critically examines contemporary contradictions and affirms education’s capacity to address threats to peace and human dignity.

Future-oriented educational thinking can help address current social issues through policy reform and curriculum development. It enables young people to understand academic achievement both as individual development and as a structured response to social needs (de los Reyes, 2020). Educational philosophy draws upon rigorous scholarship and reflective experience. Gonzalez’s contribution is distinctive because it integrates these sources within a culturally grounded framework. His understanding of education as contextually diverse calls for

approaches responsive to particular societies. In the Philippines, the K to 12 program, introduced in 2013, reconstructed basic education to include values education that is shaped by Philippine culture. Cultural horizons should not be erased, because a sound education is grounded in values, norms, beliefs, and practices (Tesar et al., 2022). Culture strengthens teaching and learning by supporting diversity and balanced individual competence in pursuit of effective educational outcomes.

FROM PHILOSOPHICAL RECONSTRUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE: A CROSS-SECTOR RESEARCH AGENDA

The preceding analysis establishes Gonzalez’s triadic hermeneutics as a theoretical account of educational reconstruction. To speak to educational studies more broadly, however, the framework must also generate researchable questions, inform practice across sectors, and specify the conditions under which its claims could be examined empirically. This section therefore translates retrieval, diagnosis of the present, and future projection into a cross-sector research program. It does not present new empirical findings. Rather, it specifies a methodologically explicit agenda through which the philosophical interpretation can be tested, refined, or challenged in schools, universities, teacher education, educational leadership, and community partnership. In this way, the article’s contribution is both theoretical and applied: it reconstructs Gonzalez’s educational thought while identifying observable institutional practices and outcomes that future studies can investigate.



THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION AND INTERNATIONAL RELEVANCE

Gonzalez's wider significance lies in his response to a problem shared by educational systems beyond the Philippines: how can educational institutions join historical identity, critical engagement with present inequality, and preparation for uncertain futures without reducing one dimension to another? Reform programs often privilege innovation and future readiness while treating history as ceremonial. Other programs defend tradition while failing to confront inherited exclusions. Still others develop strong critiques of inequality but do not specify the institutional arrangements that can sustain alternatives. The triadic framework addresses this fragmentation. Retrieval asks which cultural, linguistic, religious, and institutional inheritances should be preserved, revised, or rejected. Present-oriented interpretation examines how power, opportunity, and recognition are currently distributed. Future projection connects critique to curriculum design, research, leadership, and collective action. The framework is internationally relevant not because Philippine or Lasallian experience can be transferred unchanged, but because the temporal problem it addresses appears wherever institutions negotiate tradition, inequality, pluralism, technological change, and public responsibility.

This comparative potential also qualifies the use of social reconstructionism. Gonzalez's Christian and postcolonial context differs from the predominantly United States setting of Counts and Brameld and from Freire's account of conscientization. Those differences are analytically productive. They show that socially transformative education can be grounded in distinct moral traditions while still being evaluated through common questions: Does the institution make its normative commitments

explicit? Are learners and affected communities able to participate in identifying problems? Does curriculum connect disciplinary knowledge with public questions? Are institutional resources directed toward reducing exclusion? Are imagined futures assessed in relation to dignity, justice, democracy, and the common good? Comparative research could use these questions to examine faith-based and secular institutions, public and private systems, and educational settings in postcolonial and multilingual societies without assuming that reconstruction must take a single ideological form.

Implications for curriculum, professional practice, and leadership

For curriculum practice, the framework recommends a recurring structure rather than an additional subject. Courses can ask three linked sets of questions: What histories, languages, concepts, and community knowledge are necessary for understanding the issue? What evidence reveals its present forms, causes, and unequal consequences? What alternatives can learners propose, and by what ethical and practical criteria should those alternatives be judged? This structure can operate across humanities, social sciences, teacher education, science, technology, business, and professional programs. Its value lies in joining disciplinary rigor to public relevance. Assessment may include historical interpretation, analysis of contemporary evidence, stakeholder mapping, scenario construction, ethical justification, and reflection on action. The aim is not to reward agreement with a prescribed position but to assess whether students reason responsibly across temporal horizons and consider those affected by educational and social decisions.

For teachers and professional educators,



Gonzalez's framework positions pedagogy between transmission and activism. Teachers require strong subject knowledge, but they also need the capacity to facilitate dialogue, examine controversial issues, recognize culturally and linguistically diverse knowledge, and connect reflection with responsible action. Professional development should therefore include curriculum inquiry, community-based learning, ethical facilitation, and methods for evaluating social outcomes without overstating educational power. In teacher education, candidates might study how school routines reproduce or contest inequality, design lessons that relate disciplinary content to local concerns, and assess the risks of indoctrination, token participation, or deficit representations of communities. These practices make critical consciousness compatible with intellectual openness and pedagogical accountability.

For education leaders, mission should function as a criterion for governance and resource allocation. Leaders can conduct periodic mission audits linking declared values to admissions, scholarships, staffing, curriculum, research support, procurement, campus accessibility, and community partnerships. Decision processes should identify whose knowledge was consulted, what evidence guided the decision, how burdens and benefits are distributed, and how results will be reviewed. Leadership teams should publish indicators that combine conventional educational outcomes with evidence of inclusion, participation, ethical formation, and public contribution. This approach treats institutional coherence as an empirical question. A school or university demonstrates a reconstructionist orientation not by the language of its vision alone but by repeated patterns of allocation, participation, evaluation, and revision.

This study has argued that Brother Andrew Gonzalez's educational philosophy can be interpreted through a Reconstructionist framework because it presents education as an instrument of social transformation, assigns schools responsibility for interpreting social injustice, and connects curriculum and institutional mission with the construction of a more human future. The argument does not depend upon proving that Gonzalez explicitly called himself a Reconstructionist. It rests upon the systematic presence of seven Reconstructionist principles in his educational thought: social transformation, education as an instrument of change, critical consciousness, democratic participation, curriculum reform, future orientation, and social responsibility.

The Philippine character of this framework is substantive rather than geographical. Indigenous cultural diversity, Spanish colonial Catholicism, American educational administration, contested language policies, national identity, persistent poverty, unequal educational access, and the changing responsibilities of universities shape the concrete questions to which Gonzalez responds. Educational reconstruction in this setting cannot be limited to classroom innovation. It must address colonial memory, cultural interpretation, linguistic plurality, social inequality, professional formation, research capacity, and the relationship between Catholic institutions and national development.

Gonzalez's contribution to Philippine philosophy of education lies in demonstrating that reconstruction must be historically conscious, culturally situated, morally grounded, and institutionally embodied. Philosophy becomes educationally significant when it shapes mission, curriculum, governance, research, pedagogy, community partnership, and the formation of graduates. The school is consequently neither a



passive reflection of society nor an omnipotent remedy for every social disorder. It is a community capable of interpreting inherited meanings, confronting existing injustice, and forming individuals who can participate responsibly in social change.

This interpretation also contributes to Lasallian educational studies. Faith, service, and communion are not additions to an otherwise complete academic enterprise. They are principles that integrate knowledge, professional competence, moral formation, and social responsibility. Brother Andrew Gonzalez's educational thought thus offers a culturally grounded and religiously informed account of how institutions may retrieve the resources of the past, judge the demands of the present, and construct a more just future. In this sense, his philosophy does not merely ask schools to prepare students for society as it is. It asks educational communities to discern, with historical memory and collective responsibility, the society they ought to build.

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