

## Understanding Lonergan's Transcendental Method for an Authentic Education Curriculum in Uganda

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### Abstract

Transcendental Method is an approach to knowing which Bernard Lonergan proposes for an authentic human existence. The method posits that learning is the process of self-awareness, where we can attain deep level, systematic and comprehensive accounts of education. It nurtures the whole child beyond mere academic achievements by imparting educational ideals that explain how we one come to know about what is true and do what is right. Basically, education is a lifelong journey of discovering which truly completes the transformation of human life through critical reflection. The approach is a reasoned means to learning that propels the subject towards conscious activity. It builds our ability for better self-understanding, deeper relationships, and a stronger sense of life's purpose. In other words, the method helps a person to "be oneself,"\* guiding personal growth and shaping individuals with knowledge, sound judgment, and moral values. Thus, the method provides significant contributions to curriculum ideals in three different ways; it drives the learner to objectivity, bases on judgment as the basic means of knowing and it leads the learner into taking responsibility in his or her daily life.

Keywords: Transcendental Method, Holistic Education, Curriculum Ideals.

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### Main text

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### Introduction

Transcendental Method is an approach to knowing which Bernard Lonergan proposes for an authentic human existence. The method posits that learning is the process of self-awareness, where we can attain deep level, systematic and comprehensive accounts of education. It nurtures the whole child beyond mere academic achievements by imparting educational ideals that explain how we one come to know about what is true and do what is right. Basically, education is a lifelong journey of discovering which truly completes the

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transformation of human life through critical reflection. The approach is a reasoned means to learning that propels the subject towards conscious activity. It builds our ability for better self-understanding, deeper relationships, and a stronger sense of life's purpose. In other words, the method helps a person to "be oneself,"<sup>†</sup> guiding personal growth and shaping individuals with knowledge, sound judgment, and moral values. Thus, the method provides significant contributions to curriculum ideals as it courageously confronts the challenges that besets the educational programs. It does these in three different ways; as a drive towards objectivity, takes judgment as the basic means of knowing and it leads the learner into taking responsibility in his or her daily life.

### 1.1. Transcendental Method as a Drive towards Objectivity of Knowledge

Loneragan's theory of knowledge looks at human knowing as a system. Knowing isn't just one single activity, but a dynamic set of connected activities. The parts relate to each other by their function, not by similarity. In learning, cognitive actions differ and need to be studied individually and in their relation to others. He thinks that as one comes to know, he or she "discovers, in his or her own experience, the dynamic relationships leading from one operation to the next."<sup>‡</sup> It is in this dynamism that the subject ascertains and ascribes meanings to every mental operation, or objectivity in life.

The functions of the mind necessitate a subject who is both a knower and an agent. This knower is an intelligible being who senses, perceives, imagines, enquires, understands, formulates, reflects, judges, deliberates, and acts. The only means by which contents of knowing, at various levels, can be integrated into a singular known is the existence of a unified knower or subject. This unified knower is an "existential subject, who knows and does things. It is not only someone who feels, understands, and judges, but also someone who thinks, weighs, chooses, and acts."<sup>§</sup> The inherent processes of cognition and action significantly impact the subject's actions and identity as well as it influences, alters, and transforms his or her realm of objects. Accordingly, Lonergan thinks that by following the heightened state of consciousness or awareness one's identity is shaped into a free and responsible manifestation of oneself.

However, what affects progress in learning, according to Lonergan, is the "Innate or intrinsic aspect of human nature as well as the mutable human historicity."<sup>\*\*</sup> Since each individual person exists within a limited world of their own, they are also restricted by the horizon of their historical tradition. These horizons may be their upbringing, their unique psychological predispositions, endeavours, and misfortunes, as well as philosophical influences. This can hamper their learning processes because of the undue emphasis on objective truth while disregarding its subjective dimension of knowing.<sup>††</sup> Since knowing is "Fundamentally a process of personal transformation, involving the transition from the world of senses to the universe of being, learning helps in achieving authenticity. This does not happen by merely discovering and agreeing with a series of true propositions, but by getting involved."<sup>‡‡</sup> This means learning sets one's horizon in the realm of value or of the good, to which one tends. It is a drive, which is equivalent to what being is to the intellect.

The human drive to knowledge and objectivity is both foundational and universally significant to various fields and/or disciplines of learning. It propels conscious processes through which an individual comprehends

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<sup>†</sup> Bernard, Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" in F., Crowe, (Ed.), *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F., Lonergan*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), 179.

<sup>‡</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 7.

<sup>§</sup> Bernard, Lonergan, "The Subject," (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968), 19.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," in F., Crowe (Ed.), *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), 170.

<sup>††</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 354.

<sup>‡‡</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 122.

the coherence connections of their experiences and validates the authenticity of their judgment. Accordingly, in the educational sector, “the cognitional operations of consciousness defines the knowledge involved in comprehending one’s existence and the rationale for self-awareness.”<sup>§§</sup> It is the utilization of the cognitive faculties of attentiveness, intelligence, rationality, and responsibility that enables the subject to differentiate between the distinct forms of knowledge: personal knowledge and belief, which one justifiably depends on for action. The method is crucial for holistic learning because it offers an essential means to self-awareness, by which the subject consciously and intentionally operates.

The dynamics of this method in education is that it uniquely separate the framework of cognitional processes of knowing and doing. It affirms that human knowing is a system of cognitive activities, with the transformative character to effect radical change in the subject, in others and in the world. This calls on the knower to be attentive, intelligent in insights, reasonable in his or her judgment and responsible in conduct. The drive considers learning as the basic means of knowing, which follows a patterned sequence of operation. This can be understood from two different viewpoints; that is, the common sense view and the scientific sense. In its common sense understanding, learning is usually perceived as “An art or formal, logical system that follows a mater, through reflection on previous achievements. Meanwhile, in its scientific sense, learning is considered as a designed system or science, to grasp all knowledge. For example, Aristotle used mathematics as a method or paradigm for all other sciences.”<sup>\*\*\*</sup> For him, all other sciences were possible only to the extent that mathematical methods could be used to define them, otherwise, they are considered less than a science or not a science at all.

Lonergan associates the human drive to know with the concept of transcendence, which generally means going beyond, as opposed to immanence. It is a drive which stimulates objectivity in our knowledge. He articulates this by saying;

“Insight and formulation do not merely reproduce the content of sensible experience but go beyond it. Reflection, the grasp of unconditioned, and judgment are not content with mere objects of supposing, defining, considering but go beyond them to the universe of facts, of being, of what truly is affirmed and really is. Moreover, one can rest content with knowing things related to us or one can go beyond that and join scientists in searching for knowledge of things as related to one another. It is a means of going beyond both common sense and present science, to grasp the dynamic structure of our rational knowing and doing, before formulating a metaphysics and ethics. This process asks whether human knowledge is contained in the universe of proportionate being or goes beyond it to the realm of transcendent being.”<sup>†††</sup>

Since it involves an element of asking further questions, transcendence is a drive or a conscious operational intention which moves the subject from one level of awareness to another. It is a means to learning process, which has all of being as its ultimate objective. This presupposes that knowing does not involve the formulation of abstract concepts, but relies on man’s inquisitive nature or the desire to know.

The transcendental method becomes the fundamental drive towards objectivity because “it unifies intentionality with the varied consciousness that initiates the process of inquiry.”<sup>†††</sup> It has dual elements of knowing, which are; the basis of my conscious operation and also its epistemic foundation, ascertains the learner as a knower. In that sense, Lonergan thinks that “knowing in its proper sense is geared towards the knowledge of reality, or is intrinsically objective. It resides in the cognitive activity of intentionality, which is

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<sup>§§</sup> Lonergan, “*Natural Right and Historical Mindedness*,” in F., Crowe (Ed.), *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, 171.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 118.

<sup>†††</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 635.

<sup>†††</sup> Bernard, Tyrell, *Bernard Lonergan’s Philosophy of God*, 73.

limitless, as there exists nothing that we cannot at least interrogate.”<sup>§§§</sup> In the context of education, the method entails three processes that the learners can explore: that is, the experiential data, the intelligence and reason guiding knowing, and reflection. These are conditions that can stir the learner into knowing and taking action or responsibility.

The conscious function of the transcendental method; whether it pertains to an emotion, a desire, or an understanding, is what the learner conveys.<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> In other words, it stimulates awareness that comprehends and affirms the subject as a knower. It is the drive that establishes objectivity in the learning process. This presupposes that the objectivity of knowledge is founded on existence, which entails being. It was on this basis that Lonergan attempts to overcome the Cartesian solipsism, by stating that “being, rather than thought, constitutes the foundation of existence. Being connects the possibility of unconditional knowing with an experiential ground, to claim the unconditional affirmation.”<sup>††††</sup>

The drive to know is “confined to the activities of my awareness, which delineates the cognitive processes of the intended object; an activity of experiencing that leads to the activity of understanding.”<sup>††††</sup> It is the form of grounded awareness that compels the learner to explain pertinent facts, which enables us to act. This peculiar, unified knowledge of the contents of consciousness resembles Hegel’s absolute striving for self-awareness, which is the ultimate, all-encompassing reality that is the origin of existence. It is the dynamic and purposive process of objectivity.<sup>§§§§</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that not all contents of consciousness that the learner recognizes will be remembered, others will undoubtedly be lost from our memory permanently. But the transcendental method prompts us to affirm our conscious states. It is a means of affirming what one objectively understands. The learner who gets involved in the learning activities, takes responsibility for his or her actions.

Being responsible in life necessitates knowledge, which Lonergan says it requires a response into the question “What am I doing as I am knowing?”<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> This condition for knowledge here becomes clearer when one distinguishes the pursuit of knowledge from other inclinations. For example, the urge to learn new things is not the same as the physical needs or the desire to enjoy physical pleasures, but it is a drive that integrates into our being. It is the acknowledgment that the learner makes, which is cultivated diligently, consciously, intelligently, critically, and intentionally. To know signifies a transition from subjective to objective state of consciousness, which requires learning as its basic means. Learning is a process through which the subject transcends his or her subjectivity into objectivity. Its essential drive or the vital force is self-transcendence, which fosters interiority and validates objectivity in life.

The drive to know not only helps the learner to transcend the subjective state but also to pursue what is autonomous. In this process, Lonergan thinks that the most important element is judgment which helps the subject to affirm a particular entity. It is not “what appears to the learner, not what one imagines, not what one thinks, not what one wishes, not what one is inclined to say, or not what seems to the learner, but what reality is about.”<sup>†††††</sup> This signifies that the drive to objectivity is the basis of learning. It involves various levels of consciousness that the learner synthesizes, in order to operate with awareness. In other words, the learner who gets fully involved in the different designed learning activities, attains more objective knowledge than those

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<sup>§§§</sup> Lonergan, “*Cognitive Structure*,” 227.

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Lonergan, “*Cognitive Structure*,” 230.

<sup>††††</sup> Cf. James, W. Allard, *Bugbee on the Ground of Unconditional Affirmation*, in Roger Ward (Ed.), *Pluralist*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press), 2011, Vol. 6, No. 2, 35-53.

<sup>††††</sup> Terry, Tekippe, *What is Lonergan up to in Insight?* 84.

<sup>§§§§</sup> Alasdair, MacIntyre (Ed.), *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972), 179.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 452.

<sup>†††††</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 104.

who don't. Thus, the transcendental method is a means to knowing that concludes reasoning and compels the subject to make judgment and act upon it.

## 1.2. Judgment: The Basis of Human Affirmation

In Lonergan's structure of knowing, judgment constitutes the third level of the learning process. It is an ideal that the learner makes, to the quality, the soundness, and the accuracy of one's understanding. Making sound judgments requires reflecting on gathered data, thoughts, and insights to check if things are as they seem or if ideas are correct. Nonetheless, there appear to be many categories of judgments that individuals formulate, even in the absence of educational background. These may include introspective judgments or those judgments pertaining to the subject's conscious states. Accordingly, Lonergan argues that "knowing is not the same as learning unless it encompasses all the three cognitional operations of experience, understanding and judgment."<sup>++++</sup> Although each of these levels have significant contributions to how the subject knows, mistaking experience for knowing is incorrect or understanding for problem-solving is equally wrong. Without judgment, knowing is incomplete. In that regard, teachers should avoid treating these levels as separate or putting emphasis only on one, to make judgment or draw conclusion. They must be taken as a whole.

The progression from understanding to making of judgment is where Lonergan's transcendental method diverges from the traditional system of learning, to become the basis of holistic education. He incorporates "judgment into the knowing process because it takes one from subjective level of knowledge to objective knowledge and integrates idealism with empiricism. The shift happens through questioning till the inquirer finds firm foundation of what we call knowledge."<sup>#####</sup> While learners need to verbalize and describe what they experience, which alone doesn't lead to conscious action, they need to build their own meanings, go beyond common sense, and connect to concepts. Unless they are able to ask relevant questions, which brings about understanding and reflection, even with the help of their teachers, their learning would be meaningless. Education must help the learner to relate certain things and phenomena with their life situation. However, the question that still remains is; how do we ask relevant questions about knowledge, which is different from other particular concerns? Lonergan uses the term "sublation"<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> to explain how these levels of knowing relate. Unlike Hegel's usage, he means moving from one level to the next doesn't discard the previous but integrates it. For example, we don't drop experience as understanding sets in. Experience is integrated into understanding. Without this integration, the levels become mere additions and less effective. Thus, he articulates that;

"What negates goes beyond what is negated, introduces something new and distinct. It puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the negated, but on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context. For example, anyone coming to know must ask questions, the dynamism that drives the processes of knowing from one level to another."<sup>+++++</sup>

This suggests that learning is dependent on former knowledge. They are related by "contextual

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<sup>+++++</sup> Brian, Cronin, *Foundation of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and Epistemology*, (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 1999), 264.

<sup>#####</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 248.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Lonergan, "A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan," (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 241.

<sup>+++++</sup> Lonergan, "A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan," 242.

dependence;”+++++ the ultimate basis of learning that facilitates conscious action.

By contextual dependence of transcendental method, Lonergan refers to “the necessity of making judgments, during the learning process, to get insights into self-knowledge.”+++++ It includes the learner’s conscious states, and the surrounding environment of learning. Judgment is very important in the learning process or in education because it encourages relevant and meaningful engagements of students, in the learning process; that is, “through hands-on activities and authentic assessments.”+++++ It helps in attributing meanings to the activities of learning or utterances, by performing certain actions.

Although Lonergan never likens knowing to external judgments, nor to deductive reasoning from principles; but to the deliberate and conscious action that the subject performs, he affirms that: “The type of judgment we make, in the learning process, doesn’t base on logical reasoning, but on the total independence of the knowing levels.”+++++ The knower who is perpetually conscious, learns better than the one who only contemplates about transforming the unconscious mental state. The fundamental way of learning is contextualizing the learning environment, to stimulate progress in knowing. Nevertheless, to consider contextual dependency as the sole or valid approach to self-knowledge is also not correct, but it is “the autonomy of transcendental approach to knowing that illustrates an individual’s awareness to uphold his or her integrity and create validate significance in life.”+++++

Lonergan’s method considers the learner as an individual who experiences, comprehends, and evaluates. In that regard, the approach entails that making judgment, in the learning process contributes to the subject’s ability to differentiate between acceptable and objectionable definitions. Even if some preliminary judgments might have been formed before the actual comprehension, “the sequence of other introspections are unnecessary for the act of knowing itself. It is only judgment that forms the fundamental basis of knowing that prompts us to inquiry.”+++++ Judgment is the cornerstone of learning that presupposes knowledge itself. It exercises control over understanding that is derived from the pattern of our experiences. Thus, the transition to genuine understanding is that each interaction with facts involves judgment that progressively culminates in profound insights.

The reality about judging is that it is an autonomous action that continuously challenges us to have correct or objective knowledge. The dynamic action we perform, in the learning process, requires no external evaluations prior to its execution. This means that the precise quantity of introspective judgments that we make, before knowing, are ambiguous. However, the learner may face two potential limitations in his or her learning processes; there is either a lack of prior introspection by the subject or an absence of consciousness.

+++++ Contextual dependence here means a relation which obtains meaning between principles and increments for knowledge needed from experience. Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 398.

+++++ Lonergan, *Insight*, 398.

+++++ Patrick, R. Thomas & John, D. Bain, “*Contextual Dependence of Learning Approaches: The Effects of Assessments.*” In Anna Sfard (Ed.), *Research Gate on Human Learning*, (Israel: University of Haifa Press, 1984), Vol. 3, 227-240.

+++++ This relates to St. Thomas Aquinas’ conception of the ‘self’ which is linked to his understanding of human nature, morality and self-knowledge. Cf. Theresa, Cory Scarpelli, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge*, in Robert Pasnau (Ed.), *Mind*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Vol. 124, No. 494, pp. 623-626.

+++++ Claude, M. Steele, *The Psychology of Self-affirmation: Sustaining the Integrity of the Self*. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, (New York: Academic, 1988), 21:261–302.

+++++ Bernard, Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, in Philip J. McShane (Ed.), *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), vol. 18, 117.

These limitations come about because some introspective assertions, such as 'I am sad' or 'I am conscious,' are only probable. For that matter, Lonergan argues that knowing is connected to judgment by an affirmation the subject makes rather than by mere hypotheses. Knowing represents a midpoint that an individual engages in, before the act of self-assessment, which results into conscious and deliberate action.

The significance of Lonergan's transcendental method, in forming holistic learner, is that it functions as the means of grounding and unifying knowledge. It is the method that helps the subject to ask question, like: how accurate is my judgment in the process of learning? In such question, the learner uniquely fulfils specific prerequisites of the ultimate foundation of knowing and behaviour. The pursuit of "the ultimate foundation and endeavour for self-knowledge would be unwarranted when there is no connections between the act of judging and knowing, which must be acknowledged prior to the affirmation that one is a knower."\*\*\*\*\* This seems to suggest that what constitutes the self is represented by what one knows as well as by what he or she does. In other words, the judgment that the learner makes, through personal efforts and skills, doesn't merely happens, but it is the basis of expressing one's self-knowledge in actions.

The legitimacy of learning hinges on the inquiry, which involves questionings. In fact, the learner's active involvement in the processes of knowing indicates that he or she is able to execute the conscious operations involved in knowing. Lonergan argues that "the judgment, the knower makes is fundamentally grounded in the pragmatic involvement in the process of learning."+++++++ Judging is an ideal element for our conscious actions. To ascertain that there are no potential errors in this process, he discusses the difference between the "Descriptive and Explanatory"+++++++ types of judgment. The descriptive judgment is an empirical judgment that relies on data of sense, which cannot completely eradicate the hypothetical component of knowing. Meanwhile, the explanatory judgment is the type of judgment which solely rely on the subject's consciousness. It is the type that leads to objective knowing.

The requisite data of judging are the phenomenal problems and/or certain aspects of psychological consciousness that puzzles the subject. The knower who judges will have;

"The ability to process information about the world and deal with it in a rational fashion. The person who judges is conscious; that is, he or she is able to introspect the contents of the internal states of the mind. This is an important component of knowing that enables one to be reportable; that is, judging enhances one's ability to report the contents of his or her mental states, through conscious operations. Judging helps us to be conscious of the relevant information that we encounter every day, as it depicts and explains the unity of diverse acts, which results into the subject's cognitive operations."++++++

Thus, it is an important act that facilitates the experiential unity of conscious operation and directs one's sense of responsibility.

For Lonergan, judging is an essential element of knowing that requires a personal commitment. What sets it apart from other mental activities is not limited to a simple yes or no, but the sufficiency of the evidence of consciousness. Judgment is the necessary prerequisite for one's personal integrity because it is an undeniable means of taking responsibility. The teacher who handles the learners must be responsible in their duties.

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\*\*\*\*\* Cf. Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 260.

+++++++ Lonergan, "A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan," 242.

+++++++ Cronin, *Foundation of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and Epistemology*, 111.

+++++++ Cf. David J., Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind; In Search of a Theory of Conscious Experience*, (California: University of California Press, 1995), 24.

“Teaching, without the learners understanding the relevance of what is taught, is quite unrealistic for them as well as for the education curriculum itself.”\*\*\*\*\* The transcendental method suggests that any education curriculum must ensure that learning is dependent on these pillars;

“Firstly, asking questions, which is a natural act of consciousness, as one searches for knowledge. Secondly, it should change things and society through intelligence and responsible action. Thirdly, learning should lead us to living responsibly, respectfully and cooperatively with other people and with all the living organisms on the planet. Education must overcome prejudice, dogmatism, discrimination, authoritarianism and stereotypes, and all that leads to confrontation and war. Fourthly, learning should lead us to discover our true human nature, and encounter the essence of ourselves. It goes beyond the psychic apparatus of thoughts and emotion. It is the learning to be human, through acquisition of knowledge, skills and values conducive to personality development in its intellectual, moral, cultural and physical dimensions.

Thus, education curriculum should design learning activities that propels the learners to action and being responsible. This is where critical thinking and independency of judgment is exercised through personal commitment, to cultivate qualities of imagination and creativity, as means to universally share human values and develop personal potentials.

### 1.3. Responsibility: The Culmination of Holistic Learning

Taking responsibility is based on judgment and it establishes a transitive relation that the subject must go through in order to draw a conclusion. But in case some judgments were made beforehand, that is, before the subject takes responsibility, it means they were hypothesized, and their conclusions are hypothetical. What brings the explicit relation between the subject and the object of knowledge is learning and reasoning, the two elements of comprehension that lead to taking responsibility. In that regard, Lonergan argues that “knowing involves specific types of actions that the cognizant individual engages in.”+++++++ However, there may be still another question which remains; whether the learner possesses self-awareness to solely execute the act of responsibility that is based on knowledge or not.

To address this question, Lonergan modifies the conventional interpretation of a knower from “someone who knows something to someone who engages in specific acts.”+++++++ This appears to mean that the knower who can execute cognitional acts is the one who adheres to a cognitional process and ascertains fact, to make accurate judgments. However, this logic seems fallacious as it fails to explain how it provides evidence that supports one’s knowledge. To clarify this perceived mistake, he adds; “someone who knows something, possesses an element of reasoning that pushes him or her to make judgments. Such conclusion pertains to the entirety of judging, which cannot be contradicted because it would inherently conflict with the conclusion itself.”+++++++ Judgment prompts responsibility, which is akin to the validity of our awareness. It is an enhancement of understanding that propels our conscious functioning, as a knower. Accordingly, he asserts that: “The act of inquiry and the potentiality to be responsible constitute the learner’s conclusion of

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\*\*\*\*\* Antoni, B. Stepien, “*About the Method of Theory of Cognition*,” in Prof. Agnieszka Kijewska (Ed.), *Annals of Philosophy*, (Lublin: John Paul II, Catholic University Press, 1971), Vol. 19, 95-127.

+++++++ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 223.

+++++++ Lonergan, *Insight*, 330.

+++++++ Cf. Madigan, Arthur S. J. (Trans.) *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle’s Metaphysics 4*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 1005b18-1008a36.

reasoning.”\*\*\*\*\* In other words, education is the sufficient means for acting, since it guarantees knowledge. Whatever deliberate action the subject undertakes serves as an adequate justification for knowledge. To merely acknowledge that the learner engages in conscious activities does not suffice to establish one’s status as a knower, because that cannot serve as a comprehensive epistemological foundation for all knowledge.

The basis upon which learning prompts responsibility is in “the act of accomplishing one’s comprehension and validation of experiences, insights, and evaluations.”+++++++ Education ought to help learner develop himself or herself and the potentials to offer his or her love and service to fellow human being. It is in objective knowledge or the recognition of the existence of an ideal that we presuppose our every effort to learn. Learning is an ongoing series of cognitional operations that leads to self-appropriation and is fundamentally guided by these questions: “What am I engaged in when I am knowing? What is the rationale behind that knowledge? What knowledge do I possess when I engage in this activity?”+++++++ These questions guide the whole processes of transformation of the individual knower as one strives towards authentic existence.

Being authentic depends on being faithful to the transcendental precepts. In other words, being real to life comes from self-transcendence, “the state of consciousness that the subject attains after engaging in the process of knowing. It is a vital progress of learning, which proceeds from experience to comprehension and ultimately to judgment and being responsible.”+++++++ It is a profound re-evaluation of one’s stance regarding intellectual, moral, and religious viewpoints for the transformation of human existence to achieve a new state of being. This fundamental aspect of learning is anchored on the “learner’s aspiration to embrace the good or an elevated level of self-awareness, which entails an understanding of intrinsic connections with others.”\*\*\*\*\* It is a means of fostering educational curriculum that helps an individual to transit from one set of roots to another or the recognition of the inauthentic aspects of oneself.+++++++ It is an elevated horizon or dynamic state of human existence.

However, the learners may lose touch with their ability to wonder and ask questions or they might not know that there is yet a lot more to know than to merely passing a course. For that matter, Lonergan’s transcendental approach is vital in the path of teaching and learning strategies. This is because he thinks that “constructive learning takes place when the learners integrate both content-based and learner-based methods. Learners grasp things better when they are able to integrate both qualitative and quantitative knowledge in problem solving, in communication and in their daily lives, which is the dynamic relationship among experience, insight, and judgment.”+++++++ In this context, learning how to ask different kinds of questions, both closed-ended, open-ended, and reflective questions, are important means of assessing how learning happens. It is the learner’s participation or their need for self-appropriation that guides them to objective and responsible knowing. Thus, the transcendental method supports education to clarify all sorts of obstacles and misconceptions, in order to ask meaningful questions of life.

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\*\*\*\*\* Lonergan, *Insight*, 328.

+++++++ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 104.

+++++++ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 25.

+++++++ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 268.

\*\*\*\*\* Robert M. Doran & Frederick E. Crowe (Eds.), *Bernard Lonergan, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Topics in Education*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 389.

+++++++ Julia, Watkin, *Kierkegaard; Outstanding Christian Thinkers*, (New York: Continuum, 1997), 52.

+++++++ Lonergan, “*Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 10 Topics in Education*,” 24.

## Conclusion

Understanding Lonergan's transcendental method as a means of fostering learning, encompasses three separate aspects: that is, it drives us to objectivity, such learning is based on judgment and it is a means of taking responsibility in life. His method suggests that education is the best means of acquiring an epistemic grounding that transforms the subject into a responsible person. In other words, the method guides the everyday decisions and actions that underpins the foundation of awareness of the knower, as it exhibits the significant process of self-appropriation. It uses one's conscious state to address personal inquiries, particularly the inquiry into question such as; "What am I doing when I am knowing?" It explains how the learner can integrate and harmonize knowledge as the standards of objectivity into human behaviour as well as in human operations. His vision in proposing the transcendental method was to understand the cosmos, as well as come to terms with one's being. It seems that he uses this approach of education to address the fundamental question of how learning can transform a person's ways of operation or behaviour. Although he did not intend to present a philosophy of education, where deep level, systematic and comprehensive accounts of learning unfold, his thoughts forms the basis of learning principles that the education curriculum needs today. Thus, the transcendental method explains the power and energy of the human intellect and its contributions in the transformation of an individual learner into a responsible person.

### 1.1. Introduction

*Transcendental Method is an approach to knowing which Bernard Lonergan proposes for an authentic human existence. The method posits that learning is the process of self-awareness, where we can attain deep level, systematic and comprehensive accounts of education. It nurtures the whole child beyond mere academic achievements by imparting educational ideals that explain how we one come to know about what is true and do what is right. Basically, education is a lifelong journey of discovering which truly completes the transformation of human life through critical reflection. The approach is a reasoned means to learning that propels the subject towards conscious activity. It builds our ability for better self-understanding, deeper relationships, and a stronger sense of life's purpose. In other words, the method helps a person to be oneself, guiding personal growth and shaping individuals with knowledge, sound judgment, and moral values. Thus, the method provides significant contributions to curriculum ideals as it courageously confronts the challenges that besets the educational programs. It does these in three different ways; as a drive towards objectivity, takes judgment as the basic means of knowing and it leads the learner into taking responsibility in his or her daily life.*

| Nomenclature                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A: Lonergan's Transcendental Method nurtures the whole child into a potential child after knowing or learning. |
| B: The method provokes insight and the yearning for more knowledge acquisition.                                |

|                                                                                  |
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| <b>C</b> <b>further nomenclature continues down the page inside the text box</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **1.2. Structure**

### *1.2.1. Introduction*

### *1.2.2. Transcendental Method as a Drive towards Objectivity of Knowledge*

### *1.2.3. Judgment as the Basis of Human Affirmation*

### *1.2.4. Responsibility: The Culmination of Holistic Learning*

### *1.2.4. Conclusion.*

### 1.3. Construction of references

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#### 1.4. Section headings

Transcendental Method as a Drive towards Objectivity of Knowledge

Judgment as the Basis of Human Affirmation

Responsibility: The Culmination of Holistic Learning

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