

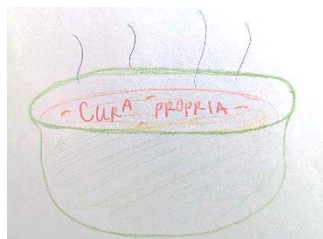
I found many parts of Dr. Yandell’s presentation in session three that resonated with me, especially as someone with a background in psychology. I was already familiar with the concept of the “lizard brain” and the idea of a “wise mind” as a balance between emotional and logical thinking. I’ve also connected with the “lizard brain” representing a survival mode—fight, flight, or freeze—where the brain overreacts to something as if it were an attacking lion. The idea of reflection as a fully “immersive, detailed, and sensory” experience appealed to me as a visual learner and daydreamer.

Research has shown that someone can stop a panic attack by identifying what they see, hear, taste, feel, and smell. This is a concrete example of using visualization and the senses to move from survival mode into a clearer state of mind—ideally a creative or reflective mode. Although I’ve never experienced a panic attack, I’ve found this activity helpful for calming my mind when I’m in a busy or survival mode—especially as someone who experiences anxiety.

This practice also helps when stress impacts my work at Xavier. During times of significant change or when things get especially busy, I can become overwhelmed by my to-do list and potential challenges. This pulls me away from being present, engaged, and in a creative or reflective mindset. In the past, when I found myself in one of these states, it seeped into my interactions with colleagues and those I was mentoring or supervising—and at times, even became “contagious.” Being in a reflective or creative mindset, rather than a busy one, also makes it easier to think of possible solutions and come up with innovative ways to approach work. Over the last few years, I’ve worked on being more aware of my mindset and better at shifting it, so I can remain a calm and resourceful leader for others. The concepts and activities presented by Dr. Yandell will be very helpful in this lifelong project. So, my new mantra: “*Be the Monk, not the Monk-ey*” (or Lizard).

I also encounter students who are experiencing anxiety and are stuck in survival mode. Many are in a constant state of busy mode, trying to finish assignments and accomplish their next goal. I plan to use these concepts to help them build mindfulness and recognize when they’re in these modes, so they can begin working on ways to shift out of them.

As someone who is a visual learner, I use spatial memory and visual recognition regularly—whether while praying, meditating, reading a book, or trying to understand the “big picture” in order to grasp a situation or resolve a problem. I use metaphors and analogies every day to explain ideas to others (ask me about my “studying is like folding laundry” analogy). The “big picture” visualization of the Jesuit values in the banner was very helpful in seeing how they relate to one another.



The activity of putting a Jesuit Value into a symbolic picture brought the concept closer to home for me and for those in my group. I drew *Cura Propria* as a bowl of soup—meant to heal and soothe, as well as offer warmth and hospitality to others. The idea that you cannot pour from an empty cup (or in this case, bowl) also came to mind during this activity. I’m planning to lead this reflection with my colleagues during an all-hands meeting in April or before a staff meeting.

In summary, using visualization activities to help shift mindsets can benefit colleagues, students, and myself—and will make me a better teammate, leader, and advisor.