

# Transformative, outcomes-based education (T-OBE)

## 1. Applied Educational Philosophies

A defining element of DGBC's educational philosophy is its European context and its mission to impart the teachings of Buddhism—together with the skills of Buddhist self-cultivation and personal development, the cultivation of body and mind—to Christian and Christian-background lay students.

- Fundamentally, Whitehead's educational theory, the perspective of creative change, process philosophy, the student's role in self-development, level-based self-development (emotional engagement, the level of precision, and the level of generalization), and the social context together provide the foundation for personal religious experience.<sup>1</sup>
- Steiner, Waldorf, Montessori, Dewey, Howard Gardner (the use of multiple intelligences in learning, e.g., linguistic intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence).
- Stephen Sterling's theory of education (sustainable, ecological, transformative education), Barbara Rogoff's theory of collaborative learning, Asian Buddhist educational models.
- Holistic Education (Krishnamurti: whole-person development, deep learning, learning organised into life cycles; Gandhi: learning integrated with activity).
- Buddhist Teacher Education: graduating competitive teachers; child education that nurtures children who strive to make the world a better place; the Buddhist teacher's self-transformation; and the aspiration to liberation and enlightenment during the training cycle.

## 2. Interpretation of Transformative, Outcomes-Based Education

- Methodology of teaching Buddhism; the model and practice of the Buddha's own teaching.
- Differences in transmission traditions across the various schools; equality of individuals; individual attunement; and interpretive questions concerning the teaching of Buddhism and its understanding.

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<sup>1</sup>Hill, R. B. *Alfred North Whitehead's Approach to Education: Implications for religious education.*

- What it means to enrol in a programme; what students are committing to; and the challenges and pitfalls of completing the programmes.
- Methodology tailored to each learner’s capacities, drawing on European transformative pedagogies (Montessori, Waldorf).
- Developing the capacity for reflexivity from contemporary pedagogies of transformative education: the student should be able to understand their frames of reference and beliefs; to understand them anew and transform them; and to interpret Buddhism as a perspective for transforming one’s life framework. The programme’s core aim is to enable students to interpret the problems and belief systems within their social, family, and personal lifeworld; to engage in critical self-reflection and critique of others; to shape new frameworks and discourses grounded in the transformative practice of Buddhism; and, through reflective evaluation, to take effective action.
- DGBC’s endeavour aligns with the UNESCO<sup>2</sup> perspective that transformative education is fundamental to motivating and empowering students and to developing their capacity to act—on the basis of informed decision-making—at individual, community, and global levels. Within sustainable, innovative education, the pillars of pedagogy, didactics, and assessment include **\*\*Student-Centered Education\*\***—embracing team- and project-based learning, experiential learning, and non-formal learning elements. Preparing learners for sustainability requires competencies across the cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural domains, with assessment for learning given particular emphasis.
- Jack Mezirow<sup>3</sup>’s theory of transformative learning rests on two fundamental elements: instrumental learning and communicative learning. Instrumental learning places emphasis on task-oriented problem solving and understanding cause-and-effect relationships. Be able—through communicative learning—to understand and articulate emotions, needs, and aspirations, and to adopt new perspectives. Within interpretive frameworks and structures, disposition and attitude—and how expectations are construed—are of central importance. Self-reflection and self-directed learning are reframed through new Buddhist perspectives. Paths of transformation: disorientation, self-examination, critical analysis of dispositions, action, discovering new perspectives, developing a learning strategy, adopting new roles, building new relationships; the aim is to develop self-efficacy.
  - Understanding Buddhism—as an idea, a system of action, and a religious and personal culture—as a new holistic lens from the individual’s perspective.
  - Interpreting students’ needs, perspectives, and expectations.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/five-questions-transformative-education> . McGill Journal of Education, Vol.23. No.1. 1988.

<sup>3</sup>Mezirow, J. (1997) Transformative Learning: Theory and Practice. José Buss Publisher.

- Cultivating critical discourse in Buddhist philosophy and religion.
- Buddhist Transformative Practices: experiential engagement with yoga, meditation, and counselling.
- The religious community's experience in forming Buddhist lifestyle communities.
- Dialogue and debate; sharing of teaching experience; discussion of students' work and studies.
- Strengthening communication among students.
- Intersubjectivity in the student–instructor relationship.
- Open and Collaborative Learning.

### 3. Perspectives on Chaplaincy Education

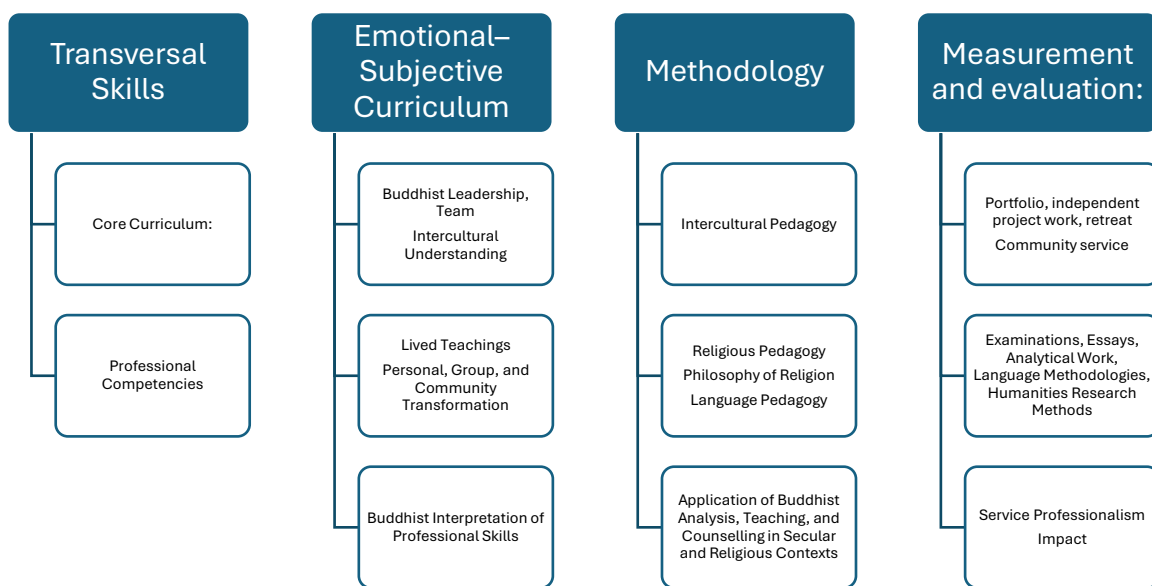
Founded in 1991, in the early years of the democratic transition, DGBC was established to carry forward the intellectual legacy and research of Hungary's great scholars of Eastern studies and to make the teachings of the rich Buddhist tradition widely accessible in Hungary. Over the past thirty years, theological and chaplaincy education in the countries of the historic West has undergone profound change—driven by the decline in religiosity, shifts in the standing of Catholicism and the historic Protestant churches, and the emergence of Islam and other new religious communities. This shift has significantly transformed American and European theological education, with the impact of postmodern political thought and philosophy also playing a role. The most consequential development—alongside systematic and biblical theology—was the rise of practical theology, understood not as mere “applied theology” but as a reconfiguration of the chaplain's vocation and role. Moving beyond the earlier “clerical” paradigm—training for church office-holders and religious orders—three distinct models of theological education have crystallized:

- a. The pragmatic theology model of education integrates the social sciences into theological study, giving particular prominence to narrative perspectives, dialogue, and socially critical approaches. This reframed the chaplain's chief task as living out and acting on the principles of faith within communities—not necessarily religious ones. Essentially an intellectual vocation, aiming to deliver effective chaplaincy by combining community leadership with the responsibilities of a practising theologian. On this basis, alongside descriptive, historical, and systematic theology, **strategic practical theology** was incorporated into the course offerings. In religious occupations, beyond teaching, pastoral care, preaching, and liturgical service, responsibilities also include social functions—such as operating schools, social service institutions, cultural institutions, and healthcare facilities. In other words, alongside internal church organization and administration, programmes now also prepare for community-facing roles.

- b. The defining feature of the *cultural–linguistic model of theological education* is its emphasis on the narratives and linguistic dimensions of religious faith, in contrast to the narrower perspectives of the Enlightenment and modernity. In this model, the shared religious practice of instructor and student is central; it encompasses the religious cultivation of body and mind and emphasizes the capacity for receptivity. The programme supports individuals in addressing everyday life challenges; making ethical and moral decisions; observing holy days; participating in rituals; engaging in communal singing; alleviating suffering; and dealing with issues around birth, marriage, and a dignified death and the process of dying. Its means include the exploration and transmission of ancient traditions; the evocation of words, gestures, languages, modes of thought, and situations; and the lived practice of a faith-informed way of life. In this model and system, the teacher—in the role of instructor—is the storyteller and transmitter of stories, doctrines, and texts, while the academic community functions as a professional community of practice. In this model, the teacher is a partner who teaches the practice and elucidates its values and meaning; in essence, their role is the transmission of know-how.
- c. The third perspective in chaplaincy education is *contextual practical theology*, which represents a radical postmodern perspective. It seeks to rearticulate spirituality and social praxis, positioning the chaplaincy role through the lens of marginalized difference and interpreting it within the conditions of minority life. In this capacity, the chaplain assumes a critical social function—including radical, society-shaping roles (Bethlehem—the Holy Family—through an intersectional perspective).
- d. *Chaplaincy Education in the Buddhist Tradition*: Today, perspectives in American and Western European Christian and Buddhist theological education have shifted markedly—from the pragmatic model toward contextual practical theology. European Buddhist ecclesial communities, in clear contrast to modernity’s essentialist–rationalist outlook, conceive communities as communities of practice. In Europe, there is no systematic training for theologians, and religious occupations are only now emerging. DGBC’s educational model is the cultural–linguistic chaplaincy education model, in which instructors and students jointly surface the practices that constitute the core of Buddhist teaching; teacher education is anchored in social thought and spiritual counselling, interpreted through community, historical-theological, linguistic, and contextual practical-theology perspectives.
- e. *Buddhist Teacher Education in Hungary*: At DGBC we welcome practising Buddhists, as well as younger and older applicants who seek to think deeply and to know themselves—who are not afraid to take the shaping of their own humanity into their own hands. We educate spiritually and intellectually mature individuals with integrated personalities who, on the path of inquiry, reject no method; they

can use and value the teachings of living lineages and traditional commentaries just as readily as the tools of academic Asian studies, philosophy, linguistics, and cultural anthropology. Our students also become able to put the teachings of Buddhism—and the way of life developed for laypeople and monastics—into practice here and now, in Hungary and across Europe. By pursuing their own intellectual path, they recognize the centering and transformative impact of traditional Buddhist teaching on contemporary people.

## 4. DGBC’s Cultural–Linguistic Practical–Theology Approach to Education AND THE CURRICULUM



### 4.1. Core Curriculum:

- Interpreting the transformative role of religious faith, religion, and religious culture; the anthropology of Buddhism.
- The Buddhist teaching itself: exegesis and commentaries on the Buddha’s teachings; traditions and schools.
- The languages and textual traditions of Buddhism; the translation of Buddhist sacred scriptures as religious praxis, and its integration and comparison with other religions.
- Comparative study of Buddhist and European philosophy.
- The practice of Buddhist meditation; communal and individual meditation; movement-based meditation.
- The transmission of Buddhist rituals, ceremonies, and liturgical order.
- Applied Buddhism

### 4.2. Outcomes through Specialisations:

- The language specialisation conveys this cultural–linguistic practical theology.

- The History of Religions and Philosophy specialisation prepares students for research careers and for the advancement of systematic theology.
- The Buddhist Meditation specialisation develops competences for transmitting a practical-theology-oriented way of life and daily practice.

#### *4.3. The substantive components of the cultural-linguistic practical-theological perspective:*

Our students can explore the histories, teachings, and practices of multiple Buddhist traditions, while also engaging with the religious systems that have framed them historically and philosophically—such as Hinduism and Taoism—and with the broader heritage of European philosophy and religious history. Our practically oriented students **can learn meditation, yoga, and other forms of movement, while those more interested in philosophy and religious thought** may dedicate their studies to refining their thinking. Our students interested in languages and original texts can currently choose from **three classical Eastern languages (Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan)**. In the credit-based programme, specialisations are launched every year or every two years, and—after a successful final exam—they are recorded on the diploma alongside the theological degree title “Buddhist Teacher.”

#### *4.4. Interpretation of modules, learning methodology, and assessment procedures*

##### **4.4.1. Religious Studies modules:**

- Religious history
- Religions of India
- Theravāda Buddhism
- Mahāyāna (Zen) Buddhism
- Vajrayāna (Tibetan) Buddhism
- Applied Buddhism

##### *Instruction:*

Religious Studies Paradigms:

- **Descriptive focus:** outlining Buddhist beliefs, doctrines, and rituals; engaging phenomenological perspectives and first-person experience; and applying ethnographic and anthropological lenses to the contexts of its traditions.
- **Analytical focus:** sociological perspectives on Buddhism and the cultural forces shaping religious beliefs and practices, along with the psychological factors behind religious experience in Buddhist contexts.
- **Comparative emphasis:** Buddhist comparative mythology that maps similarities and differences among traditions; the patterns of Buddhism’s diffusion across different cultures; and comparative theology examining theological concepts and doctrines both in other religions and within Buddhist schools.

##### *Learning:*

Knowledge of the history of religions, methodology, the development of new theological frameworks and research perspectives, moving beyond European viewpoints, and hermeneutical methodology in text analysis and textual criticism.

*Measurement and evaluation:*

Exposition, essays, discourses, critical thinking, intercultural communication, digital humanities

**4.4.2. Philosophy modules:**

- History of philosophy
- Buddhist philosophy
- Comparative philosophy
- Philosophical schools of India
- Philosophic disciplines

*Instruction:*

The main philosophical schools within Buddhism, the Four Principles System (Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra, Madhyamaka)

*Learning:*

Key philosophical concepts underpinning the Four Principles System: the Four Noble Truths; the Noble Eightfold Path; the Three Marks of Existence (anicca, dukkha, anattā); dependent origination; secular Buddhism; thought and ethics.

*Measurement and evaluation:*

Setting individual goals; cultivating right effort and right thinking; demonstrating causal relationships; connecting knowledge to one's life situation; offering well-considered articulation of views; bringing out the best in students; and fostering an independent, egalitarian teacher–student relationship.

**4.4.3. Languages and Sources of Buddhism modules:**

- Exegesis of Buddhist Scriptures
- Reading of Buddhist Technical Texts
- Buddhist technical terminology
- Dharma Conversation

*Instruction:*

In Buddhist education, alongside so-called textbook Buddhism, text analysis and problem-based learning also play a role—not primarily aimed at training researchers or translators, but at fostering an understanding of the suttas and the Buddha's teachings.

*Learning:*

Text selections, step-by-step grammar concepts, and sutta selections support the student.

*Measurement and evaluation:*

Translations, concept and text interpretations.

#### 4.4.4. Buddhist Meditation modules:

- Movement-based meditation
- Meditation practice, retreat
- The theory of meditation

#### *Instruction:*

Mindfulness-based learning, constructivist frameworks, teaching self-awareness and emotional regulation skills.

#### *Learning:*

Perceiving and reflecting on one's inner state; student-centred learning; and fostering both academic and personal well-being.

#### *Measurement and evaluation:*

Experiential learning, cultivating and discovering Buddha-nature, ethical conduct, psychological perspectives.

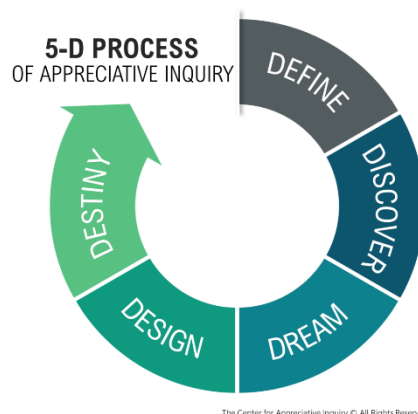
## 5. The practice of transformative, outcomes-based and student-centered education

### 5.1. ASSESSING THE STUDENT'S INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

#### 5.1.1. The methodology of Appreciative Inquiry

##### 1. Figure The 5D methodology of Appreciative Inquiry

- 5 D methodology: Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny



The technique of Appreciative Inquiry is an internationally recognized method of positive personality development, supported by a rich body of literature.

#### 5.1.2. Personal Balanced Scorecard-based planning

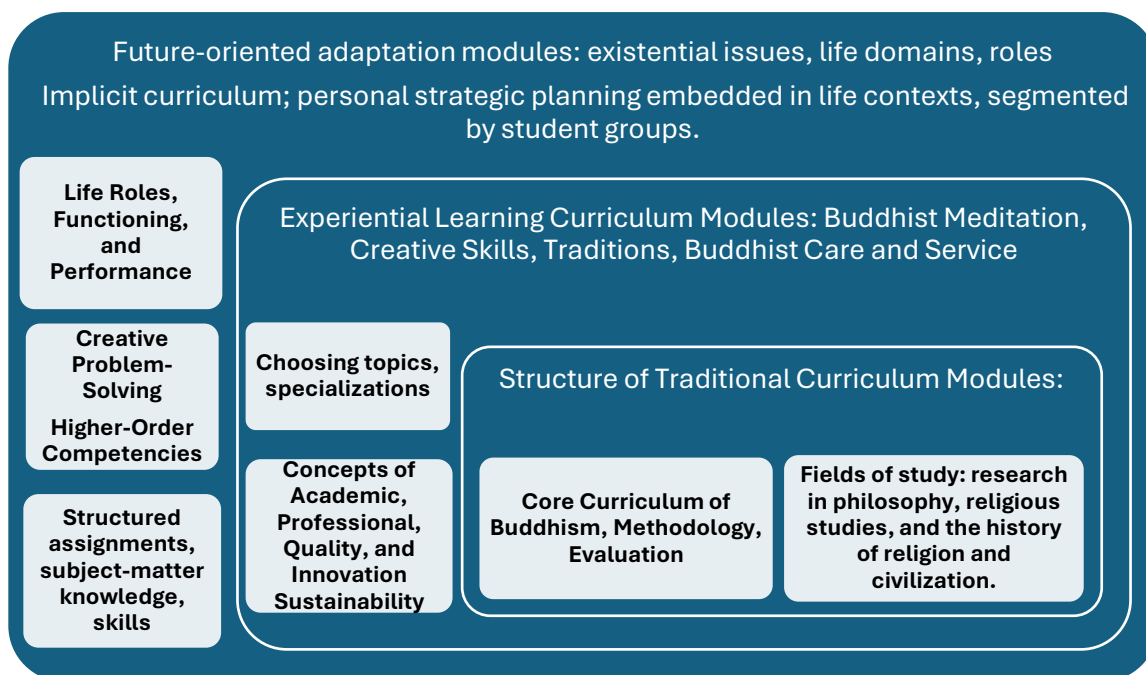


2. Figure Applying the BSC to individual goals

Training period: activities, tasks, and action goals during the programme.						
Buddhist Eightfold Path goals						
Liberation from suffering						
Personal potential: health and well-being goals						
Learning goals						
Lifestyle and resource management						
Developing close and meaningful personal relationships						
Groups, community memberships						
Livelihood, work, entrepreneurship						
Development of the physical and cultural environment						
Family roles						

5.2. PLANNING THE CAPACITY FOR SHAPING BUDDHIST IDENTITY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

3. Figure The pedagogy of transformative outcomes



5.3. STUDENT EMPOWERMENT IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE, OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM

- Human beings are curious by nature and naturally explore their lifeworld
- People learn and perform in very different ways
- 1.3. Human beings are social beings, and their learning is naturally influenced by others

- Human beings are capable, throughout life, of learning, creating, and transforming their own lives
- Human beings use all their senses while learning
- Human beings are responsible for their own thinking and emotions
- Human beings naturally strive for quality and beauty
- Human beings are capable of perceiving their own limitations
- Human beings naturally rely on their inner conviction
- Human beings are capable of intuition, inner vision, imagination, and creativity — capacities that confer inner strength and are essentially boundless

#### 5.4. IDEAL TEACHER BEHAVIORS IN THE T-OBE METHODOLOGY

- Recognize and value the diversity of students’ backgrounds, hidden talents, interests, motivations, and intrinsic qualities.
- View learning as an intimate, multisensory, and holistic process.
- Encourages new creative ideas, frames problems, and fosters problem-solving.
- Optimizes learning conditions and institutional support so that every student can succeed
- Integrates holistic, continuous life experiences, knowledge, and identity
- Respect the brain’s natural aptitude for meaningful, harmonious, and organized thinking
- Engage deeply with the mind–body processes and their exposure to stress and disruption resulting from social and cultural influences
- Uncover students’ human potential and life experiences, and design their development pathways
- Delve into nature, the Earth’s ecosystems, and the roles of the individual within them
- Apply collaborative inquiry, activities, and student work in real-world contexts
- Use collaborative exploration and activities and situate student work in real-life contexts.
- Fundamentally integrate ethical and moral themes into the educational process and offer appropriate solution proposals for students.

#### 5.5. BUDDHIST LEARNING IN THE NĀLANDĀ TRADITION

- Perspective: conceptual understanding
- Meditation: experiential understanding
- Application: experiences of applying knowledge in everyday life.

Learning perspectives unfold across three phases:

Viewpoint	Foundational phase
Meditation	Path
Application	Effectiveness: behavior

#### 5.6. TEACHING STYLE

- The Buddha’s teaching style (question and answer)
- Arhat style: teaching through role models

- Pandita style: academic and scholarly immersion
- Kóan-methodology