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Siew, Yau Man. "A Curriculum Model for the Evaluation of Existing Programmes of Theological Education in Asia." *Asia Journal of Theology* 9, no 1 (April 1995): 146-169.

A Curriculum Model for the Evaluation of Existing Programmes of Theological Education in Asia

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ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS of the modern era is the linking of people worldwide into global networks. With cheaper travel, people cross national boundaries and carry products and ideas to distant markets. An important implication of this globalisation for Asian theological education is that many Asian theological institutions become export models from the West. Harvie Conn points out that the pattern seems set with many of the key faculty positions occupied by western-trained professors.¹ While this can bring about a healthy cross-fertilisation of ideas, a blind copy of western models with a wholesale incorporation of curriculum and philosophy of training without thoughtful critique and recognition of contextual differences is disastrous. Not only is there the danger of dependency which can kill all initiative or creativity among indigenous efforts, but a curriculum which does not recognise social and cultural realities will produce decontextualised thinkers and theologians.² Asian scholar Bong Ro shares the same concern.

Western evangelical theological schools have emphasised the inerrancy of Scriptures and orthodox theology versus liberal and neo-orthodox theologies. But these are not major issues in Asia. Rather, the prevalent areas of concern are poverty, suffering, injustice, communism and non-Christian religions.³

As early as a decade ago, the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) identified curriculum restructuring and re-

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thinking as one of the most urgent and fundamental needs in Asian theological education.

ATESEA sponsored a curriculum construction workshop in Singapore in 1982, which resulted in the publication of three significant articles in the *East Asia Journal of Theology* in 1983.⁴ However, a review of the past issues of the *East Asian Journal Of Theology* and its successor, the *Asia Journal of Theology* shows that nothing has been published in this area since then.

This paper seeks to address this major gap by refocusing attention on this crucial area. As more and more theological institutions emerge in Asia, it is imperative that faculty and administrators be familiar with curriculum theory and design. This paper seeks to develop a diagrammatic curriculum grid model for the evaluation of existing programmes of theological education in Asia. It attempts to integrate learning and curriculum theories, theological concerns, developmental insights, content and contextual matters into a coherent whole. The goal is that one will be able to critique (and redesign) educational programmes and events with greater precision, relevance and insight.

Definition of Curriculum and Five Basic Orientations

Curriculum is used in a variety of ways in educational discourse. It can be as broad as "what schools teach" to as narrow a "a specific educational activity planned for a particular student at a particular point in time." Historically, the word is derived from the Latin, *currere*, meaning "the course to be run," with the notion of a track, a set of obstacles or tasks that an individual is to overcome, something that one aims at completing.⁵

Elliot Eisner's definition of curriculum is helpful. To him, "the curriculum of a school, or a course, or a classroom can be conceived of as a series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students."⁶ Three essential elements stand out in this definition. First, it is a series of planned events. Although a single event is possible, a series of interconnected events is more likely. It is planned because someone does something that has some aim, purpose, goal or objective. Second, it is intentional in that it seeks to be educational. Third, it has consequences. Educational events can do more than what is intended because they influence people in a wide variety of ways.

A critique of Eisner is that unplanned events can have educational consequences too. A broader perspective of curriculum as "experiences" may be more helpful. Andrew Hsiao views Christian education curriculum as "experience under guidance toward the fulfillment of the purposes of Christian education."⁷ In this light, the "hidden curriculum" of devotions, corporate worship, institutional culture, faculty disposition and interpersonal relationships take on new significance.

Hilda Taba notes that a society's underlying theories and value judgments about schooling largely influence the kind of curriculum schools will adopt.⁸ Eisner lists five basic orientations to curriculum.⁹ The first orientation sees the major function of the school as the development of cognitive processes in problem solving. What is important is not storing knowledge or content, but the impartation of process. The curriculum is problem centred, and the teacher raises questions among students to cultivate analysis and the higher mental abilities.

The second orientation sees the school's major function as fostering intellectual growth of students in subject matters most worthy of study. These classicists or rational humanists believe that all humans deal with essentially the same fundamental questions. Schools should develop human reason so that life can be critically examined and led intelligently through the study of the "great books." The third orientation sees schools responsible for developing personal meaning within students. For experience to be educational, students must have some investment in it, rather than merely being seen as members of a class.

The fourth orientation sees curriculum as a mechanism for meeting critical needs within society. Social reconstructionists identify society's problems and design school programme to help children understand and cope with them. Another social view looks at society to see what students need to get ahead and build curriculum to achieve that goal.

The fifth orientation sees curriculum essentially as a technical undertaking, a question of relating means to ends – a way of systematising educational planning.

It is clear that curriculum is closely tied to the philosophy, explicit or implicit, that one brings to any given programme of studies. Emilio Nunez points to three important philosophical questions which every curriculum should respond to: (1) "Whom do we want to educate theologically?" 2) "For whom and for what do we want to educate them?" (3) "How do we want to educate them?"¹⁰ Theological educators need to re-examine underlying values and biases which undergird their philosophy of theological education and influence curriculum planning. The key question is, "What is the purpose of theological education in the light of the gospel, theology of the church, mission, and the task of theology?" Asked in another way, "What kind of graduates are we producing through the use of this curriculum? Is this goal concurrent with our understanding of the gospel, ecclesiology, mission, and the task of theology?"

Purpose of Theological Education

Edward Farley provides a powerful historical critique of some of the dominant models (and goals) of theological education in the West.¹¹ The first, provided by the monastic model is *habitus*, or the development of

“life-wisdom,” where the primary concern is the development of a lifestyle of spirituality that is not clearly distinguished from the cognitive effort to rationally apprehend the truth of God’s revelation in history. The second model views theology as a “science,” a discipline of systematic inquiry and exposition seeking to relate theology to other domains of knowledge. The third, or “university” model is prevalent in university departments of religion today. Theology is primarily the work of theological faculties, with chairs in different specialised branches. The fourth or “clerical paradigm” model, searches for a focus of unity among the fragmented curriculum in theological seminaries in the principle of ministerial practice.

Christopher Duraisingh insightfully points to the major weakness of the western models in that they all leave out the vital aspects of ecclesiology and mission.¹² He calls for the reaffirmation of the apostolate as the singular *raison d’être* of the Church, rather than seeing mission as one among many functions of the Church, the Church is a function in God’s mission – “God’s constant, outgoing and self-giving love manifested in Jesus Christ.”¹³ If the Church is the instrument and expression of God’s Kingdom in this world, then the goal of theological education is to “form” people in the local congregations for their participation in God’s mission, both locally and globally. Following Gnana Robinson¹⁴ and Nacpil,¹⁵ the underlying perspective and organising principle of Duraisingh’s paradigm is missiological.

In a similar vein, Orville Nyblade believes that the purpose of theological education, in its most simple form, is to enable Christians to do theology.¹⁶ If the Church is a community of believers who reflect upon the meaning of their faith for their lives, and then going out to the world to serve in accordance with the conclusions of their reflections, then theological education should facilitate this theological task. Theological education therefore exists for the purpose of doing theology and is not a function of an elite that have been trained academically.

John Stott suggests that the biblical doctrine of the Church points to her double identity of “holy worldliness.”¹⁷ The Church is a people called out of the world to worship God (I Pet. 2:5, 9) and sent back into the world to witness and serve (John 17:18; 20:21). Thus, she is simultaneously “holy” (distinct from the world). For Stott, the essence of doing theology is to practise “double-listening,” – to the Word and to the world. Where listening to the Word alone can result in escapism, listening to the world alone can issue in conformity. In calling for “doublelistening,” Stott follows Helmut Thielicke’s definition of theology as “a debate between the *kerygma* and self-understanding of the age.”¹⁸

In sum, our philosophy of theological education influences the kind of curriculum we adopt. The purpose of theological education is not the training in abstract theological thought for respectable scholarship,¹⁹ but to enable the Church to fulfil her mission in the world. It is to enable every

member of the Church to “do theology” by critically applying God’s revealed Word to one’s social and cultural context. To the extent that Asian theological education is not teaching Asians to inform, critique and transform their world in fulfillment of the *Missio Dei*, it has failed in its goal. This concept of the purpose of theological education stems from a foundational understanding of the gospel, ecclesiology, mission and the task of theology.

A Curriculum Grid Model

This curriculum model is an adaptation of the models of Lois McKinney,²⁰ Brian Hill²¹ and Duraisingh.²² The author has retained useful ideas

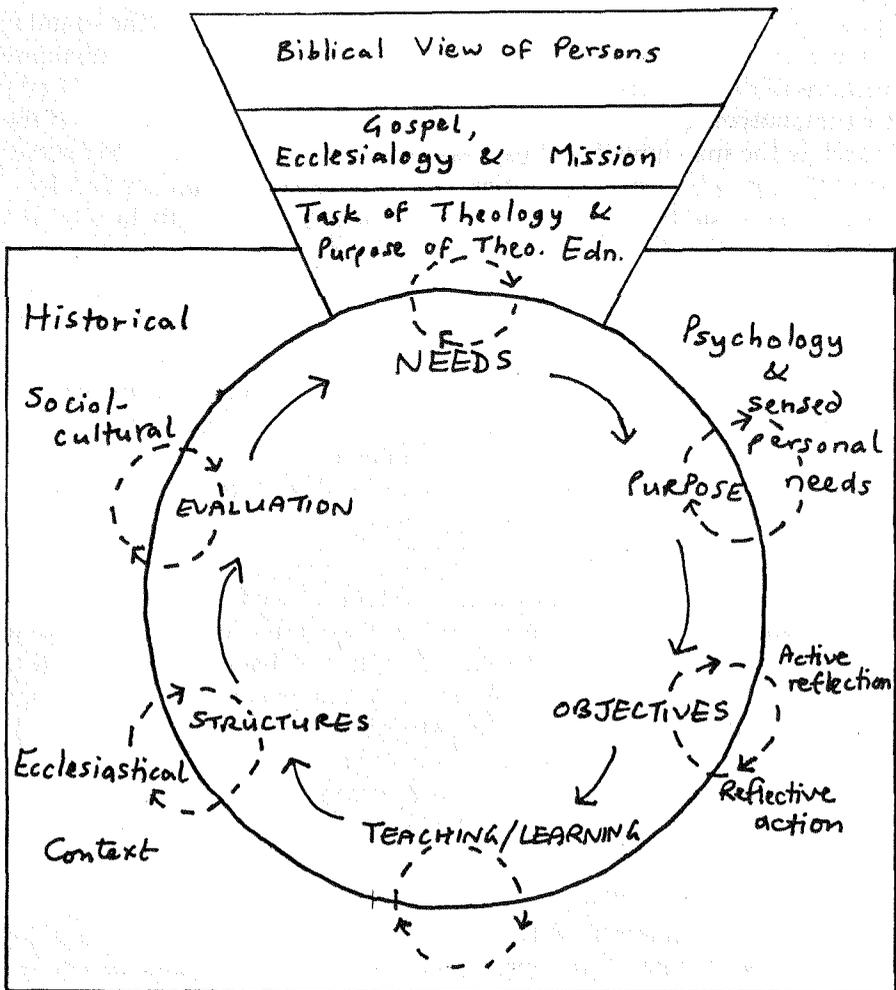


Figure 1: A Curriculum Grid Model

in each design but incorporated major sections which reflect new ideas from the fields of theology, education and missiology.

Contextual Reflection

The foundational principle of this model is that curriculum development must begin with prior contextual reflection. There must be a sincere and informed attempt to understand significant aspects of the history, contemporary culture and ecclesiastical life of a country. A key question of such contextual reflection is: "What implications for theological reflection and curriculum design grow out of this context?" To ensure contextual sensitivity, there is a continuous cycle of active-reflection and reflective-action of the designer upon context at every stage of the curriculum plan in the light of the gospel, theology of the Church, mission and the task of theology.

Psychology and Sensed Personal Needs

Another important aspect of this model is the attention given to the psychology and sensed personal needs of the learner in the light of a biblical view of persons. Secular learning theorists often work from inadequate views of the nature of persons. Behaviourism focuses heavily on a deterministic model of selfhood which is deprived of human dignity.²³ Although classical Romanticism celebrates the imaginative, the childlike and the expressive elements,²⁴ it fails to recognise the Fall which marred the *imago Dei*, thus making no adjustments for the innate devious and selfish behaviour of learners. Transmissionists liken the educational enterprise to a factory with the student as the raw material to be moulded. The goal is to transmit efficiently and scientifically a cultural or religious heritage to the next generation.²⁵ Although transmissionists can sharpen one's approach to teaching and learning or even curtail individualism, its major weakness is to pass on knowledge without affecting lives. The danger is to confuse knowing God with knowing about God. Revelational theology believes that the Creator God has spoken and in his word is life. John Dewey, an open antagonist of supernaturalism, applied pragmatism, empiricism and Darwinian evolutionism to education and advocated a comprehensive developmental philosophy of education. The developmentalist metaphor is that the student is a scientist who sees knowledge as a tool to make sense out of the world.²⁶ Although developmentalism encourages active learning, reflection and self-motivation, it frequently downplays the values of one's religious heritage.

In contrast, the Christian recognises the individual's worth and capacity to make responsible decisions about life and what one needs to learn. In this light, learning is encouraged through collaborative planning and shared authority. Collaborative planning includes opportunities for learners to participate in and accept responsibility for planning and implementing their own learning objectives, activities and assessment. Brundage and

Mackeracher notes that adult learners are highly motivated to learn in areas relevant to their current developmental tasks, social roles, life crises and transition periods. In Asia, cultural conditioning tends to place teachers on a pedestal, resulting in little interactions with students except in the classroom. Even then, communication is mostly one-way and subject-centred, with the teacher setting the sole agenda for the class. Learners are seen as dependent, ignorant, and mere "receptacles" of information, with punishment or external reward as the only motivation to learning. Such an attitude not only fosters unhealthy dependence, but produces passive learners who know how to be taught, but have not learned how to learn.²⁷ If the Bible emphasises the importance of the individual and the worth of each person before God, it is not inappropriate for theological institutions to mirror this same biblical affirmation in participatory educational planning. A biblical understanding of persons also recognises human limitations resulting from the Fall. In this light, discipline, relevant teacher input and structure are also wisely applied.

Needs

All educational agendas must begin with an assessment of needs. A wise curriculum designer will reflect upon the historical, socio-cultural, and ecclesiastical context of the country and ask some pertinent questions. What are some of the major historical developments which have affected this country and formed its people? Are there watershed political events which have affected the political structure, thinking and economic future of the country? What is the socio-cultural background of the learner? What are some of the predominant social forces and how are they affecting the learner? What are their needs and abilities? What are they used to, the institutions they have inherited, and the expectations they have of the roles of learner and teacher? How mature is the learner theologically? Ecclesiastically, the planner needs to reflect upon the historical development, maturity and needs of the Church. Is she in a pluralistic environment? If so, how has she related with other faiths? What are some of the pressures facing her leaders? What is the profile of a typical pastor/leader and is this person sufficiently equipped for the needs of the Church? What are the quantitative and qualitative leadership needs? The essential overarching question in this crucial exercise is, "What implications for theological reflection and education grow out of this context?"

Purpose

After needs are clarified from contextual reflection, the next phase of curriculum planning is the development of purpose. Simply defined, a purpose is a statement of the primary reason being of a particular institution, programme, or department in theological education. It basically tells "who does what, and for whom."²⁸

When writing a programme purpose, it is important to name the programme, define the target group, give reasons for its existence, highlight its uniqueness and define its perimeters. While contextual reflection needs assessment, and participatory planning provides some useful guidelines, Ford notes that institutional purpose statements, educational goals and objectives (when they exist) can provide helpful directives for the drafting of programme purpose statements. Theoretically, the combination of all programme purpose statements should equal the statement of institutional purpose.²⁹

Objectives

Ralph Tyler believes that the formulation of objectives is the first and most crucial step in curricula planning.³⁰ Ford defines educational objective as "a statement of learning intent which expresses what learners should be able to do well as a result of a programme's fulfillment of its purpose and goals."³¹ While one's philosophy of education plays an important role, there are other important sources of influence in setting objectives. Learners' "needs" and "interests" can be ascertained through observation, interview and questionnaire. Subject specialists can provide information as to what subjects will contribute toward the education of a person. An institution's educational and social philosophy, expressed in purpose statements are important.³² A major source of information for educational objectives comes from contextual reflection and an assessment of community needs. Nyblade proposes an interesting curriculum for theological education in Africa by asking, "What *knowledge, attitudes and skills* are of *most worth* to the individual Christian minister and the community to which one belongs?" (Emphases mine.) He answers this set of questions in the context of the four-fold division of theology (Biblical, Systematic, Historical and Pastoral studies) and suggests some novel objectives for African theological education.³³

Tyler notes that objectives should be stated in a form which is helpful in selecting learning experiences and guiding teaching. he suggests that the most useful objectives are expressed in terms which identify both the kind of behaviour to be developed in the student and the content or area of life in which this behaviour is to operate.³⁴ For example, the objective, "Cite important and helpful primary texts (in English translation with references both to text and source of translation) for understanding the historical-cultural context of I Tim. 2:9-10, includes both an indication of the sort of behaviour, namely, "citation of important and helpful primary texts for understanding historical-cultural context," and the content, namely, "I Tim. 2:9-10." A possible use of Tyler's two-dimensional chart in stating objectives for a biblical exegesis course based on I Timothy is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Illustration of the Use of a Two-Dimensional Chart in Stating Objectives for a Biblical Exegesis of 1 Timothy

Behavioural Aspects of Objectives

	Cite important Primary texts (Lev. Translations) Historical-Cultural Context	Literary Context/ Sentence Flow	Textual Criticism/ Grammar	Word Study	Parallel texts - biblical - non-biblical	Sentence exegesis	Exegesis for Sermon preparation
2:9-10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2:14							

Content aspect of Objectives

Using the foundations set by Tyler, some scholars differentiate between cognitive skills and affective objectives.³⁵ They recommend that verbs used in setting objectives must be observable and/or measurable (“To list, identify, construct” rather than “to understand or grasp”). They must be sharpened with conditions and criteria (“To demonstrate achievement of this goal, the student ...”) and usage of the second person is recommended (“When you have ... you will be able to ...”). Writing such objectives can be tedious and cumbersome as they follow a hierarchy of goals.³⁶ Institutional purposes and goals filter down to programme purposes, goals and objectives, which in turn filter down to department purposes, goals and objectives. By the time course and individual lesson plan goals and objectives are listed, they form a massive amount of work.

There is increasing debate over the validity of using behavioural (measurable) objectives in course design. While recognising a place for clearly defined objectives in cases which call for specified skills or competencies, Eisner believes that one should not feel compelled to abandon educational aims that cannot be reduced to measurable forms of predictable performance.³⁷ Limiting educational aspirations to what is verbally describable or measurable is to expect too little. Although aesthetic, cogency, style, and analytical skills cannot be measured, it does not mean judgments cannot be made about them.

Eisner provides two alternatives. First, he calls for “problem solving objectives” – where the problem, and the criteria needed to resolve it are clearly posed. An everyday example of such problem solving is the work of an architect. When asked to design a house the architect is given a site, budget, personal life-style of occupant, preferred architectural styles, and

information about builder and municipal codes. The designs the architect can come out with are virtually infinite. In this approach, the premium is on cognitive flexibility, intellectual exploration and the use of the higher mental processes.

Second, he suggests the use of "expressive outcomes." If the weakness of behavioural objectives is the prescription of goals as rational measurable ends, then the strength of this proposal is the freedom for the involvement of educational outcomes. To Eisner, "purposes need not precede activities, they can be formulated in the process of action itself."³⁸ A trip to the zoo, camping, or mountain climb may not have pre-formulated goals, but the educational outcomes can be powerful.

Using a model similar to Tyler, McKinney recommends the use of a two-dimensional chart to plan curriculum by listing objectives and learning experiences.³⁹ Table 2 illustrates the use of such a chart in developing curriculum for a leadership course in Malaysia.

Table 2: use of a Two-Dimensional Chart in Developing Curriculum for a Leadership Development Course for Anglican Lay Readers in West Malaysia
Objectives

Activities \ Scope & Balance	Objectives												
	Asian Religions	Islamization	Race	Emigration	Work & Success	Biblical theology	Church hist. & sacraments	Preaching	Family /IR + counseling	Baptism & confirmation	Principles of Biblical Interpretation	Leadership	Spirituality
Visit site	✓							✓	✓				✓
Reading & Study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Case study	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Role-plays			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	
Practicum								✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Group research & presentation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Stories			✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓
Drama			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Simulation				✓	✓							✓	

To guide overall curriculum planning, McKinney suggests three important questions. First, one must decide on the scope. It must be broad enough to include needs, purposes and objectives, but narrow enough to exclude others. Second, one must balance priorities in the midst of available re-

sources. Questions about qualified faculty, library holdings, and indeed, student maturity, are essential. Third, one must decide about sequencing. This is based on one's theoretical base. David Ausubel's organising principle is the subject matter and his goal of curriculum sequencing is content mastery.⁴⁰ Piaget, Kohlberg and Fowler aim at growth through developmental stages.⁴¹ Robert Gange seeks to achieve skills development through task analysis.⁴² Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles use the needs of the learner to achieve self actualisation.⁴³ Paulo Freire encourages conscientisation through the organising principle of the needs of the community.⁴⁴

In sum, objectives are important in that they help select learning experiences and guide teaching. Objectives are useful when they specify learner behaviour and identify the content area in which behaviour is to take place. Limiting objectives to behavioural outcomes may be short sighted because one limits educational aims to measurable forms of predictable performance. Problem solving objectives and other forms of expressive outcomes which indicate cogency, style, analytical skills and critical thinking should also be sought. Essential determinants of curriculum are scope, balance between priorities and resources, and sequencing.

Teaching and Learning

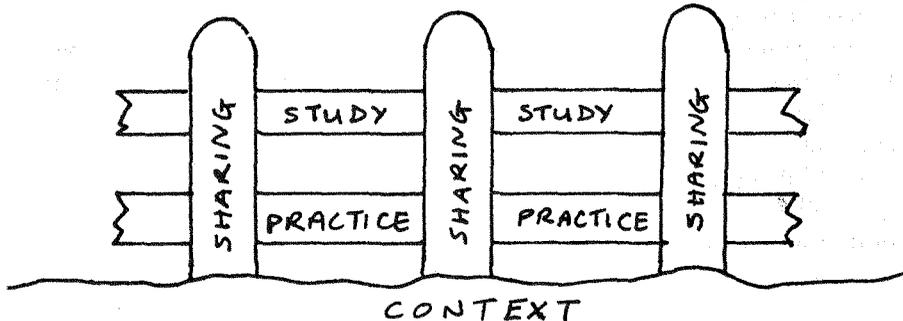
Asian theological institutions have embraced the schooling⁴⁵ model for theological education without adequate critical appraisal. One is therefore not aware of some of the dangers of schooling. Ivan Illich points out that the school, as an institution, is built on the axiom that learning is the result of teaching. Yet, we all learned most of what we know – speaking, thinking, loving, feeling, playing, cursing, politicking and working, without inference from a teacher. Increasingly educational research shows that children learn most from peer groups, comics, chance observations, and above all, from mere participation in the ritual of school. Illich recommends that we adopt a “de-schooled” frame of mind and view “schooling” as one of the many ways a society learns. Other effective and efficient modes of learning come from experience, culture, history and reflection.

Freire notes that one of the fundamental errors of the schooling model is it views learners as “receptors” rather than communicators. His diagnosis is that education is suffering from “narration sickness.” The teacher seeks to fill the students with the contents of narration – contents often detached from their reality and totality which give them significance. Such a “banking” concept of education is oppressive because students are educated to fit a situation without development of critical thought and in the end, submerges consciousness.⁴⁶

Ted Ward, a lone prophet in the theological educational wilderness for more than three decades, insightfully points to a long list of schooling characteristics which are defective to theological education. However, he

does not support discarding the schooling system, but rather views these defects as reasons for the continuous necessity for renewal.⁴⁷ Ward and Sam Rowen developed the rail-fence approach to curriculum development in theological education. They combine the elements of study, practice and sharing within a particular context for effectiveness.

Figure 2: The Rail-Fence Approach to Theological Education – developed by Ted Ward and Sam Rowen



Eleanor Duckworth considers the development of ideas as the essence of intellectual development. Working with children, she discovered that the right question at the right time can move children to peaks in their thinking, resulting in significant steps forward and real intellectual excitement. In addition, she found that ideas cannot spring out of nothing. They build on a foundation of other ideas.⁴⁸ What this means for theological education is that teachers must encourage learners to explore with their own ideas by providing the right setting and an accepting environment.

Case studies are an excellent teaching tool for the development and testing of ideas in theological education. The power and the beauty of case study is that it presents problems from an “actual slice of human life in the world,” which learners must solve using principles of their disciplines.⁴⁹ It forces critical reflection from a variety of perspectives. Cases are a way of entry into the Christian tradition because teachers and students need to ask how the Bible, theology and the Church inform issues. Almost all areas of theology have been the subject of real life dilemmas in Church history.⁵⁰

Another effective teaching tool is the use of dissonance/disequilibrium in learning experiences. A cursory review of the educational psychology literature shows some interesting findings as to its teaching effectiveness. First, discrepant events and unexpected situations fascinate students.⁵¹ Students who encounter the dissonance of conflicting ideas are motivated by the psychological discomfort to resolve them, achieving Piagetian equilibration,⁵² and thereby activating cognitive processes.⁵³ Nussbaum and Novick point out that students’ “alternative frameworks” (AFs – frequently

regarded as misconceptions) plays a crucial role in science learning. They believe that science concept learning involves cognitive accommodation of an initially held AF through exposing AFs and creating cognitive conflict.⁵⁴ Indeed, Bruce Joyce believes that learning is a matter of handling discomfort in an environment productively. To enable learners to attain optimal states of growth, discomfort producing conditions need to be developed.⁵⁵

Second, Stonewater and Stonewater outline the relationship between cognitive development, disequilibrium, and problem solving skills. Instructional strategies which promote cognitive development must not only create disequilibrium but also facilitate engagement. Engagement involves specific instructional strategies which provide learners with opportunities to engage in the learning and attend to the disequilibrium created by the teaching.⁵⁶ The literature strongly suggests that cognitive conflict within a context of social relationships significantly impacts cognitive development.⁵⁷ This may be due to the availability of psychological support in such communities, which is an essential factor for engagement.

Third, disequilibrium encourages learner involvement which contributes toward learner motivation.⁵⁸ Last, but not least, disequilibrium situations provide meaningful challenges to students resulting in personal growth⁵⁹ and increased self-esteem among special needs students.⁶⁰ Leta Stetter Hollingworth (1886-1939) was therefore unusually insightful when she understood gifted adolescents in a state of disequilibrium (defined as discrepancy between expectancy and achievement) and constantly in a process of adjusting to it.⁶¹

Reflecting theologically, the concept of cognitive disequilibrium abounds in Scripture. If Satan disequibrated Eve and brought about the Fall through her accommodation, ("Did God really say ...? You will not surely die ...") She took and ate [Gen. 3:1, 4]; Jesus employed it freely in his teaching to upset rabbinic tradition (especially Matt. 5:21-48). It is no wonder that his enraged hearers set him above the religious teachers of his day. Theological education must aim toward growth. If this is to take place, it is inevitable that theological educators not only take Piaget seriously, but employ his theory in all learning encounters.

Asian theological educators of the Asia Theological Association rated "creative teaching" as the least important, and "theological grounding" as the most important factor in the *ICAA Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education*.⁶² This is sad because *how* one teaches is just as important as theological qualification. The way we teach is a reflection of how we are taught. If we limit ourselves in theological education to the lecture method, we should not be surprised at much of the ineffectiveness of our graduates' teaching in the church. Perhaps theological institutions

should start by requiring students (and potential faculty) to have a foundational course in learning and the art of teaching?

Structures

Structure has to do with the organisation of learning experiences for effective instruction. Tyler lists three important criteria for effective organisation.⁶³ "Continuity" is the vertical reiteration of major curricula elements. Learners are continually exposed to certain areas of context, skills and attitudes. While it is possible for a major curriculum element to recur again and again with little progression of understanding, skill or attitude, "sequence" builds upon preceding experiences by going more broadly and deeply into the matters involved. "Integration" helps learners fit materials together in such a way as to give a unified understanding of the content.

The current fragmentation of theological studies into the fourfold disciplines dates only from the second half of the 18th century in Europe, but it presents significant problems for integration. Although it is way of managing the knowledge explosion, the price of such widespread, perhaps irretrievable, fragmentation is confusion for the learner. Theological faculties often teach without knowledge of what their colleagues are doing, nor do they attempt to integrate their work or encourage the learner to see the whole. Theological syllabi, in the words of Leslie Houlden, are "all pieces and no obvious whole, a wheel of spokes and no hub."⁶⁴

Francis Bridger lists four attempts at integration in theological education today.⁶⁵ The first seeks to bring together the sub-disciplines through curriculum design. The problem with this approach is that it looks better on paper than in practice. Moreover, since this is curriculum-led, it may fail to give due weight to other types of integration, some of which are not easily expressed in the language and structures of the curriculum. The second approach seeks to integrate academic theology with ministerial practice or experience. Recent attempts include building into the curriculum more contextual learning experiences, context-led consideration of theological material, and the use of action-reflection strategies. The strength of this approach is only as strong as its supervisory field programme. The third approach attempts to bring together a student's pre-and post-training experiences with the training itself. The integrating factor is the student's experiential continuum as one "makes sense" of the training through ongoing integrative insights. The fourth approach sets the locus of integration in the student's own consciousness. The student coherently fits together the disparate elements in the training process of spiritual character. In short, this model looks for the integration of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions within a person. Although these models are worthy attempts at integration, they offer inadequate guidelines to curriculum structure and organisation.

Tyler suggests that effective organisation of curriculum begins with the identification of elements which can serve as "organising threads."⁶⁶ I believe the three common elements of an effective theological education are concepts, character traits and ministry skills. Under concepts are all the content/knowledge material required for ministry. Healthy character traits include a good reputation and a good conscience, attitudes and disciplines of a godly life, pleasing social qualities, dedicated family life and friendships, purity and self-control in the areas of money, sexuality, power and time, compassion and healthy attitudes toward work. Ministry skills include all the tasks of a spiritual overseer like discernment, shepherding, prayer, clarifying doctrine, teaching, discipline, encouragement, affirming/com-mending, leadership, commissioning, spiritual direction and discipleship. Where traditional curriculum is commonly subject-centred, this curriculum structure follows that of the Conservative Baptist Seminary of the East, and proposes a ministry-character approach (See Appendix 1). The rationale for such a vocational approach to structuring comes from my understanding of the task and function of theology, which recognises the importance of experience as setting the agenda on which theological disciplines must be brought to bear.

In sum, a theological curriculum structure must have continuity, sequence and be fully integrated within all its sub-disciplines. The critical elements for organisation are concepts, character traits and ministry skills. Since the task of theology arises from experience and demand both character and a good grasp of theological disciplines, curriculum should be structured around a ministry-character approach, rather than the common subject-centred approach.

Evaluation

Research indicates that how we evaluate determines the whole climate of classroom instruction and learning.⁶⁷ If we test for factual recall, students will memorise a set of facts. If we test for ability to analyse relationships, students will learn to think critically. If we assess application of theory to concrete situations and problems, students will relate learning to life situations.

Georgine Locker lists six important elements of an evaluation process.⁶⁸ First, one needs to determine what is to be evaluated. As tests can only measure a representative sample of learning outcomes and subject matter, the use of a "Table of Specifications" is helpful to ensure adequate sampling (See Table 3). This is basically the use of Tyler's two-dimensional objective chart, where the intersecting cells allow for variation of both learning outcomes and content-matter proportions.

Table 3: Table of Specifications for a Unit of Cognitive Assessment
 (Adapted from Gronlund, *Constructing Achievement Tests*,
 New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1977, p. 9.)

Learning Outcomes/ Subject matter	Knowledge of facts and principles	Understanding of facts and principles	Application of facts and principles	Total Number items
A	5	5	10	20
B	5	10	10	25
C	5	5	5	15
D	10	5	15	30
E	5	5	10	20
Total	30	30	40	100

The second part of an effective evaluation is to design the means and criteria of assessment. Since standardised tests rarely give sufficient evidence of expertise, understanding, insight and the judgment that characterises a liberally educated person, considerable thought is required to design evaluation procedures that will elicit from students the fullest possible demonstration of their abilities. Bobby Fong suggests that not only objective or essay tests, but portfolios, projects, simulations, exhibits and other presentations are important and legitimate experiences.⁶⁹ The third part of the evaluation, "assessment," require faculty to determine precisely what the various testing procedures reveal about a student's development and progress. This is related to the fourth part of evaluation, which is the interpretation of results. Teachers who assess with care can advise students about the nature and progress of their learning, and advise them about future directions. A grade, therefore is not the final outcome of assessment, but an indication of the progress on one's learning.

Evaluation criteria should be clear to students, and opportunities for self-correction should be available through formative, rather than summative assessments. For example, students could turn in draft copies of their work for critique by both instructor and fellow students. They can then improve on their work before submitting it for final evaluation. Such an approach to evaluation gives priority to learning, not grading, and requires more time in preparation, interpretation, and counsel.

The last, and possibly the most important, stage in evaluation is feedback. In a large class, creative ways of feedback can be employed. Tutorials, either with the teacher or teaching assistant, can serve as a forum where a few students can discuss individual problems. Going over the test in class can help students see how the teacher approaches the problem. A carefully written appraisal of a term paper can highlight strengths and weakness in

research, thought, and expression of ideas. Feedback, whether written, one-to-one, or with an entire class, is meaningful to the extent that it informs students about progress and provide cues for the teacher about the quality of instruction.

Jon Wergin suggests that teachers reflect on the purpose of student evaluation.⁷⁰ Norm-referenced tests distribute students along a continuum of ability and knowledge. If the purpose is to judge whether students have completed the course objectives satisfactorily, the use of criterion-referenced test is preferred. Criterion-referenced measures assume that the best test communicates how well a student has mastered a set of specific objectives. In this light, a normal distribution of scores is not important or even desirable, since the instructional goal is maximum learning rather than maximum discrimination. This encourages students to compete against a standard, not against each other.

A vexing problem facing test developers is how to maximise the factors of "control" and "relevance." Control ensures a standardised measure of students by having them respond to the same stimuli and by assessing those responses equally and fairly. Relevance ensures congruence between test performance and the knowledge skills required to accomplish course objectives. Classical classroom tests tend to be high on control (all students respond to the same set of test items and graded the same way, for example multiple-choice), but low in relevance (few real-life situations). Essay tests, though more relevant by testing understanding of complex relationships, are hampered by the difficulty of control through grader error and subjectivity. Recent interests in simulations has grown as a possible compromise between control and relevance. Simulations put students in realistic problem situations which require a series of decisions. Theological education can benefit from the use of simulations and case studies, where students can apply theological insights critically and creatively.⁷¹

Howard Polio and Lee Humphreys question both the process and place of grading in contemporary higher education, highlighting various weaknesses in the system.⁷² Instructors grade differently, based on a wide variable of norms and values. Yet, a grade on a transcript does not reflect any of these procedures, priorities or values. The quest for high grades has produced what researchers called, "learning oriented" and "grade oriented" students.⁷³ For some students, attaining a good grade interferes with the purposes of higher education. One learns only for the examination. If what is taught is not on the test, there is often no incentive for learning, no matter how brilliant the instructor's presentation. A corollary symptom of this academic malaise is that the climate of academic cooperation and mutual trust that facilitates genuine learning is seriously eroded. Learning becomes highly competitive and takes second place to grades. In this light, teachers should understand the strong dynamics of grading and use them

for the enrichment of the academic setting. Rather than using grades to sort or rank students, grades should be used as the basis for communication between teachers and students to facilitate learning. Grades are human judgments about complex processes in specific contexts. They cannot, therefore, always be quantified or expressed with the precision of a number taken to the second decimal. While acknowledging that not all are equally gifted, teachers can still attempt to bring all students to certifiable levels of mastery.

Eisner proposes a different approach to educational assessment.⁷⁴ rather than a preoccupation with quantitative methods, he calls for "educational criticism," which focuses on events and materials which purport to be educational. Educational criticism involves three important stages. First, the educational critique provides a vivid rendering of educational qualities. Second, the critique interprets educational events by providing understanding of what has been rendered by using ideas, concepts, models, and theories from social science and education history. Third, the critique provides evaluation by assessing the educational import or significance of events or objects described or interpreted. Such a qualitative approach directed to the student, looks for distinctive style of the students' ideas, verbal expression, quality of individual work/painting, analytical abilities, way student responds to opportunities, perceptiveness, sensitivity to new ideas and feelings of others. In short, it looks for qualities which give them individuality and creativity. Reflecting on this approach theologically, such qualities are not incongruent with the *imago dei* within all of us. We were made to be creative and therefore we must not stifle discovery. But creativity needs an environment that allows for daring playfulness. The critical question is, "Are teachers creating such an environment?"

In sum, theological education must understand assessment procedures and use them to aid learning and teaching rather than discourage the learner. Current practices which emphasise factual recall and norm-referenced measurements do not contribute to the development of theological reflection, and hinder the sense of excitement and adventure in learning. Since ministerial education also includes professional skill development, assessment criteria should be more relevant and criteria-based, rather than standardised to a normal distribution. There should be greater use of simulations, case studies, creative writing and critical thinking. Assessment should be formative rather than summative, and should benefit rather than discriminate among learners by facilitating fruitful interaction within the learning community. Evaluation should also critique educational events and materials and assess for individual creative and thinking style.

Conclusion

In contrast to Bong Rin Ro, I believe that relevant theological education in Asia will not arise by merely "training Asians in Asia."⁷⁵ There is a need

for re-evaluation of current curriculum, educational philosophy and methodology because many theological seminaries in Asia are modelled on the schooling pattern of the West. Asian theological education must develop a biblical philosophy of training based on a clear understanding of the Gospel, ecclesiology, mission and the task of theology. She must develop curricula which arise from a sincere reflection of the history, socio-cultural and ecclesiastical life of her varied contexts. Curriculum development is one of the most fundamental, but neglected and difficult issues facing Asian theological education today. Asian theological educators must not only be familiar, but conversant with curriculum theory and design. As the Asian church matures, she must not only take a missiological initiative, but strive for independence in creative theology and contextualised theological training.

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APPENDIX 1

*Curriculum of Studies: Conservative Baptist Seminary of the East, P.O. Box 611,
Dresher, PA 19025, USA. President Dr. John F. Robinson*

***Diploma in Theology and Ministry
First Year***

Course Title	Credits	Total
<i>Fall Term</i>		
Philosophy of Ministry	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Doctrine of the Church	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
Greek Grammar	3	
		10
<i>Winter Term</i>		
Gospels	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	

Hermeneutics and Cultural Adaptation	3	
Dynamics of Christian Worship	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
		10
<i>Spring Term</i>		
Foundations of the Gospel	3	
Acts and Letters of Paul	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Homiletics I	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
Integrative Seminar	1	
<i>Second Year</i>		
<i>Fall Term</i>		
Person and Work of Christ	2	
Romans	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Evangelism and Church Growth	3	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
		10
<i>Winter Term</i>		
Work of the Holy Spirit	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Homiletics II	2	
World Vision	3	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
		10
<i>Spring Term</i>		
Challenges to Christianity	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
History of Christianity I	2	
Old Testament I	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Introduction to the Hebrew Language I	1	
Integrative Seminar	1	
		11
<i>Third Year</i>		
<i>Fall Term</i>		
Topics from Hebrews through Revelation	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	

Pastoral Counselling	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
Old Testament II	2	
Introduction to the Hebrew Language II	1	
		10
<i>Winter Term</i>		
Church Administration	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
Old Testament III	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Introduction to the Hebrew Language III	1	
Homiletics III	2	
		10
<i>Spring Term</i>		
History of Christianity II	3	
Marriage, Family, and Friendship	2	
Ministerial Skills Contract	1.5	
Christianity and the Future	2	
Character Development Contract	1.5	
Integrative Seminar	1	
		11
	Total	93

Points of Interest:

1. A significant factor in this model is that theological training is a joint venture between the seminary and the local churches, with local congregations serving as the principal locus of training. Two supervisors (pastor and lay person) meet with student weekly to review growth in character and ministry skills, and submit monthly log to Seminary. Student's faculty advisor meets with internship supervisory team at least once a term, and with student weekly in discipleship sessions. Seminary provides regular training and opportunities for interaction for supervisors of the local churches.
2. Supervisors also review with student and certify satisfactory completion of two learning contracts per term. Learning contracts (with academic credit) are related to specific courses students are currently enrolled, and correlated with needs identified in self-assessment of character qualities and ministry skills.
3. Classes are scheduled once a week to allow for immersion in congregation ministry.
4. Training philosophy seeks active integration of academic studies, spiritual formation and experience in ministry.