Instructional Strategies for the Integration of Faith and Learning

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Christian education focuses on the formation of Christian persons. Given the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every aspect of life (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31), we need educational programs that teach young people to think Christianly and to be consistently Christian in all aspects of life. Such integration of faith and learning remains "the distinctive task" of the Christian school (Holmes, 1987, p. 8).

In order that students might relate everything in life and learning to their faith, all subjects in a Christian school must be taught from a Christian perspective. Students must recognize that the farthest reaches of any subject still lie within the realm of God's truth. Such an educational program must be revelation-based, doctrinally correct, and philosophically coherent (Beck, 1991). It must seek to foster in its students spiritual growth, ethical integrity, church relatedness, world consciousness, and evangelistic outreach.

The problem for many Christian educators, however, is not so much a matter of knowledge, but of application. We recognize that Christian schools must be distinctively "salty," genuinely committed and authentically Christian (Matt. 5:13). We are convinced that the integration of faith and learning must be vibrant and evident in the academic community. So what is missing? The crucial link is frequently the step from theory to practice, from belief to action, from perception to realization. How does a Christian teacher go about integrating faith in the teaching/learning experience?

Approaches to the Integration of Faith and learning

In some educational programs identified as Christian, there is, in fact, a total separation of faith and learning (see Figure 1). Faith experiences are relegated to chapel periods, "Bible classes," extracurricular activities, or weekend religious functions. Learning is channeled to the "academic subjects"—history, science, psychology, literature, statistics, and the like. In fact, if one were to drop into one of these classes, it would be difficult to tell any difference from a course taught in any good non-sectarian institution. There is, in essence, a disjunction of faith and learning (Holmes, 1987), each relegated to its own sphere.

When faith and learning are thus separated, there is a resulting disintegration of both faith and learning. With little reasonable evidence to consider (Heb. 11:1), faith erodes into blind belief. Without a holistic faith perspective that relates knowledge to the ultimate Source of Truth (Prov. 2:6; Col. 2:2-3), learning also begins to fragment. Universities, places where one was to view life in its totality, have splintered into multi-versities, each discipline compartmentalized into its own academic cocoon, isolated from the real issues of life.

In other educational settings that seek to be Christian, there are occasional interactions between faith and learning. Some of these contacts take the form of dialogue, although these are often unpleasant. In these exchanges, faith shouts across the chasm between faith and learning, launching a vitriolic attack on the heresies of evolution, the New Age, homosexuality, hypnotism, or such. The teacher may assert, "As Christians, we don't believe in this. It's wrong. Anti-biblical." A few proof texts are fired off. "So students, we're going to skip this chapter. We know what we believe, don't we."

A somewhat more fruitful interaction occurs when teacher and students pause on occasion to explore some obvious faith and learning overlap—such as presenting the creation perspective when dealing with the origins of life, including an analysis of theocracy when examining forms of government, noting pertinent Bible prophecies when discussing various world empires, or interposing the Biblical position on human sexuality when studying sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This is obviously an improvement over disjunction or fiery exchanges between faith and learning, but it still falls short of true integration. The problem lies in the fact that after exploring the perceived overlap, the class then moves on for long stretches devoid of the faith perspective.

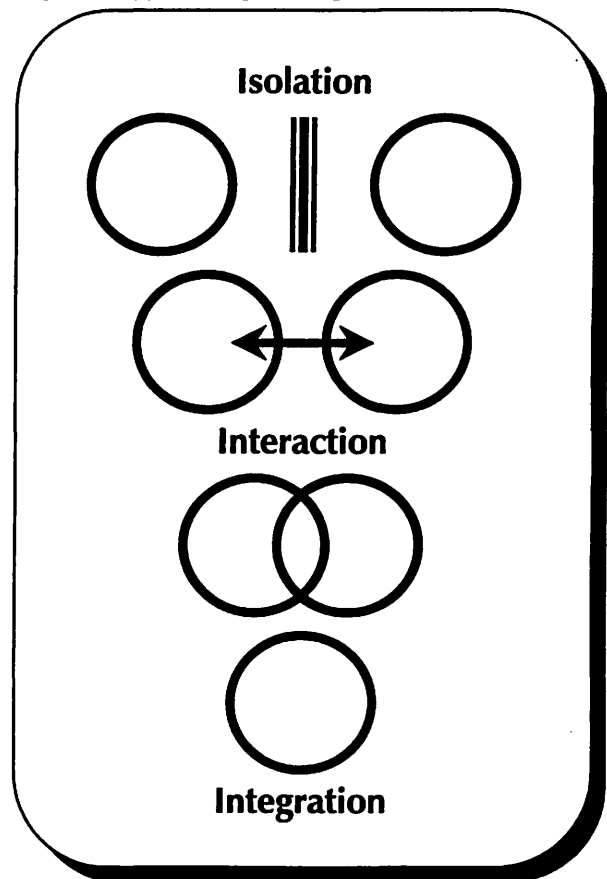Figure 1. Approaching an integration of faith and learning

True integration, however, occurs when faith and learning meet and merge, when they fuse to become the pervasive, driving force in Christian education. This implies that whenever learning takes place, faith must be exercised through an endeavor to see the fullness of life from God's perspective. Furthermore, faith itself implies a commitment to grow in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18; Eph. 4:15). It is not sufficient to merely stand for the truth. One must walk progressively in the truth (Ps. 86:11; 3 John 4).

The recurring question, of course, is that of implementation. How does a Christian educator bring about this authentic integration of faith and learning?

An Overview of IFL Strategies

Before one can develop and effectively deploy integrational strategies, two fundamental conditions must be met. First, one must be conscious of theological and philosophical presuppositions. That implies some in-depth thinking concerning personal beliefs,

particularly as they relate to one's discipline and academic function. In effect, a teacher cannot share with students what he or she has not thought through. Such Christian thinking, of course, is not an isolated event but an ongoing process that continues throughout the entire teaching experience.

In addition to suppositional consciousness, there must be personal commitment—an allegiance to the Christian mandate to teach all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), bringing every thought in submission to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Such dedication is evidenced through a steadfast, proactive endeavor to help students think and live Christianly.

Once conscious of personal beliefs and committed to the integration of faith and learning, a teacher is ready to examine means through which education can be made distinctively Christian. One way in which this may be accomplished is through an understanding and implementation of integrational strategies, instructional approaches that have emerged largely from the consensus of Christian professional practice.

Strategies for the integration of faith and learning may be classified in four broad categories—Contextual, Illustrative, Conceptual, and Experiential (see Figure 2). It should be noted that each of these methodological areas is essential, and no hierarchy is implied. Within each grouping, however, the strategies might be viewed as progressive—increasingly comprehensive, powerful, and ultimately more effective in terms of their impact on the life of the student

In brief, the Contextual cluster includes tactical, ornamental, and environmental strategies. The Illustrative category incorporates analogous, narrative, and exemplary strategies. The Conceptual group of strategies is comprised of textual, thematic, and valuative methods. Finally, the Experiential cluster includes personal, interrelational, and declarative strategies. We consider in some depth each of these integrational methods.

Figure 2. Classification of IFL strategies

Contextual	Tactical
	Ornamental
	Environmental
Illustrative	Analogous
	Narrative
	Exemplary
Conceptual	Textual
	Thematic
	Valuative
Experiential	Personal
	Interrelational
	Declarative

Contextual Strategies

Tactical methods are primarily of a descriptive, and often political, nature. The name of the school, for example, may include the word "Christian" or identify the institution as belonging to a particular denomination. Official statements may define the mission of the school to be "holistic" and "redemptive," "preparing students for eternal life." Institutional policies may stipulate that only Christian teachers may be hired, and that Christian codes of conduct will be enforced. Course designations may themselves carry such coded descriptors as "character," "ethics," "moral," and "biblical" in an attempt to convey the spiritual dimension of the academic program.

These are, of course, important ingredients in an integrated approach. They seek to fulfill the divine injunction to be the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:14-16). It should be clear, however, that a name doesn't tell the whole story. A school may call itself Christian, but be found, upon closer examination, to be thoroughly secular in nature. A teacher may have been brought up in a Christian home, educated in denominational schools, and baptized. But that is no guarantee that he is an ambassador of Christ, the Master Teacher (2 Cor. 5:20). Thus, while *tactical* evidences are needed for the integration of faith and learning, in and of themselves, they are insufficient.

Ornamental strategies in the integration of faith and learning can serve to enhance the spiritual influence of an educational context. Recently, I had occasion to visit a certain Christian boarding school. Upon entering the campus, one immediately encountered the administration building, located strategically between the classroom complex and the cafeteria. In eye-catching color and large enough to be read from several hundred meters away, the school had inscribed a quotation from a Christian author reminding students to make the best of their educational experience, for they would pass "this way but once" (White, 1943, p. 554). It is hard to believe that no impression was made on students as they passed by day by day.

Other institutions have taken similar approaches, posting biblical passages or quotations containing moral principles throughout the campus. Department heads have created attractive bulletin board displays, focused on Christian topics. Teachers have decorated their classrooms with pictures of Christ and other Bible heroes. In all, a concerted effort to remind students of the moral and religious dimensions of life. While helpful, ornamental strategies, in and of themselves, are still incapable of creating a spiritual context for learning.

Environmental methods are some of the most powerful strategies in creating an instructional setting in which faith and learning are inseparably intertwined. This is the area of the hidden curriculum, perhaps the most powerful educational force with which Christian education must deal (Richards, 1975). Elements of this hidden curriculum include the organizational pattern of the school, classroom structure, student-teacher and student-student interactions, and extracurricular activities. Factors at work in creating the learning environment include leadership style, disciplinary methods, and classroom management systems. Is the focus of disciplinary procedures, for example, primarily punitive or redemptive? Is assessment carried out principally for the benefit of the administration, the teacher, or the student? Are students given opportunity to voice personal opinions, to make certain choices? Or are all decisions made administratively and merely handed down? How do teachers speak to students—as mindless second-rate citizens or as fellow human beings? Is the pervading tone of the school, the "feel" of the classroom, that of fear or of love?

In order to effectively integrate faith and learning, Christian educators must bring the hidden curriculum to the surface. Careful analysis must be made of the subliminal messages being transmitted through the instructional setting to ensure that these intentionally solidify rather than detract from spiritual growth. Only when tactical and ornamental strategies are joined by a genuinely Christian instructional environment, can there be a strong contextual integration of faith and learning.

Illustrative Strategies

In His teaching, Christ frequently utilized parables to convey spiritual truth (e.g., Matt. 11:16; 13:31, 33, 44, 47, 52; Luke 6:47-49; 7:32). The apostles used a similar approach, employing metaphors of mirrors, waves, thieves, and the sense organs of the body, among others (1 Cor. 12:14-21; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 5:2-4; James 1:6, 23).

Analogous strategies in the integration of faith and learning seek to replicate this approach. While some similes, such as "God is like a circle—He has no end" or "two and two are always four and God is always the same," may border on the trivial and superficial, others, such as a comparison of the Trinity to the three states of water (Heie & Wolfe, 1987), of the components of a computer to the various functions of the Church, or likening the immune system to divine agencies that repel the attacks of the enemy, call for deeper thought processes and may be especially useful in assisting more concrete thinkers to grasp spiritual truth. Allegories that contain a spiritual moral, such as *Hinds' Feet on High Places* (Hurnard, 1977) or *Flatland* (Abbott, 1991), can serve a similar purpose.

Perhaps the most important form of analogy, however, involves forging metaphoric links between a particular idea under study and spiritual factors in one's own life. Teachers can guide students to discern and understand these connections. In discussing the implications of probability, for example, a research class might relate that construct to personal decision-making, where one must carefully weigh the evidence but recognize that only God can see the complete picture and ultimate truth. In studying the process of natural selection in microevolution, one might help students realize that personal adaptability and flexibility may make them more effective in carrying out the gospel commission under diverse and often difficult circumstances.

Use of personal analogy can also endeavor to help the student place him or herself in the circumstances of something else. "How would you react if you were a social worker and encountered a situation of child abuse?" "How would you feel if you were a rundown church building, where people met each Sabbath?" Through any of these modalities, students enhance not only creative and analytical thinking, but are also encouraged to glimpse new dimensions of spiritual truth.

Narrative strategies constitute another illustrative approach. In the narrative method, the teacher provides, or requests the students to provide, Christian examples for a particular topic under consideration. The illustration might be a story from the Bible that highlights a particular point—the story of the talents (Matt. 25) when studying business investments, the case of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) when studying cultural differences, or the contention between Paul and Peter when discussing conflict resolution (Gal. 2). The story could also be from the life experience of some Christian, such as Mother Teresa when studying about India, or prominent Christian figures in the history of a particular discipline (e.g., Comenius, Pestalozzi, or Horace Mann in the development of modern education).

Even more effective, however, are personal narratives. The teacher, for example, can share incidents from her personal experience that illustrate a particular topic from a spiritual perspective. When studying about Thomas Edison's discovery of the incandescent light bulb,

in which he tested over 12,000 filaments before succeeding, the teacher might relate a personal experience in which she was tempted to give up and then share with the students what kept her going. Students could also be invited to contribute their own experiences. These occasions, in fact, may develop into serendipitous opportunities in which one can share the truths of the gospel in fresh and meaningful ways.

Modeling is unquestionably the most powerful illustrative method. Through *exemplary* strategies, the teacher seeks to evidence in his own life what he wants his students to become (John 13:15; 15:12-17; Luke 6:40; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:9). Students, for instance, must see in the Christian teacher a thirst for knowledge, particularly a search to understand the subject area from a spiritual perspective. They must perceive the teacher's trust in God, in His plan, and in His divine revelation. They must sense their teacher's confidence in what they can become, by the grace of God.

Students tend to fashion their lives more according to what the teacher does, than by what is said. The manner in which the teacher treats the student, deals with controversial issues, and manifests ethical conduct can graphically illustrate the integration of faith and learning, or the lack thereof (1 Thess. 2:7-12). In essence, if we want our students to become authentic Christians, then we as educators must set the pace, thinking and living Christianly.

Conceptual Strategies

Instructional methodologies that are conceptual in nature lie at the heart of the integrational process. *Textual* strategies identify pertinent scriptural passages for a particular topic and then incorporate these in the teaching/learning experience. Traditionally, some teachers begin their classes with a short devotional period—a verse from the Bible followed by prayer. This could indeed be meaningful, provided that the passage is carefully chosen so as to relate to the concepts under consideration that day. In commenting on the text, the teacher should help students to see and understand that relationship.

More important, however, is the utilization of Scripture at appropriate junctures throughout the class period. This can be done by identifying the core concepts to be taught and seeking out Biblical passages that are relevant to these key ideas, perhaps with the aid of a topical concordance or computer software.

In a history course, for example, the concept of change might be examined in the light of Daniel 2:21, "He removes kings and raises up kings" (also Acts 17:26 and Dan. 4:17). The passage "There is no authority except from God" (Rom. 13:1) addresses matters of power and governance. Conflict could be viewed in relationship to the verse "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed" (Gen. 3:14), as well as the passage "These things I have spoken to you that you may have peace; in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Insights regarding conflict management can be found in Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turns away wrath;" and Matthew 18:15, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." Tolerance is advocated in Matthew 7:2, "With what judgment you judge, you will be judged;" while the importance of time/space relationships is

underscored in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under heaven." Other passages might address such historically relevant topics as nationalism (Acts 22:25; Phil. 3:20), justice (Micah 6:8), equality (Gal. 3:28), freedom (John 8:32), integrity (Prov. 20:7), respect (Matt. 7:12), historical research criteria (Isa. 28:10), and historical periods (Dan. 12:4). Pertinent portions of Scripture can similarly be identified in other disciplines (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Sample Biblical references pertinent to commerce, science, and language

Commerce	Science	Language
Accountability: Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:12	Creation: Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6-9; Isa. 45:12, 18; John 1:1	Importance of Communication: Gen. 1:3; Amos 3:7; Matt. 28:19, 21; John 1:1
Ambition: Prov. 11:4; 1 Cor. 12:31	Environment—God's Ownership: Gen. 9:11-16; Ps. 24:1	Attitudes when Communicating: Prov. 15:1; Matt. 5:41-44; Rom. 12:18; Rom. 14
Authority: Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1	Environment—Man's Dominion: Gen. 1:26, 28; 3:15-19; 6-9; Ps. 8:6	Quality of Communication: Ps. 15:2; Matt. 5:37; 12:36; Phil. 4:8; Col. 4:6
Benevolence: Prov. 11:24, 25; Luke 12:33; Acts 11:29; Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 13:3; 2 Cor. 8:9-15	Ethics: Josh. 24:15; Ps. 8:3-6; Isa. 43:11-15; 45:5-8; Jer. 10:2; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 13:7; Heb. 13:18	Communication to be Critically Evaluated: Matt. 13:13; Luke 24:13-27; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Tim. 4:13; 6:20
Honesty: Lev. 19:35, 36; Deut. 25:15, 16; Prov. 10:2; 11:3; 20:10; 2 Cor. 8:20, 21	Human Body: Ps. 139:14; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31	
Justice: Gen. 18:19; Deut. 27:19; 32:4; Ps. 98:9; 99:4; Jer. 22:15; Amos 5:15; Col. 4:1	Natural Law: Nahum 1:3; Ps. 19; Rev. 19:1	Literary Genres: 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Chronicles (historical records); Ruth, Jonah, Esther (short story); Proverbs (wise sayings); Psalms (songs); Job (poetry); Judges 9:7-15 and Matthew 13 (parables); Ecclesiastes (philosophy); Romans, Philippians, Philemon (letters); 1 & 2 Corinthians (instructional prose); Daniel, Revelation (apocalyptic literature)
Responsibility: 1 Sam. 20:4; Matt. 20:1-16; Luke 19:1-10; John 19:26, 27; Phil. 2:22	Revelation through Nature: Job 12:7-9; Ps. 19:1; 97:6; Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-25	
Stewardship: Luke 12:32-44; 19:11-26; 1 Peter 4:10	Sources of Knowledge: 1 Sam. 2:3; 2 Chron. 1:10; Job 37:16; Job 38; Ps. 19:1; Prov. 1:7; 2:6; Eccles. 1, 2; Luke 24:25-31; Rom. 1:28; Col. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:21	
Tolerance: Rom. 14:1		
Unselfishness: Dan. 5:17; Acts 4:34, 35; 1 Cor. 10:24; 13:4; Phil. 2:3, 30		
Work-Ethic: Gen. 3:19; Ex. 34:21; 2 Thess. 3:10	Value of Life: Matt. 6:25-30; John 8:1-11	

Adapted from the corresponding Curriculum Frameworks, South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Entire class periods could even be devoted to establishing a Christian perspective for a particular unit or an entire subject area, based on the Scriptures. Throughout these endeavors, the fundamental premise is that the Word of God speaks with relevance to all aspects of life. If indeed a subject or topic is significant to the life experience—which should clearly be the case if it is to be taught in the school, then there should be portions of Scripture that address these matters.

Thematic strategies are an exceptionally effective approach in the integration of faith and learning. Themes that lend themselves quite readily to an integrational approach can be

found in every discipline (see Figure 4). They may be located by examining course goals and objectives, unit titles, and lists of core concepts and key terms. Faculty could also work through the major topics of systematic theology, asking how each concept touches the foundations of its disciplines.

Once the teacher has identified specific themes embedded in the course content to be taught, he then seeks to candidly examine these concepts from a distinctively Christian perspective. Such an analysis would endeavor to view a particular theme in the light of the great controversy between good and evil, and of the gospel commission. It would seek to understand the relationship of this theme with the character of God and His plan for man and for the universe. It would help students to discover spiritual insights and foster Christian attitudes and convictions. Although such themes should be examined Christianly in and of themselves, they can also serve as a springboards for textual, analogous, or narrative strategies in the integration of faith and learning. In essence, the goal in utilizing thematic strategies is to help students form a Christian worldview that encompasses all topics and subject areas.

Figure 4. Sample integrational themes in selected disciplines

Audience	Accountability	Access	Accountability	Author	Accuracy
Balance	Assessment	Association	Beginning/end	Balance	Assumption
Beauty	Authority	Change	Cause	Character	Balance
Celebration	Competition	Choice	Change	Collaboration	Classification
Contrast	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Communication	Comparison
Creativity	Control	Cooperation	Consequence	Comprehension	Constant/Variable
Culture	Debt	Decision	Continuity	Contrast	Equality
Diversity	Decision	Disaster	Eternity	Curiosity	Factor
Dominance	Development	Dispersion	Evidence	Discussion	Infinity
Emotion	Economy	Diversity	Greatness	Evidence	Limit
Excellence	Effectiveness	Ecology	Heritage	Feeling	Logic
Expression	Efficiency	Environment	Independence	Hero	Measurement
Flexibility	Equity	Extinction	Influence	Human nature	Opposite
Harmony/discord	Freedom	Globalization	Interdependence	Imagery	Order
Humility	Growth	Harmony	Kingdom	Interaction	Pattern
Meaning	Influence	Interaction	Liberty	Metaphor	Positive/negative
Medium	Initiative	Interdependence	Loyalty	Mood	Precision
Pattern	Investment	Management	Motive	Moral	Probability
Perspective	Mission	Migration	Nation	Persuasion	Problem/solution
Pleasure	Organization	Nation	Pattern	Planning	Proof
Reality	Participation	Pollution	Peace	Plot	Proportion
Repetition	Plan	Poverty	Period	Purpose	Quantity/quality
Responsibility	Product	Preservation	Progress	Quality	Reduction
Simplicity	Profit/loss	Resources	Restoration	Questioning	Relationship
Talent	Quality	Responsibility	Revolution	Reality	Set/subset
Truth	Responsibility	Restoration	Slavery	Sensitivity	Sign/symbol
Uniqueness	Service	Service	Struggle	Simplicity	System
Unity	Stewardship	Space	Time	Structure	Transformation
Value	Success	Stewardship	Triumph	Surprise	Value
Worship	Teamwork	Urbanization	Viewpoint	Uniqueness	Whole/fraction

Attitude	Attitude	Church	Adaptability	Alien	Accuracy
Challenge	Behavior	Death	Cause/effect	Allegiance	Change
Competition	Commitment	Evangelism	Change	Authority	Confidentiality
Confidence	Conflict	Faith	Conservation	Career	Control
Coordination	Counsel	Fellowship	Design	Citizenship	Copyright
Courtesy	Dependence	Forgiveness	Earth	Community	Crime
Defense	Development	God	Energy	Cooperation	Dependence
Development	Dignity	Gospel	Future	Corruption	Efficiency
Empathy	Disability	Grace	Growth	Culture	Equity
Encouragement	Empathy	Heaven	Healing	Custom	Excellence
Endurance	Giftedness	Heritage	Heredity	Education	Flexibility
Enjoyment	Growth	Inspiration	Instrument	Equity	Information
Fairness	Home	Judgment	Life	Fairness	Initiative
Fitness	Human	Law	Method	Family	Integrity
Generosity	Individuality	Love	Nature	Freedom	Invention
Health	Intelligence	Man	Observation	Government	Limitation
Injury	Marriage	Mission	Origin	Harmony	Logic
Leisure	Mind	Outreach	Pattern	Institution	Order
Lifestyle	Morality	Persecution	Research	Interdependence	Organization
Movement	Motive	Praise	Resources	Justice/injustice	Perseverance
Recreation	Need	Prayer	Restoration	Minority	Piracy
Rest	Personality	Prophecy	Stewardship	Nation	Power
Safety	Reflection	Relationship	Survival	Neighbor	Privacy
Self-esteem	Relationship	Righteousness	Symbiosis	Prejudice	Process
Self-restraint	Religion	Salvation	System	Privilege	Record
Sportsmanship	Self-worth	Sin	Tentativeness	Responsibility	Reliability
Strategy	Service	Standard	Theory/fact	Role	Respect
Teamwork	Sexuality	Truth	Truth	Society	Security
Win/lose	Thinking	Witness	Universe	Tradition	Skill
Work	Violence	Worship	Validity	Unity	Tool

Valuative strategies focus on relevant issues and associated values. While themes usually have their roots in the particular discipline, situational issues arise from the culture itself. These real-life issues, with ethical implications, exist in nearly every subject area.

Plagiarism, for example, could be a relevant issue in the arts, business, literature, technology, and even mathematics (e.g., the Newton-Leibniz controversy or Cardan's "theft" of the cubic solution method from Tartaglia). The right to privacy could be studied from an ethical perspective in business, psychology, technology, and research. The issue of vegetarianism could be examined in geography (overpopulation and food production), science (health concerns), philosophy (animal rights), and religion courses (original diet and Levitical laws).

The fact is that most disciplines contain many issues that can be explored from a Christian, value-oriented perspective. In the arts, there are issues of the acceptance of culture, the lifestyle of the artist, and the use of pop tunes for religious songs, as well as matters of nudity, noise pollution, and violence (particularly in video production). In business subjects, there are issues concerning equitable taxation, fair profit, monopolization, unionization and worker strikes, declaration of bankruptcy, sexual harassment, and deception in advertising.

Issues in geography include immigration policies, squatter settlements, foreign aid and national debt, the exploitation of natural resources, and waste disposal (including toxic mining, industrial, and nuclear wastes). Historical issues might involve justifications for war (e.g., the Crusades), spying, sabotage, and the utilization of chemical/biological/nuclear weapons. Language and literature courses could review issues such as the freedom of speech, pornography and eroticism, defamation through libel or slander, stereotypes, swearing, and sensationalism (e.g., the "yellow press" and "muckrakers"). Value-laden issues in research and statistics might include the ethical considerations of disclosure, informed consent, and confidentiality, as well as related matters such as smoking and gambling.

Physical education courses might discuss competition, deception, and hormone enhancement. In psychology, issues include hypnosis, IQ testing, sexual expression, codependency, dealing with a counselee's threat of harm to self or others, and securing informed consent from persons who may have psychological impairments. Religion courses could focus on cults, the New Age movement, the role of Ellen White, Sabbath observance, religious intolerance and discrimination, the unpardonable sin, and why bad things happen to good people, as well as lifestyle issues such as dancing, social drinking, and premarital sex.

Scientific issues include global warming, cloning, animal experimentation, abortion, euthanasia, nuclear energy, and waste recycling, among others. A social studies class could study issues such as sexism, racism, and nationalism; AIDS, birth control, and the recreation use of drugs; pressure groups, conflicts of interest, public welfare, and compulsory voting. Issues in technology include piracy, hacking, computer fraud, encryption, viruses, net etiquette, robotization, artificial intelligence, intellectual property rights, and privacy at the work site.

Issues such as these, often gripping and controversial in nature, must be carefully evaluated. Students should be encouraged to engage in ethical reasoning and to develop a personal position, derived from a Christian perspective. They should ask questions: "What are the facts in the case, including contributing causes and possible consequences? What are the purposes God intended for this area of human activity? What Christian response is called for in this kind of case or situation?" (Holmes, 1987). Any judgment, however, implies certain standards or priorities. From an integrational perspective, these criteria are ethical principles and Christian values, which teachers and students must carefully consider when examining any controversial issue.

Ethical principles include the concept of duty—the fulfillment of a moral obligation regardless of personal inclination, of discernment—a respect for special categories of people and situations, of remediation—the adjustment of inequities detrimental to the well-being of another, and of proportion—a balance between immediate and long-term consequences of actions. Autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and fidelity, among others, are further examples of ethical principles.

Values are noble ends or ideals that we highly esteem, such as liberty, happiness, acceptance, justice, compassion, and stability (see Figure 5). They affect one's decisions and consequent behavior. For the Christian, God is the source of Christian values, "He has

shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). Christian values, in essence, are God's purposes for His creation and contribute to the formation of Christian character.

Figure 5. Value areas with a sample listing of Christian values

Accuracy	Attractiveness	Acting on	Awareness of	Adventure	Acceptance
Clarity	Balance	principle	Christian issues	Astuteness	Affection
Coherence	Beauty	Benevolence	Belief	Balance	Affirmation
Competence	Contrast	Dependability	Devotion	Certainty	Altruism
Critical Analysis	Creativity	Ethical sensitivity	Earnestness	Cleanliness	Appreciation
Curiosity	Delicacy	Fairness	Forgiveness	Confidence	Awareness of
Discernment	Diversity	Flexibility in	Genuineness	Contentment	heritage
Discrimination	Dominance	judgment	Grace	Creativity	Candidness
Evaluation	Economy	Freedom	Holiness	Curiosity	Charisma
Independent	Elegance	Goodness	Hope	Decisiveness	Cheerfulness
thinking	Fluidity	Honesty	Love	Determination	Cooperation
Inquiry	Gracefulness	Humaneness	Mission	Diligence	Courtesy
Insight	Gradation	Impartiality	Patience	Flexibility	Dependability
Knowledge	Harmony	Independence	Purpose	Forethought	Devotion
Logical thought	Impact	Integrity	Repentance	Imagination	Empathy
and expression	Integration	Justice	Reverence	Impartiality	Friendship
Neatness	Originality	Loyalty	Righteousness	Independence	Geniality
Objectivity	Realism	Mercy	Self-control	Industriousness	Graciousness
Perfection	Responsiveness	Obedience	Selflessness	Ingenuity	Gratitude
Precision	Rhythm	Openness	Self-motivation to	Initiative	Hospitality
Reasoning	Sentiment	Purity	develop faith	Intuition	Modesty
Relevance	Serenity	Pursuit of truth	Sense of worth in	Liveliness	Participation
Sensibility	Simplicity	Reliability	God's eyes	Openness	Patriotism
Sensitivity	Spontaneity	Respect	Significance	Optimism	Politeness
Structure	Subtlety	Self-control	Sincerity	Perceptiveness	Sensitivity
Tentativeness in	Surprise	Sincerity	Solemnity	Persistence	Supportiveness
research	Symmetry	Stability	Spirituality	Personal growth	Sympathy
Thoroughness	Uniqueness	Trustworthiness	Thankfulness	Positive outlook	Thoughtfulness
Understanding	Unity	Truthfulness	Trust in God	Safety	Tolerance
Workmanship	Variety	Uprightness	Unselfishness	Temperance	Willingness

Adapted from the Language Curriculum Framework, South Pacific Division Curriculum Unit.

How does a Christian teacher approach the teaching of values? Although various specific techniques—such as voting, ranking, continua, forced choice, listening, dilemmas, interviewing, role play, and goal setting (Larson, Larson & Gillespie, 1992)—can be used, there are typically four basic choices in terms of approach (Hill, 1982).

When teaching values, some teachers rely on indoctrination. "Premarital sex is wrong. Homosexuality is wrong. Adultery is wrong. The Biblical perspective is that human sexuality should only be expressed in marriage. Do you all understand? Good. Now be sure you answer correctly on the exam Monday." Under indoctrination, the teacher lays down the Christian position and summarily dismisses all others as evil, erroneous, immoral, and anti-biblical (see Figure 6). The problem, of course, is that students have not been taught to think Christianly for themselves. Furthermore, they have been conditioned to acquiesce reflexively or have been goaded into rebellion, both of which are undesirable.
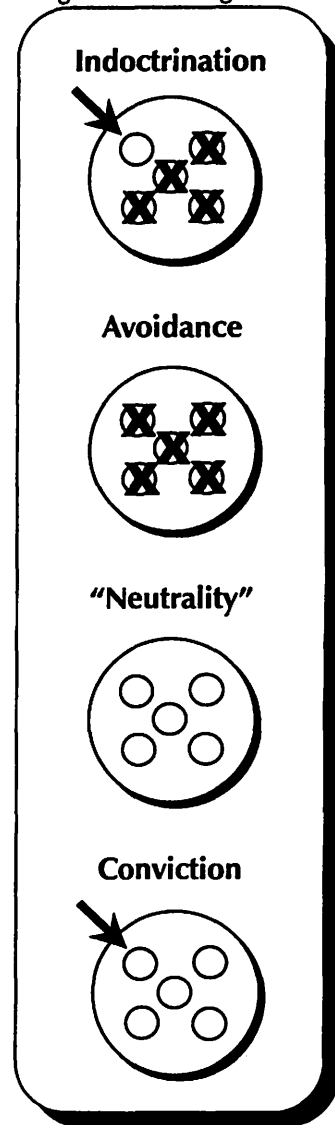
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A second reaction is simply avoidance. "This next unit deals with human sexuality. Now we are running a bit behind schedule so we are going to skip this section. And frankly this is an area that is best discussed with your parents at home. So our next unit will be...." The results of value avoidance are highly detrimental. Some students will view the teacher as a coward, unwilling or unprepared to address a controversial but significant issue. Others, however, will take the cue that this issue is not really all that important in life, at least not important enough to be addressed in school. Still others, their curiosity aroused and no guidance proffered, will look for their answers on the street.

A third approach is "neutrality." "Students, our new unit is about human sexuality. Now most of you probably recognize already that people have different values in this area. Some people believe that it is acceptable to express sexuality before marriage. Some of the reasons are.... Of course, there are some concerns.... Others believe that, once married, sexuality can be expressed either within or without the marriage. Again, there are some reasons and concerns.... Now others believe that sexuality can be expressed at any time, regardless of gender, as long as there is mutual consent and the parties care about each other.... Still others maintain that sexuality should be expressed only within marriage. The reasons given...." About this time a student raises his hand and asks, "Teacher, what do you believe?" "My dear students, it's not important what I believe. What's important is what you believe. You must each think through this matter carefully and come to a personal decision."

This sounds quite sophisticated. But there are some profound difficulties. First of all, "neutrality" is really only a pretense and students will discover sooner or later what the teacher really believes. But by then, they will have lost confidence in the teacher's ability to provide a sense of direction. An even greater problem is the impression some students will receive that all things are equal or at least relative, that there are really no divine criteria. The sordid story of the book of Judges ends with this observation, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Joshua 21:25).

Figure 6. Teaching values

Indoctrination

Avoidance

"Neutrality"

Conviction

So what is the Christian approach in teaching values? The most effective strategy seems to be that of candid conviction. In this approach, the teacher frankly discusses the various perspectives that are assumed in relationship to the particular issue. The rationale for each is carefully considered. Students are encouraged to think deeply. But there is more. The teacher also shares his own Bible-based, faith-oriented belief with the students. In fact, he is willing to let his students "press him to the wall" by making comments, asking questions, and even raising objections. He sees his role as that of a knowledgeable

guide, rather than arbitrator. There is, of course, a condition—the teacher must himself know why he believes. He must think deeply and Christianly; which is, of course, what must happen anyway if the teacher is to integrate faith and learning.

Experiential Strategies

It is not enough for a student to know about God. He or she must know God personally. It is insufficient for a student to describe the faith construct. Faith must be experienced in the life. *Personal* strategies in the integration of faith and learning seek to help students experience faith and form a close relationship with God as a part of the academic program.

To accomplish this purpose, the teacher must take a personal interest in each student and seek for opportunities to converse together regarding spiritual things. This may take place through informal chats, interviews, or counseling sessions. It may involve a look at some problem the student is facing, some decision that needs to be made, or simply convey recognition for a milestone or achievement. At times, it may be appropriate and meaningful to pray with and for the student.

Within the academic program, opportunity should be given at strategic junctures for students to explore the great questions of life—Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? How do I know what is right? What is wrong around and within me? What is the solution? (John 14:6; Matt. 23:23). Questions such as these may be examined by giving students time for reflection, through discussion and position papers, or by asking students to keep a reflective journal. These activities can also be enhanced by the provision of a prayer garden, prayer chapel, or quiet spots of beauty on the school campus, as well as through weekend retreats, class sessions held in natural settings, or wilderness survival programs.

Interrelational methods help students to interrelate with others in ways that enhance the integration of faith and learning. Two interrelational strategies that have been found quite effective are cooperation and service.

Cooperation is a Christian construct. Although cooperative learning experiences have been researched quite thoroughly and have become one of the most widely promoted instructional strategies (Ellis & Fouts, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Slavin, 1999), it is important to recognize that the Scriptures have long emphasized cooperative activities in passages such as these: "Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, 'Be of good courage!'" (Isa. 41:6). "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak" (Rom. 15:1 KJV). "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2, NIV; see also Ex. 17:12; Neh. 2:17, 18; 4:16; Dan. 1:11-16; Mark 6:7-13; 2 Cor. 8:13, 14).

In the classroom setting, Christian teachers should seek to diminish activities that foster competition (see Kohn, 1992; also Matt. 20:25-28; 23:5-11; Rom. 12:10; 2 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:4), and in their place promote cooperative learning experiences. These can include collaborative projects, small group discussions, student mentors, fieldwork dyads, role-play, and group investigation, among others. The overarching purpose is to provide students with

the opportunity to better understand others' circumstances and to actively contribute to their well-being.

Service is similarly a Christian mandate. Christ told his disciples, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), and the Apostle Paul exhorted the Christian believers, "Through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). To encourage an experiential integration of faith and learning, each course should incorporate a variety of subject-related service activities, both within and outside the institution. These may include campus beautification projects, community conservation endeavors, outreach activities to the poor and homeless, alcohol and drug prevention programs, mission trips, as well as adopt-a-school or adopt-a-grandparent projects.

Some of the key elements in these service learning activities include (1) identifying service-oriented learning outcomes with strong academic ties, (2) engaging in meaningful service to the individuals or community being served, (3) developing community-based partnerships through the service experience, (4) reflecting on the experience both privately and publicly, and (5) celebrating effort and achievement. All of these ingredients coalesce to establish a service ethic among the academic community.

Declarative strategies focus on the Christian as a witness. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The primary purpose of a Christian school is not to insulate students from the world, but to prepare them to effectively represent Jesus Christ in every setting (John 17:15-18).

One should not expect, however, that students graduating from a school will suddenly become powerful witnesses for God, if they have had no training or experience in witnessing throughout their academic program. Teachers must consciously incorporate in course requirements activities that will help prepare students to communicate God's truth. This testimony can be shared through various media—mime, speeches, articles, radio spots, posters, songs, and works of art. It can focus on health, conservation, interpersonal relationships, personal experiences, or specific moral values. The goal is to help students to develop a worldview in which they see themselves as active witnesses for God.

A Crucial Issue: Mere Tokenism

Perhaps the greatest threat to authentic Christian education is found in the dichotomized school—an educational institution wherein activities are classified as either spiritual or secular. Those that operate under the "spiritual" designator include a brief devotional at the beginning of the day, the "Bible" class, chapel period, the Week of Prayer, and church services on weekends. Once these are over, however, we must "get on with business." And we carry on the academic enterprise with a decidedly secular orientation.

In effect, we have said, "Keep God in His place!" Relegate Him to a cubicle of time, space, and influence. Consign Him to a corner of our school; keep Him on the margin of our lives. But we must ask ourselves: What does this do to the worldview of our students? What does it do to their lifestyle?

The underlying problem, of course, is that the dichotomized school has engaged in but a mere token of Christianity, a pseudointegration of faith and learning. Spiritual snippets on the bulletin board, a religious ritual at the start of class, denominational books in the school library, church members at the front of the classroom, the word "Christian" in the school's name—all of these are important, but woefully insufficient. It is not enough to think from time to time about spiritual matters; we must think Christianly about the totality of life and learning.

Without illustrative, conceptual, and experiential strategies that integrate faith and learning deeply within the teaching/ learning process, contextual strategies are simply a veneer. The program is just a sugarcoated pagan pill—and it is the pill and not the coating that works (Clark, 1969). Mere tokenism is not enough! We must have the genuine article. We must offer distinctive, authentic Christian education.

A Core Issue: The Bible Class

What is the place of the Bible in Christian education? There are basically three alternatives. The first is to make the "Bible class" a wedge of the curricular pie, one course among many (see Figure 7). This, of course, sets up the Bible in competition with other courses for the student's time and energy; a contest, by the way, in which the Bible class often performs quite poorly. It also sets the Bible classes adrift, as flotsam of spiritual truth in a secular sea (Gaebelein, 1968). The greatest problem, however, is the subliminal message that this arrangement communicates to students—that the Word of God is just one among equals, that the spiritual is but a slice of life.

A second option is found in the approach taken by many Bible colleges. Here the Bible assumes the dominant position in the curriculum, crowding other subjects into whatever time remains. In essence, this amounts to a form of bibliolatry. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that students leave the school unable to converse in any depth regarding science, history, literature, or the arts. They are unskilled in communication, technology, or research. They are so "heavenly" that they are of little earthly good.

The integration of faith and learning proposes that the Bible must be the foundation of the curriculum, the core of every subject. Far from being relegated to a particular course or department, the Bible has a right to control instruction in all courses and departments (Clark, 1969). Every discipline, every subject, every topic must be Christ-centered and Bible-based.

Which leads to a corollary: There should be no course in a Christian school that is called the "Bible class." Lest I be summarily expelled for "heresy," let me add that I firmly believe there should be religion courses in every academic program. Religion (not to be confused with spirituality) is a vital dimension of life, and should occupy a prominent place in the curriculum. Some, in fact, have argued that we should teach the 4 R's, with religion occupying the highest rung (Hill, 1982). These religion courses should focus on
- God—personal relationship and corporate worship
- Scripture—beliefs and heritage
- Church—mission and fellowship

- Humanity—witness and service
- Life—values and standards

The point, however, is that religion courses should not be identified as the "Bible class." This simply gives the wrong message. Teachers come to feel that it is "the Bible teacher's" job to teach the Word. And students quickly catch on. "So why are we talking about the Bible in this class? This isn't Bible class." Granted that the Word of God should be at the center of the religion course; but it must also occupy the foundational position in all subjects, regardless of the particular discipline. This is integration of faith and learning at its fullest.

A Concluding Thought

Some years ago I encountered a question that tends to lay bare the soul. The question was this, "How is teaching your subject different because you are a Christian?" I had to admit that there was not much at all that was distinctive. Yes, I had tried to be creative, to do the best I could to help my students succeed in learning. But frankly, things weren't all that much different from what happened in other classrooms with no pretense of Christianity whatsoever.

Today, I still grapple with the deep implications of the integration of faith and learning. If I have learned anything so far, it is that the integration of faith and learning does not come about in a moment; it does not happen magically, with some secret technique or formula. Rather it requires a foundational understanding of Christian education, a personal commitment to think and teach Christianly, and concentrated effort to move forward, by the grace of God.

The good news is that we are not alone in this endeavor. Christ has given us the Spirit of truth, who will guide us into all truth (John 16:13). He has promised us wisdom—the ability to apply knowledge correctly (Prov. 15:2), if we will but ask in faith (James 1:5, 6). And He has given us power, "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). As we seek to follow in the footsteps of the Master Teacher, may we reach out and claim the promise, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

Figure 7. The place of the Bible

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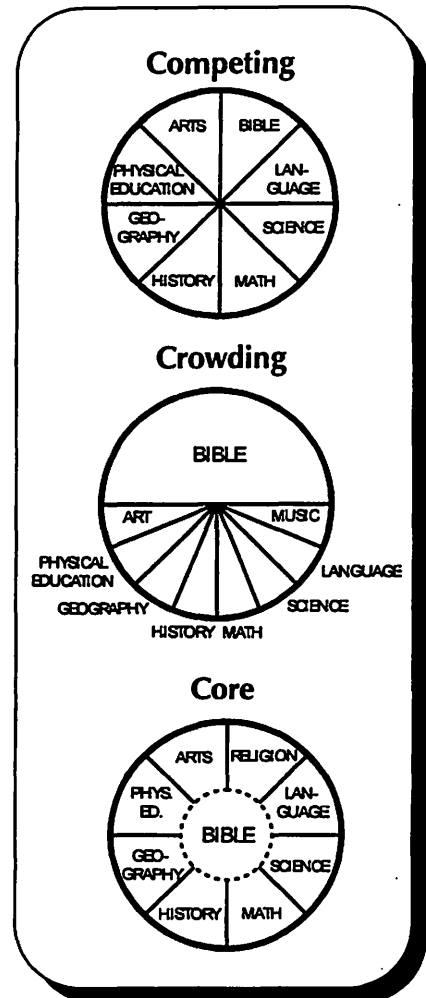
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