Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Collection

J. Oliver Buswell Jr. Library
12330 Conway Road
Saint Louis, MO 63141

library.covenantseminary.edu

CROSS-CULTURAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA: PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By

JAMES E. BOOK

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

2012

CROSS-CULTURAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA: PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By

JAMES E. BOOK

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Graduation Date: May 18, 2012

Dr. Donald C. Guthrie, Faculty Advisor Donald C Guthrie

Dr. David B. Calhoun, Second Faculty Reader David B Calhoun

Kristen P. Sagar, Assoc. Dir. of D.Min. Program Kristen P Sagar

ABSTRACT

Those engaged in cross-cultural theological education face numerous challenges, including matters of what is culturally appropriate. The purpose of this study was to discover the preferred learning styles of East African students studying with Global University on the East Africa School of Theology campus in Nairobi, Kenya. Discovering individual and cultural preferred learning styles can assist those teaching theology in cross-cultural settings to be more effective in their ministries. This facilitates better contextualization of both pedagogy and theological education.

This study utilized a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with seven Global University students at the East Africa School of Theology in Nairobi, Kenya. The review of literature and analysis of the seven interviews focused on three key areas of study that affect cross-cultural theological education. These three areas of focus were learning *styles, pedagogical contextualization* and contextualized theological education. This study focused on the students' perception of the learning experience in the East African context. In order to determine the student perceptions, three research questions guided the study. The questions were: 1) How do students express their learning experiences with Global University courses? 2) How do students identify their preferred learning styles? 3) How do students explain their culture's influence on their preferred learning styles?

Concerning learning experiences, the findings indicated that students struggled with difficult vocabulary and theological concepts at the undergraduate level. The findings also indicated that students preferred frequent feedback throughout the course. Students also indicated appreciation for the practicality of Global University courses and many of them use what they have learned in their respective ministries, including preaching and teaching

Concerning preferred learning styles, findings indicated that all participants had a preference for learning visually with the most common method being through observation and demonstration.The study found there was variety among the participants in a preference for learning in groups, learning alone, or learning through a combination of those two methods. The findings also indicated that most students had more than one preferred learning style

Concerning cultural influences on preferred learning styles, the findings of this study revealed that the most prominent cultural influence on learning preferences was the method of learning visually and specifically through observation and demonstration. Cultural influence on a preference for group learning was also indicated by two participants.

This study concluded that learning experiences indicated that greater explanation of difficult terms and concepts are needed. The research demonstrated that there is a marked preference for visual learning and there is great variety in the preference for group learning or individual learning and that cultural and family influences play a role in these preferences. The literature agrees with the finding of the preference for visual learning but disagrees with the finding of a greater preference for individual learning than group learning. This disagreement is most likely due to the small sample, and the study concluded that further research is needed in this area involving other research participants and institutions. Finally, this study concluded that a variety of teaching methodologies should be used in order to contextualize pedagogy, including a variety of visual methods of learning. The study also concluded that appropriate contextualization of theological content is needed as well.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the support of numerous individuals, this dissertation would not have been possible. I want to express my thanks and deep appreciation to Dr. Ron Iwasko, former president of Global University, Dr. George Flattery, former president and current chancellor of Global University, and Dr. Gary Seevers, current Global University president. All three have been a constant source of help and encouragement along this journey. In addition, my immediate supervisor at Global University, Dr. Willard Teague, Dean of Global University's Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology has also encouraged and assisted me in all stages of my dissertation work, as well as Dr. Jack Nill, Global University's provost. John Bueno, former director of Assemblies of God World Missions, and Dr. Joann Butrin, director of International Ministries for the Assemblies of God have also been strongly supportive of this effort at every stage.

Jeff Nelson, the president of the East Africa School of Theology in Nairobi, Kenya, an agreement school with Global University and the entire staff at EAST were immensely helpful in supporting the subject matter and arranging meetings with the participants. Dean Harris Gichuhi and Registrar Lucy Karanja as well as the other faculty and staff members deserve special mention.

I want to say a special thank you to my editor, Kristen Sagar, who was extraordinarily efficient in eliminating my wordiness, and yet staying true to my original intent. Kristen was a delight to work with throughout this entire process. Steve Jamieson in Covenant Seminary's Library was also very helpful, securing hard to find sources and assisting with computer matters. And most of all, to God be all the glory.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Bob is one of four western missionaries and faculty members serving with several nationals on faculty at a Bible college in Ghana. He and his wife Sherry enjoy living in another culture, they love the local foods, and they know the local language well. They also enjoy interacting with the national faculty members. When Bob teaches, he primarily lectures, rarely invites discussion, and never uses visual tools. He does not even pass out printed copies of his outline and lecture for the day.

Daniel, a student at the Bible college, learns by a combination of verbal and visual means. He understands concepts better when they are accompanied by pictures, documentaries, or movies. Daniel also learns by hands-on approaches, putting into practice what he is learning as soon as possible. Ruth, one of Daniel's fellow students, learns by hearing stories, poems, and riddles, and by being shown how to perform a particular task. Such real-life situations have led to a discussion about the best approaches to cross-cultural teaching environments. Missionaries assigned to cross-cultural theological education contexts face numerous challenges, including cultural adjustments. Cultural adjustments include adjustments in daily life, food, and customs. In addition, in the classroom, the missionary may face adjustments in the different educational system the country follows, the ways parents teach their children, the learning style of the students, and the ways theological truths are expressed.

Many missionary organizations are committed to a full-orbed, holistic view of the mission of God. As a result of this holistic viewpoint, these organizations teach and train

national ministers worldwide through both residential and distance education programs. Although an increasing number of these organizations include nationals on their faculty, many faculty members are missionaries appointed by Western mission organizations, sometimes at the request of the national churches.

Adult education theory and practice, both overseas and in the increasingly multi-cultural environment of the United States, has encountered several cross-cultural matters that raise questions about the historical approach to Western educational methods. While this question is not new, the discussion has become more prominent in recent years. Both Western and non-Western voices in adult education theory and missiological contextualization of educational practices have recently called for a more global discussion of culturally responsive approaches to teaching and theological expression in these settings.

One specific question is whether or not these educational programs are based primarily or even exclusively on Western educational methods and learning styles. Learning styles have generally been discussed in terms of individual and cultural preferences. In broader terms, cultural learning styles are described as either Western or non-Western. Non-Western and Western learning styles are discussed in adult education theory and missiological literature. Cross-cultural experience in teaching, as well as in the available literature, raises the question of whether there is a need to adapt these educational approaches to non-Western learning styles.

Sharan B. Merriam, adult education theorist, author of *Learning in Adulthood*, and professor of adult education at the University of Georgia, asserts that "the knowledge base that has developed around learning and adult learning has been shaped by what counts as

knowledge in a Western paradigm."[1] Merriam attributes the beginning of this development to "the 1928 publication of Thorndike et al's landmark study of adult learning."[2] The researcher's reading of Thorndike's work confirms this theme.[3] In their book *Teaching in a Distant Classroom*, Michael Romanowski, former professor of education at Ohio Northern University and a current cross-cultural professor of education in several countries, and Teri McCarthy, writer in residence for the International Institute for Christian Studies, contend that "worlds can clash in an overseas classroom when a teacher enters from another culture and worldview and tries to apply his own teaching techniques."[4] At the same time, Merriam asserts that the differentiation between Western and non-Western could be categorized as a false dichotomy. "There are problems, of course, with classifying epistemological systems according to Western or non-Western. The dichotomy itself is a particularly Western concept."[5] Yet, Merriam sees this distinction as a helpful "shorthand means of referring to...unfamiliar perspectives."[6]

The recent phenomenal growth of Christianity overseas has led historians and statisticians to claim that the majority of Christians now live in the non-Western world, or what some have termed "the global South." Andrew Walls, professor emeritus of the study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh claims that "within the last century there has been a massive southward shift of the center of gravity of the Christian world, so that representative Christian lands now appear to be in Latin America, Sub-Saharan

---

[1] Sharan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, Third ed. (San Francisco, CA:: Jossey-Bass, 2007)., 217.

[2] ibid., 217.

[3] Edward L. Thorndike, Elsie Olschrin Bregman, and John Warren Tilton, *Adult Learning.* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1928)..

[4] Michael H. Romanowski and Teri McCarthy, *Teaching in a Distant Classroom: Crossing Borders for Global Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009)., 60.

[5] Sharan B. Merriam, *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2007)., 2.

[6] ibid., 3.

Africa, and other parts of the southern continents."[7] Philip Jenkins, distinguished senior fellow at Baylor University's Institute for the Study of Religion agrees and asserts that "the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa and Latin America."[8] Jenkins goes on to define the global south as it relates to Christianity as "the sense of an ever-larger share of Christians being found in the teeming poverty of Africa, Asia, and Latin America—the Tricontinental world."[9] This growth has led to a more multi-directional approach to global missions and cross-cultural interaction. Several nations besides the United States are both sending and receiving nations in missions. In his books *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* and *Invitation to World Missions*, Timothy Tennent, President of Asbury Theological Seminary, asserts, "The church in India, the traditional home of Hinduism, now sends out over 41,000 cross-cultural missionaries. In fact, today there are nearly half a billion Christians who are crossing cultural boundaries with the gospel from the majority world."[10] Tennent posits, "The new reality of mission is both multidirectional and multicontinental."[11]

Some writers maintain that this rapid growth rate has contributed to an insufficient number of adequately trained Christian pastors. In the 1993 edition of *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone, missiologist and editor of *Operation World,* observes the lack of adequate leadership training.[12] In the 2001 edition of this publication, Johnstone reiterates this

---

[7] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christan History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006)., 9.

[8] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity: Revised and Expanded Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)., 1.

[9] ibid., 4.

[10] Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century*, Invitation to Theological Studies (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, 2010)., 17.

[11] Ibid.32.

[12] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World: The Day by Day Guide to Praying for the World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1993)., 38, 66, and 72.

observation.[13] David Livermore, author of *Serving with Eyes Wide Open* and president of The Cultural Intelligence Center in East Lansing Michigan, attributes this continuing challenge to the rapid church growth occurring overseas. "With the unprecedented growth of Christianity, seven thousand new church leaders are needed daily to care for the growing church. The burgeoning growth of the Christian church is creating a leadership chasm."[14] Likewise, Ronald A. Iwasko, former president of Global University and author of *Christian Adult Education in Cultural Context,* posits that "...such rapid growth has demanded a commensurate number of pastors but has outstripped the capacity of Bible colleges and seminaries to train them. As a result, a large proportion of these churches are led by persons with little or no formal training in Bible and theology."[15] According to Livermore, "Eighty-five percent of churches in the world are led by men and women who have no formal training in theology or ministry."[16]

A common assertion in the literature is that most theological curriculum has been developed in the West in harmony with generally accepted Western educational methods. Some missionaries and educators have alleged that this is not effective cross-cultural theological education or appropriate sensitivity to local cultural learning styles. Johnstone contends that "too much [curriculum] is geared to Western theological battles and perceptions."[17] Peter Chang, theological education by extension coordinator for the Asia Theological Association and professor at the China Graduate School of Theology ties both

---

[13] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World: When We Pray God Works: 21st Century Edition* (Waynesboro, Georgia: Paternoster Press, 2001)., 24, 37 and 48.

[14] David A. Livermore, *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2006)., 41.

[15] Ronald A. Iwasko, "Adult Christian Education in Cultural Context," (Springfield, Missouri: Global University, 2012)., 7.

[16] Livermore., 41.

[17] Johnstone, *Operation World: When We Pray God Works: 21st Century Edition.*, 25.

the content of theological education and thinking and learning styles to too much Western influence.[18] Lois McKinney Douglas, professor emerita of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, former long-term missionary with the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, and co-author of *Encountering Missionary Life and Work,* summarizes Chang's article, noting that it "applies cognitive style theories to missiological issues. He challenges the imposition of Western linear thought patterns in non-Western contexts."[19] Douglas also observes that there are "implications in learning style theories for [cross-cultural] theological education."[20] Robert W. Ferris, professor of intercultural studies, missions, and Christian education and Associate Provost of Columbia International University, contends that missionaries did not "design culturally appropriate educational programs...[and] replicated (with minimal adjustments) the Western schools in which they trained."[21] Tom Steffen, professor of intercultural studies at Biola University and Lois McKinney Douglas contend that "traditionally Bible curricula from the West were taken to the rest of the world and translated verbatim."[22]

Gabo Ntseane, senior lecturer in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Botswana, posits that "The formal Western type of educational system currently offered in Africa has left out most of the forms of African indigenous knowledge systems."[23] The same author contends that "the stifling of the advancement of the African indigenous knowledge

---

[18] Peter Chang, "Steak, Potato, Peas and Chopsuey: Linear and Non-Linear Thinking in Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 5, no. 2 (1981)., 279.

[19] *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, s.v. "Learning Theories."

[20] ibid.

[21] *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, s.v. "Theological Education in Non-Western Contexts."

[22] Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas, *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008).,357.

[23] Gabo Ntseane, "African Indigenous Knowledge: The Case of Botswana," in *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, ed. Sharan B. Merriam(Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 2007)., 129.

has led to the influx and comparative advantage of Western science and technologies."[24] In a discussion of learning styles, Ntseane asserts that due to this neglect, there is a current need for "the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and diversity in learning style in the instruction process."[25] Ntseane is one of several non-Western voices that are emerging in learning style theory. Others include Mazalan Kamis, assistant director of educational planning at the Ministry of Education in Malyasia, Masanah Muchammed, professor of professional development and continuing education at the Universiti Putra Malaysia, Swathi Nath Thaker, Ph.D. student in adult education at the University of Georgia, Lavinia Tamarua, senior lecturer in the School of Education at the Auckland University of Technology, Akoranga Campus in New Zealand, Jiensen F. Shih, Buddhist Monastic and associate professor in the Department of Education at Hsuan Chuang University in Taiwan, and Youngwa Kee, associate professor and department head of lifelong education at Soongsil University in Seoul, Korea.[26]

A similar development is occurring in theological writing. However, some of these individuals have been trained in Western schools. For example, Kwame Bediako, late African theologian and author of *Jesus in Africa*, studied in Bordeaux, France before studying theology at both the London Bible College and the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.[27] A review of African contributors to the *Africa Bible Commentary* reveals that a

---

[24] ibid., 131.

[25] ibid., 133.

[26] These individuals have contributed to the 2007 publication edited by Sharan B. Merriam, *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*. Some have also written journal articles, such as Peggy Gabo Ntseane.

[27] Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2000)., vii-viii.

significant number of them received some of their education through various Western colleges, universities, and seminaries.[28]

Cross-cultural communication is a challenging endeavor regardless of the culture of the communicator or listener. Missiologists have long discussed cultural differences and the broader issues of communication, regardless of whether the context is personal conversation, the attempted communication of the gospel, or theological education. Recently, the popularity of short-term missions teaching trips among Americans has increased dramatically. At the same time, David Livermore has observed that there is a marked contrast in the perceptions of national leaders and the American pastors teaching in these short-term cultural contexts concerning the value of the material taught and the teaching style employed. One pastor noted, "They would sit and listen...they wouldn't even get up and go to the bathroom every five minutes...they didn't get up and leave. I mean they were spellbound...in listening to the message, the methodology...the format...the how to's and the philosophy."[29] By contrast, a national student in the class expressed the following perspective: "I'm glad the trainers felt respected. They should. What they need to realize however is that we would never think about talking or getting up to leave in the middle of their lecture. It would be repulsive to do that in our culture."[30]

Steffen and Douglas assert that some Western churches teach a theology that is "typically systematic and devoid of the Bible narratives that inform theology."[31] They suggest that while the positive aspect of this approach is a strong theology, the weakness is

---

[28] Tokunboh Adeyemo, ed. *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers, 2006)., xiii-xvi.

[29] David Livermore, "American or American't?: A Critical Analysis of Western Training in the World," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (2004)., 2. http://www.intersectcommunity.com/pdf/AmericanorAmericant/pdf (accessed 19 June 2010).

[30] ibid., 3.

[31] Steffen and Douglas., 356.

that this theological expression is "often presented from the narrowness of a Western perspective. Topics relevant in many parts of the world tend to be overlooked because they are perceived as nonissues in North America."[32]

A significant body of literature exists on cultural learning styles, pedagogical contextualization, and contextualized theological education. A growing but significant body of literature on African learning styles is also emerging, including literature on how Kenyans learn. In the Kenyan theological education context, the literature on Kenyan learning styles as it relates to Global University, East Africa School of Theology (EAST), and Assemblies of God World Missions is limited.

Problem and Purpose Statements

Global University is a distance education school affiliated with Assemblies of God World Missions. While undergraduate courses are designed primarily for independent study, a significant number of overseas Bible colleges use GU undergraduate courses in their curriculum in residential and extension contexts. One of these schools is the East Africa School of Theology (EAST) in Nairobi, Kenya. Global University and EAST train national ministers from several East African countries and denominations.

Though Global University has many students in many countries, the typical undergraduate student is a male ranging in age from thirty-five to forty-one, living on the African continent and already engaged in active ministry, according to Dr. Willard Teague, dean of Global University's undergraduate school. With the explosive growth of the church in East Africa and theological education centers established by Western missionary sending agencies, missionary educators are endeavoring to improve contextualization of theological education and teaching methodologies in the African context. The purpose of this study was

[32] ibid., 356.

to discover how Global University East African students identified their preferred learning styles.

Primary Research Questions

This study focused on the students' perceptions of the learning experience in the East African context. To explore these perceptions in light of the efforts of course writers and instructors, the following research questions were used:

1) How do students express their learning experiences with Global University courses?
2) How do students identify their preferred learning styles?
3) How do students explain their culture's influence on their preferred learning styles?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant for several reasons. First, it can help missionary organizations involved in cross-cultural theological education to understand culturally preferred learning styles. The research can assist instructors on the EAST campus and in Global University's international office as they assess current curriculum and instructional methodologies. The research can raise awareness among faculty that students from different cultures may have different perceptions of the learning experience than the instructor. Finally, it can help missionary educators worldwide to explore ways to contextualize theological training in specific cultural contexts.

Definition of Terms

Contextualization: The act or process of communicating in a way that is understandable by the receptor culture. This includes both the message and methodologies.

Pedagogical Contextualization; The teaching methodology and/or learning style being adapted appropriately to the receptor culture.

Indigenous Learning: "Learning which occurs with or within indigenous peoples, contexts, or worldviews."[33]

Learning Styles: The preferred means of learning of an individual or culture, while recognizing that there are variations even within a culture from the general cultural patterns of a preferred style.

Syncretism: A blending of Christian and non-Christian religions in ways that facilitate practices contrary to biblical teaching.

Translatability: The ability of the gospel to be "translated," not just into languages, but in varying cultural contexts and expressions, so that the local cultural expression of the gospel is both biblically faithful and culturally relevant.

[33] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York: Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Indigenous Learning."

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to determine how students learn best in cross-cultural theological education contexts, and in particular the specific cross-cultural context of Nairobi, Kenya. Since theological education is a primary component of cross-cultural missionary activity, it is important for missionary educators to be aware of cultural differences in learning and teaching patterns. It is also important for missionary educators to be cognizant of the theological questions that host cultures may pose to the biblical text and to the professor, who may be from another culture.

Waynne B. James, Professor of Adult Education at the University of South Florida and Patricia A. Maher, Instructor of Adult Education at the University of South Florida claim "it is typical for an instructor to be someone with expertise in a particular field or area who has been asked to teach others. The result is often instructors whose tendencies are to teach either to their own natural style since it worked for them, or to teach the way they were taught."[34] Similarly, Dr. Ronald Iwasko, former president of Global University and former professor of intercultural studies at North Central University in Minneapolis claims that "Traditional education has focused on the accumulation of factual knowledge. Teachers lament the lack of time to cover all the content . . . . Trained in the West, missionaries take this philosophy and practice of education to other cultures. We teach as we have been

[34] Waynne B. James and Patricia A. Maher, "Understanding and Using Learning Styles," in *Adult Learning Methods*, ed. Michael W. Galbraith(Malabar, Florida: Krieger 2004)., 120-121.

taught."[35] If these claims are correct, then it could be assumed that professors have a tendency to teach out of their own educational experience. Professors will utilize the educational methods that helped them to learn because they will assume that whatever helped them will also help their students. However, this may not always be the best approach, particularly if one teaches cross-culturally, and if educational methods that helped the professor do not translate well to the host culture. Michael Romanowski, professor of education in the Middle East and Teri McCarthy, writer in residence for the International Institute for Christian Studies, contend "teachers, no matter how experienced, will face new and unfamiliar challenges in another culture and some of their presuppositions and approaches to teaching simply will not work."[36] In order to determine how students learn best in cross-cultural theological education contexts, the issues of learning styles, both individual and cultural, contextualizing pedagogy, and contextualizing theological education need to be considered.

There is some significant literature in each of these areas, although often in missiological literature, the issues of learning styles and pedagogy are primarily found in journal articles, brief chapters in missiological books, and occasionally in dissertations. As a result, the literature related to this study has been arranged under three general topics: a) learning styles, b) pedagogical contextualization, and c) contextualized theological education. However, before the literature related to these three subject areas is reviewed, it is essential to craft a biblical/theological framework for this study.

---

[35] Iwasko., 38.

[36] Romanowski and McCarthy. 57.

Biblical/Theological Framework

It has long been accepted that the apostle Paul wrote his letters to specific situations and needs in specific contexts. Thus, one can say with accuracy that Paul contextualized the gospel in areas that agreed with the culture and in areas of the culture that needed to be challenged. Did Jesus and the New Testament writers "contextualize" both the message and the methodology? If so, to what extent? Did they contextualize not only the message, but also the pedagogy in their teaching? Did they discern both individual and cultural learning styles, and did they then adapt to those particular contexts?

Some New Testament scholars suggest that they did exactly that. Dean Flemming, professor of New Testament and intercultural communications at European Nazarene College in Germany asserts that "the four Gospels are four 'contextualizations' of the one story."[37] He also contends that "the author of the First Gospel is a Jew who contextualizes his story about Jesus primarily for fellow Jews."[38] Concerning the gospel of John, Flemming posits that "the entire Gospel is a case study in how John recontextualizes the story of Jesus for a new audience and a new generation."[39] Flemming states that "John consistently pictures Jesus as one who uses images that are appropriate to the situation and the people he is addressing."[40] One such example is the story of the Samaritan woman found in John 4:4-15, the first of several key New Testament passages that will be considered.

Romanowski and McCarthy suggest that Jesus effectively contextualized pedagogical methodology by "adapt[ing] lessons for both large and small groups, rich and poor, male and

---

[37] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005).*, 234.

[38] ibid., 244.

[39] ibid.,259.

[40] ibid., 261.

female, educated and uneducated, religious and irreligious, the powerful as well as the disenfranchised. He effectively utilized different learning styles."[41] Romanowski and McCarthy observe that Jesus used lecture, asking students questions and allowing students to ask questions.[42] Stephen Struass, professor of world missions and intercultural studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, contends "every culture has elements that conform to God's truth and other elements that violate it. Good contextualization recognizes this good and evil in every culture."[43] Strauss goes on to assert that good theological contextualization "affirms the good in a culture by building links between the Bible and those good elements. . .[and] it challenges the evil in a culture by speaking prophetically from scripture, disturbing those elements of the culture that violate God's truth."[44] Flemming contends that "a conversation beside a well and a woman's felt need for a constant source of fresh water become the occasion for a theological exposition on 'living water' (Jn. 4:4-15)."[45] If Flemming is correct, then Jesus is identifying with the woman and her culture in this passage. Yet at the same time, Jesus violates cultural norms and challenges the culture to be changed by the living water of the gospel, so that both components of the culture are present in this exchange. Jesus affirms the good in the culture and he also speaks prophetically.[46]

Kenneth E. Bailey, author, lecturer and emeritus research professor of Middle Eastern New Testament studies for the Tantur Ecumenial Institue in Jerusalem, suggests that Jesus

---

[41] Romanowski and McCarthy.94.

[42] ibid. 94. They cite the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as an example of lecture, Matthew 16:15 as Jesus asking a question of students, and Luke 10:29 as an example of a student asking a question.

[43] Stephen J. Strauss, "Contextualization and Mission," in *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*, ed. Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, Encountering Mission (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010). 270.

[44] ibid., 270.

[45] Flemming., 261.

[46] John 4:1-30 (ESV).

actually sat on the well, but then did not follow cultural protocol when the woman approached. "By deliberately sitting on the well without a bucket, Jesus placed himself strategically to be in need of whomever appeared with the necessary equipment."[47] He goes on to note several violations of cultural protocol. Only a couple of these will be noted here. "On seeing her, Jesus was expected to courteously withdraw to a distance of at least twenty feet, indicating that it was both safe and culturally appropriate for her to approach the well. Only then could she move to the well. . . Jesus did not move as she approached. She decided to draw near anyway. Then comes the surprise. Jesus asks for a drink."[48] Bailey contends that Jesus "breaks the social taboo against talking to a woman, particularly in an uninhabited place with no witnesses."[49] Bailey goes on to observe that he himself did not violate this cultural protocol when he lived in that part of the world. "Throughout forty years of life in the Middle East I never crossed this social boundary line. In village society, a strange man does not even make eye contact with a woman in a public place."[50]

African national and theologian Samuel Ngewa posits that the application of this passage to African culture today challenges cultural norms:

> In some African cultures, women are not allowed to eat certain choice cuts of meat that are reserved for men only. The exclusion of women extends to other areas of life too...Where all women are excluded from certain things, women who carry some kind of stigma fare even worse in terms of social isolation...Jesus approach to her speaks loudly about areas of African culture that must change.[51]

---

[47] Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2008).,202.

[48] ibid., 202.

[49] ibid., 202-203.

[50] ibid., 203.

[51] Samuel M. Ngewa, "John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo(Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive Publishers, 2006)., 1259.

In some cultures, students show respect for their professor/teacher by standing. Ken Bailey observes that "in Middle Eastern traditional culture the teacher sits and the student shows respect for the teacher by standing to recite."[52] Bailey then examines the Parable of the Good Samaritan as recorded in Luke 10:25-37, noting observance of cultural protocol, nuances, and violations of cultural protocol. For example, cultural protocol is observed but also violated when the lawyer stands. Bailey asserts that "in this instance the lawyer stands in order to test the teacher."[53] Thus, the lawyer observes cultural protocol by standing but violates cultural protocol in the purpose of his standing. However, the question arises whether his engagement of Jesus in this way could be an expression of learning style. Bailey observes that Jesus pedagogy "was to invoke the lawyer's question to a related question and then use that response to answer the original question."[54] So first Jesus engages in a give-and-take conversation with the lawyer, discussing biblical passages, as was done in teacher-student exchanges. He also participates in the cultural penchant for making one's point through stories. Bailey observes that "Jesus responds to the lawyer's question by creating the classical story of the Good Samaritan."[55]

Bailey contends that a Middle Easterner listening to the story in that time would have made several assumptions about the circumstances Jesus mentions in the story. Bailey asserts, "Robbers in the Middle East are known to beat their victims only if they resist. It can be assumed therefore that this poor fellow made this mistake and consequently suffered a severe beating…The wounded man is naturally assumed to be a Jew."[56] The second

---

[52] Bailey.,286.
[53] ibid.,286.
[54] ibid., 286.
[55] ibid.,289.
[56] ibid., 291.

assumption that Bailey contends would be common concerns the priest in the story. He first observes that numerous priests lived in Jericho at that time and often traveled to Jerusalem for assignments that lasted two weeks. Because of this frequency of traveling, and the fact that priests were generally wealthy, Bailey contends that "as a person of means, the priest would not be hiking seventeen miles down the hill when he could easily afford to ride. A Middle Easterner listening to the story would assume that the rich priest was riding. He could well have transported the man to help."[57]

A Middle Eastern Jew would have been familiar with the law which has preceded the story in the teacher-student dialogue in Luke 10, so the student may have assumed that the priest faced an unusual dilemma. "If the victim was a fellow Jew...the priest would have been responsible to reach out and help him. But this victim was naked and unconscious, so how could anyone be sure of his ethnic-linguistic identity? No doubt, the priest wanted to do his duty. But what was his duty?"[58] Bailey expounds on the possible dilemma. If the wounded person is dead, the priest risks defiling himself according to the law. This means that he would need to return to Jerusalem and arrange for a week-long purification process, which could affect distribution of funds to the poor. If the man was not a Jew, then the priest was under no legal obligation to assist him.

Yet the conclusion of the parable is still an unexpected turn in the story, as the Samaritan provides compassion and mercy to the wounded individual. "The Samaritan risks his life by transporting the wounded man to an inn within Jewish territory. Such inns were found in villages, not in the wilderness."[59] It can be posited that Jesus used cultural customs

---

[57] ibid.,292.

[58] ibid., 292

[59] ibid.,295.

in his teaching, but that in the teaching itself, sometimes aspects of the stories violated cultural norms in order to challenge aspects of the religious/social culture that needed to change in order to express God's mercy and grace.

Dean Flemming suggests that the apostle Paul also contextualized the message and methodology by his sermons and written letters which "become a word on target for diverse mission communities."[60] The book of Acts records Paul's various contextualization activities. For example, he "proclaims the Word of God in various settings to diverse groups of unbelievers."[61] In Acts 13, Paul preaches to Jews in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. In Acts 14, the context is non-monotheistic religions and culture in Lystra. In Acts 17, Paul preaches to worshippers of many gods, including the "unknown god."[62] Flemming provides a most useful chart of the different contexts, contextualized messages and responses of these three passages.[63]

Two of these three respective texts and contexts will be briefly considered. Flemming observes that in the Antioch synagogue, "The speech is brimming with language, themes, and quotations from the Greek Old Testament...Luke consciously adapts his style of writing to the Septuagint...By imitating the familiar patterns of the Greek Bible, Luke contextualizes the form of the speech to its Jewish subject matter and setting."[64] Flemmng also notes that "The speech's structure fits conventional patterns of Greco-Roman rhetoric."[65] As a result, Flemming declares that this missionary sermon "is a masterpiece of contextualization for a

---

[60] Dean Flemming, "Paul the Contextualizer," in *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, ed. Matthew Cook et al.(Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010)., 2.

[61] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission.*, 56.

[62] Acts 17:23 (ESV)

[63] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission.*, 86-88

[64] ibid., 58-59.

[65] ibid., 59.

synagogue gathering. When preaching to Jews, Paul incorporates his audience's history, its expectations, its Scriptures and its culturally accepted methods of interpretation in order to persuasively proclaim the good news."[66]

In the Acts 14 passage about Paul's ministry in Lystra, the context is the streets, not the synagogue. "He addresses the crowds on the street...His message is prompted by the healing of a man who was lame from birth and the subsequent misunderstanding of its meaning...The crowd immediately recognizes divine power...The Lycaonians erroneously interpret the healing event against their religious polytheistic template. A collision of worldviews is unavoidable."[67] Yet Paul also appeals to cultural understandings. "The specific allusions to God providing rain from heaven and crops in season, the basic needs of life, are well suited to the...crowd."[68] One could assert that even in Paul's preaching adaptations to culture, he was contextualizing not just the theological message, but also the pedagogical methodology to the specific context and situation.

Now that selected passages in the biblical record relating to pedagogical and theological contextualization have been examined, the remaining literature will now be reviewed. The literature related to this study has been arranged under three general topics: a) learning styles, b) pedagogical contextualization, and c) contextualized theological education.

Learning Styles

Adult educators often encounter different personalities, as well as observing different levels of performance by students on different types of learning exercises. This has led to the theory that different students and even different cultures may have preferred learning styles.

---

[66] ibid., 65.

[67] ibid., 67.

[68] 7ibid., 67.

Mark Tennant, professor of adult education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia suggests that adult educators commonly ask the following questions, "Through what processes do adults learn best? How can I adjust my teaching practices to take into account the learning styles of my students?"[69]

In order to further explore this issue, one must first understand the use of the term "learning styles" in the literature. The term can refer to a particular preference for learning in a specific manner. "In the layperson's language, learning styles are unique ways students prefer to learn."[70] Similarly, Patricia Cranton, visiting professor of adult education at the Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg and adjunct professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, contends that "learning style consists of a preference for a certain condition or way of learning."[71] The late Rita Dunn, professor at St. Johns University defines learning style "as a way in which each person absorbs and retains information and/or skills."[72] Nathan Kogan, professor of psychology at the New School for Social Research uses the term "cognitive style" and suggests that "cognitive styles are purported to deal with the manner in which individuals acquire, store, retrieve, and transform information."[73]

Learning styles are sometimes described in terms of both individual and cultural preferences. However, this is only one of several ways in which learning styles can be described. Sometimes the terms "learning styles" and "cognitive styles" are used interchangeably, and sometimes distinctly. Mark Tennant contends that "'cognitive style,'

---

[69] Mark Tennant, *Psychology and Adult Learning* (New York: Routledge, 1997)., 135.

[70] Ntseane., 132.

[71] Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2006)., 6.

[72] Rita Dunn, "Learning Style: State of the Science," *Theory into Practice* 23, no. (1984).12.

[73] Nathan Kogan, "Sex Differences in Creativity and Cognitive Styles," in *Individuality in Learning*, ed. Samuel Messick(San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976)., 105.

'learning style' and 'conceptual style' are related terms which refer to an individual's characteristic and consistent approach to organizing and processing information."[74] Cranton differentiates between cognitive style and learning styles in that "cognitive style refers to how people acquire, process, store, and use information."[75] Merriam cites several sources that contend, "There is no common definition of learning style, nor is there a unified theory on which this work is based."[76] Cranton likewise asserts, "There is no one definition, model, or theory of learning styles. It tends to be a practical concept, based on the assessment of individual differences with a view to helping learners and educators understand how best to work together."[77] Cranton goes on to note that "there are at least six approaches to learning style in the adult education literature: a) experiential, b) social interaction, c) personality, d) multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence, e) perception, and f) conditions or needs."[78]

In spite of the lack of a general definition or unified theory, many educators affirm the concept. Sharan B. Merriam, professor of adult education at the University of Georgia, Rosemary Caffarella, professor and chair of the Department of Education at Cornell University, and Lisa Baumgartner, associate professor of adult education at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, claim "the learning style inventories. . .appear to have proved effective in helping both learners and instructors gain some basic understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as learners and instructors."[79] Cranton posits that "learners have different styles or preferences when it comes to making meaning out of and learning from their

---

[74] Tennant., 80.

[75] Cranton., 5.

[76] Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide.*, 407.

[77] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York, NY: Palgrave McMillan, 2005), s.v. "Learning Styles."

[78] ibid.

[79] Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide.*, 420.

experiences."[80] She also observes, "It is widely accepted in adult education theory and practice that learners have varying preferences and styles of learning."[81] Mark Tennant contends that the attractiveness to adult educators concerning "the idea that people have different learning styles is...[that] it highlights the importance of learning processes (rather than teaching techniques), and...is an egalitarian concept because it focuses on people's strengths and weaknesses so that the operative term describing learners becomes 'different,' rather than 'bad,' 'poor,' 'average,' 'good,' and 'very good.'"[82]

Authors disagree on how specific learning styles are categorized. Some authors have developed inventories based on their categories. Mark Tennant asserts that "there have been numerous attempts to classify the basic ways in which cognitive or learning styles differ."[83] Tennant then states, "Messick and associates (1978) identify nineteen types of learning styles, each type being supported by a range of research articles and theoretical papers, and Smith (1984) tabulates seventeen learning style inventories."[84] However, it is not clear how Tennant arrived at the conclusion that Messick and associates arrived at nineteen different learning styles. One possibility may be that he counted various styles mentioned in the different chapters of the book. Another possibility is that even though nineteen is a feasible number, it is a typographical error based on the following observation about the book edited by Messick.

The late Herman A. Witkin professor at Brooklyn College and the State Univeristy of New York contributed a chapter to Messick's book. This chapter speaks of both field

---

[80] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Learning Styles."

[81] Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults.*,98.

[82] Tennant., 80.

[83] ibid., 80.

[84] ibid., 80.

dependence and field independence. However, he appears to see these two categories as one particular cognitive style. He states, "We have examined here in some detail one well-studied cognitive style."[85] Witkin then mentions several other cognitive styles present in the literature of his day. "A number of other cognitive styles have been described in the literature. Among these are the styles of leveling versus sharpening, constricted versus flexible control, reflection versus impulsivity, tolerance versus intolerance for unrealistic experience, analytical versus relational versus inferential categorizing, and strong versus weak automatization."[86] If one counts each pole as one learning style and then adds both field dependence and field independence, one arrives at the number fourteen rather than nineteen.

Cranton suggests, "There are at least 20 commonly used learning styles inventories in adult education."[87] Kolb categorizes the differing learning styles as accommodators, divergers, convergers, and assimilators.[88] Mark Tennant contends that "these varied approaches to cognitive style should not be seen as mutually exclusive, rather they support the reasonable expectation that people differ in their learning style in a number of ways."[89] Kolb and Fry have developed what they call an "experiential learning model," and they claim to have considered four aspects of the "experiential learning process: 1) the integration of the cognitive and socio-emotional perspectives on learning, 2) the role of individual differences in learning style, 3) the concept of growth and development inherent in the experiential

---

[85] Herman A. Witkin, "Cognitive Style in Academic Performance and in Teacher-Student Relations," in *Individuality in Learning*, ed. Samuel Messick(San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976)., 47.

[86] ibid., 47.

[87] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Learning Styles."

[88] A.Y. Kolb and D.A. Kolb, "Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 4, no. 2 (2005).

[89] Tennant., 80.

model, and 4) a model of learning environments that is commensurate with the experiential learning process.[90]

Kolb and Fry contend that "each of us has, in a unique way, developed a learning style that has some weak and strong points."[91] They then assert that what they have developed is "a simple self-description inventory, the Learning Style Inventory (LSI), that is designed to measure an individual's strengths and weaknesses as a learner."[92] They contend that this inventory "measures an individual's relative emphasis on the four learning abilities—Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE)."[93] Kolb and Fry "have called these four styles—The Converger, the Diverger, the Assimilator, and the Accomodator."[94] They posit that

> "The Converger's dominant learning abilities are Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE)...The Diverger...is best at Concrete Experience (CE) and Reflective Observation (RO)...The Assmilator's dominant learning abilities are Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Reflective Observation (RO) ...The Accomodator...is best at Concrete Experience (CE) and Active Experimentation (AE)."[95]

Kolb explains the way the Learning Style Inventory was developed and how the four categories are determined. "The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) was created to measure the individual learning styles derived from experiential learning theory...the test should be brief [so that] it could be used as a means of discussing the learning process with individuals and

---

[90] David A. Kolb and Ronald Fry, "Towards an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning," in *Theories of Group Processes*, ed. Cary L. Cooper(London: John Wiley and Sons, 1975)., 34.

[91] ibid., 37.

[92] *ibid.*, 37.

[93] ibid., 37.

[94] ibid., 37.

[95] ibid., 38-39.

giving them feedback on their own learning style."[96] Kolb then describes the test as "a nine-item self-description questionnaire."[97] The individual responding to the questions is asked "to rank order four words in a way that best describes his learning style. One word in each item corresponds to one of the four learning modes—Concrete Experience (sample word "feeling"), Reflective Observation ("watching"), Abstract Conceptualization ("thinking"), and Active Experimentation ("doing")."[98] Kolb contends that this inventory "measures an individual's relative emphasis on four learning abilities...plus two combination scores that indicate the extent to which an individual emphasizes abstractness over concreteness (AC-CE) and the extent to which an individual emphasizes action over reflection (AE-RO)."[99] Kolb contends that individuals grow in learning styles depending on the situation, but then eventually adapt a preference for a particular style. "Over time, accentuation forces operate on individuals in such a way that the dialectic tensions between these dimensions are consistently resolved in a characteristic fashion...most people develop learning styles that emphasize some learning abilities over others."[100]

Dr. Ronald Iwasko, former professor at North Central University and former president of Global University, builds on Kolb and Fry's four learning style categories in a table he adapted from Smith. This is based on Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning Cycle. In the adapted table, Iwasko "interprets" or "translates" each of the learning style categories into simple statements that might describe a person's learning approach, ability, or preference. For example, Iwasko suggests that a "diverging" learner that focuses on concrete

---

[96] David A. Kolb, *Learning Style Inventory: Technical Manual* (Boston, Massachusetts: McBer and Company, 1976)., 1.

[97] ibid., 1.

[98] ibid., 1.

[99] ibid., 1.

[100] ibid., 4.

experience and reflective observation might say, "I have an experience and get an idea about how it works and how to apply it."[101] An assimilator who would focus on reflective observation and abstract conceptualization might say, "I have a concept in mind about how things might work, and I reflect on how it actually is working 'out there.'"[102] A converging learner who would focus on abstract conceptualization and active experimentation might say, "I think of what could be and then try it out."[103] An accommodating learner focusing on concrete experience and active experimentation might say, "I experience an event and try to apply what I experienced in a new event of my choosing."[104]

Mark K. Smith, Rank Research Fellow and Tutor at the YMCA George Williams College in London, England describes the Kolb and Fry model as one that possesses opposite poles. He contends that Kolb and Fry assert "that effective learning entails the possession of four different abilities...concrete experience abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities and active experimentation abilities."[105] Smith goes on to suggest that Kolb and Fry posit that "few of us can approach this 'ideal' in this respect and tend...to develop a strength in...one of the poles of each dimension."[106] Smith notes that they do acknowledge both strengths and weaknesses "associated with each style (and that being 'locked into' one style can put a learner at a serious disadvantage)."[107]

Smith goes on to summarize some literature that critiques Kolb and Fry's model as problematic. Some problem areas that are noted include "the claims made for the four

---

[101] Iwasko., 91, Table 3.

[102] ibid., 91, Table 3.

[103] ibid., 91, Table 3.

[104] ibid., 91, Table 3.

[105] *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* (2001), s.v. "David A. Kolb on Experiential Learning.", http://infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm (accessed 24 September 2011), 3.

[106] ibid., 3.

[107] ibid., 5.

different learning styles are extravagant...the model takes very little account of different cultural experiences/conditions...[and] empirical support for the model is weak."[108] Similarly, Mark Tennant posits that Kolb and Fry "are too extravagant in the significance they attach to their learning styles."[109] Jarvis contends that "Kolb's learning cycle does appear rather simplistic for such a complex process. Jarvis (1987) tested it with a variety of groups of adult learners. They demonstrated that it is an oversimple description of the learning processes."[110] Jarvis is citing his own earlier work here.

In relationship to cultural matters pertaining to learning styles, Smith observes that "the inventory has also been used within a fairly limited range of cultures."[111] Smith cites Anderson and Tennant as positing that "there is a need to take account of differences in cognitive and communication styles that are culturally-based...and the extent to which they may differ from the 'western' assumptions that underpin the Kolb and Fry model."[112] In relationship to the assertion that there is extravagance in their model, Smith contends that "the problem here is that the experiential learning model does not apply to all situations."[113] Similarly, Iwasko asserts that "it is tempting to assume this process of teaching is basically the same, no matter the student. Yet this assumption can cut the effectiveness of the educational process...Adult students enter the learning process already equipped with a

---

[108] ibid., 5-6

[109] Tennant., 91.

[110] Peter Jarvis, *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice*, Second ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995).,1969.

[111] *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*, s.v. "David A. Kolb on Experiential Learning.".

[112] ibid.

[113] ibid.

considerable variety of experiences, perceptions, attitudes, values, commitments, and expectations."[114]

Knud Illeris, professor of educational research at Roskilde University, Denmark contends that "all learning includes two essentially different types of process: (a) an external interaction process between the learner and his or her social, cultural, and material environment and b) an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition in which new impulses are connected with the result of prior learning."[115] Illeris also states that "the individual is in interaction with an environment that includes other people, a specific culture, technology, and so on that are characterized by their time and society."[116] Illeris contends, "All learning always includes three dimensions—the cognitive dimension of learning and skills, the emotional dimension of feelings and motivation, and the social dimension of communication and cooperation—all of which are embedded in a societally situated context."[117]

Based on Illeris's comments, Iwasko asserts that "the entire learning process occurs within a given society. Cultural mores and practices influence the process. For instance, what is the society's general perspective regarding education? What approaches to learning do they consider valid and acceptable?"[118] Similarly, Gerald Lesser, professor of education and developmental psychology at Harvard University contends that "people who share a common cultural background will also share, to a certain extent, common patterns of intellectual

---

[114] Iwasko., 81-82.

[115] Knud Illeris, "Transformative Learning in the Perspective of a Comprehensive Learning Theory," *Journal of Transformative Education* 2, no. 2 (2004)., 81.

[116] ibid., 81.

[117] ibid., 82.

[118] Iwasko., 88.

abilities, thinking styles, and interests."[119] In respect to word abilities, Michael Cole, professor of ethnographic psychology and experimental anthropology at Rockefeller University, who holds a partially contrasting view to Lesser, asserts that "abilities represent the interaction of content, structure, and context."[120] Yet Cole agrees with Lesser that "differences in learning style may be due to differences in cultural experience."[121]

In relation to the empirical support issue, Smith asserts that the research and studies probing the effectiveness of the model was small and insufficient. He also agrees with Tennant, who claims that "the learning style inventory 'has no capacity to measure the degree of integration of learning styles.'"[122]

Cranton describes another system of categorization as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, basing this division on perception preferences. "When many practitioners think of learning style, they are referring to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic preferences. It is standard rhetoric in the how-to guides for adult educators that information should be presented both visually and through auditory channels."[123] This categorization scheme is a simple one describing learners who learn best by seeing, those who learn best by hearing, and those who learn best by doing hands-on work. The recommendation in the guides for adult educators seeks to address the need for a variety of teaching methodologies recognizing that in any class there will be a variety of preferences among students.

---

[119] Gerald S. Lesser, "Cultural Differences in Learning and Thinking Styles," in *Individuality in Learning*, ed. Samuel Messick(San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976)., 137.

[120] Michael Cole, "Commentary: Cultural Differences in the Contexts of Learning," in *Individuality in Learning*, ed. Samuel Messick(San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976)., 162-163.

[121] ibid., 168.

[122] Tennant., 92.

[123] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Learning Styles."

Likewise, Merriam asserts that "learners' visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning preferences are the central focus of the perceptions approach to determining learning styles."[124] This assertion indicates that this is the most common way of thinking about learning styles among practitioners and learners. They seek to understand how an individual learns best from the individual's own perception of their learning experience. Michael Romanowski, former professor of education at Ohio Northern University and current professor of education in the Middle East and Teri McCarthy, writer in residence for the International Institute for Christian Studies, posit seven types of learning styles: "visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, [and] intrapersonal."[125] They contend that visual/spatial learners "tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information."[126] Verbal/linguistic learners possess "highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers."[127] Logical/mathematical learners prefer "to think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns, making connections between pieces of information…these learners ask lots of questions and like to do experiments."[128] Bodily/kinesthetic learners prefer to "express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand coordination."[129] Musical/rhythmic learners tend to "think in sounds, rhythms, and patterns. They immediately respond to music, either appreciating or criticizing what they hear."[130] Interpersonal learners "try to see things from other people's points of view in order to

---

[124] Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide.*, 408.
[125] Romanowski and McCarthy., 215-217.
[126] ibid., 215.
[127] ibid.,215,
[128] ibid., 216.
[129] ibid., 216.
[130] ibid., 216.

understand how they think and feel...they use both verbal...and nonverbal language...to open communication channels with others."[131] Finally, intrapersonal learners possess "an ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses."[132]

In relation to visual learning as one of the categories discussed, Earle and Dorothy Bowen, who conducted research on learning styles in the Kenyan context many years ago, contend "if a student is shown to be more visual than auditory, then that student will function best with a textbook or duplicated notes."[133] The Bowens also assert that for such learners, "visual aids of all kinds are essential."[134]

In spite of the wide acceptance of the learning style concept, some educators have maintained that the theory is flawed. Catherine Scott proposes that several studies which have questioned the usefulness of the theory should discredit the theory in its entirety. She argues, "Failure to find evidence for the utility of tailoring instruction to individuals' learning styles has not prevented this term from being a perennial inclusion in discussions about and recommendations"[135] concerning teaching. She asserts, "There is no credible evidence that it is a valid basis for...decision-making."[136] She also posits that the concept "perpetuates the very stereotyping and harmful teaching practices it is said to combat."[137]

---

[131] ibid., 217.

[132] ibid., 217.

[133] Earl Bowen and Dorothy Bowen, "What Does It Mean to Think, Learn, Teach?," in *Internationalising Missionary Training*, ed. William David Taylor(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991)., 212.

[134] ibid., 212.

[135] Catherine Scott, "The Enduring Appeal of 'Learning Styles'," *Australian Journal of Education* 54, no. 1 (2010)., 3.

[136] ibid., 5.

[137] ibid., 1.

However, Michael Galbraith, professor of leadership studies at Marshall University Graduate College in South Charleston, West Virginia contends that learning styles assist the instructor in knowing how to approach one's teaching methodology. "Knowledge of the current proficiency level and the preferred learning styles of the learners will also aid in the selection of the most appropriate learning activities."[138] Galbraith goes on to suggest that "knowing something about the preferred way the adult learner wishes to process information is also important."[139] Similarly, Iwasko posits that "understanding how adults learn and getting to know their individual needs and aspirations can measurably improve both the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process and the satisfaction of the students. Recognizing the complexity of adult learning is the first step."[140]

The concept of individual and cultural learning styles has also gained wide acceptance among missiologists, missionaries, and nationals working in cross-cultural theological education contexts, suggesting that preferred learning styles may be linked to specific cultures. Deborah Anderson suggests, "Cross-cultural investigation is important as it relates to exploring differences in cognitive styles and learning."[141] She suggests that "style may be linked to cultural factors."[142] Anderson asserts, "Though cross-cultural research seeks to identify differences, particularly with regard to seeking style matches as they pertain to education, it also recognizes that individuals within a group may bring . . .practical learning

---

[138] Michael W. Galbraith, "Attributes and Skills of an Adult Educator," in *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*, ed. Michael W. Galbraith(Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991)., 13.

[139] ibid., 13.

[140] Iwasko., 82.

[141] Deborah G. Anderson, "The Influence of Culture on Learning Styles" (2007)., 2.

[142] ibid., 4.

techniques that come from personal experience rather than strictly adhering to a cultural styles approach to one's learning and cognition."[143]

Patricia Harrison, head of the intercultural studies department and professor of missiology and theology at Tabor College, NSW, Australia recommends that "as an example of a different way of learning, we might note that in tribal societies, people often learn by observing a complete process several times with little commentary, and then trying it themselves."[144] Earle and Dorothy Bowen conducted research on learning styles in the Kenyan context many years ago, and they contend that the concept is valid.[145] While their research has been affirmed to a certain extent, James Plueddemann, professor and chair of the Mission and Evangelism Department at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois contends that missionary educators must guard against the tendency to overgeneralize about a specific culture. He asserts, "Not only are there significant similarities within all cultures, but also there are important differences within each culture. Factors such as the amount of schooling people have received can predict wide variations in thinking patterns even within the same culture."[146] Anderson suggests that a learning style preference may be linked to "family practice, cultural preference, cognition or a combination of all" of these.[147] Likewise, Brookfield asserts that "learning activities and learning styles vary so much with physiology, culture, and personality that generalized statements about the nature of adult

---

[143] ibid., 3.

[144] Patricia Harrison, "Bridging Theory and Training," in *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, ed. Matthew Cook et al.(Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010)., 205.

[145] Bowen and Bowen., 203-216.

[146] James E. Plueddemann, "Culture, Learning and Missionary Training," in *Internationalising Missionary Training*, ed. William David Taylor(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991)., 219.

[147] Anderson., 4.

learning have very low predictive power."[148] In his dissertation East African national Elie Buconyori, President of Hope Africa University and Free Methodist Bishop of Burundi sought to answer the question: "To what extent does cognitive style relate to cultural background (rural, urban upbringing), educational background of parents and gender?"[149] He describes the research he did for his dissertation as follows: "The perceived cognitive styles were analyzed in relation with the important variables of the study, namely cultural background, educational background of the parents, and gender."[150]

Thus, it can be seen that a wide representation of viewpoints concerning definitions, descriptions, inventories and the value of the learning styles theory is present in the literature. Much of the literature surveyed thus far comes from Western societies, which are often considered individualistic, and therefore learning styles are described in terms of individual preferences. Jerry Gilley, professor of human resource development at Colorado State University reflects this individualistic orientation by contending that "by providing adult learners the opportunity to focus upon a preferred learning style, the learning situation becomes more personalized and individual."[151]

Many writers in this area also consider cultural preferences for learning styles, in spite of some authors who contend that the very concept is a Western concept. Some of the literature seems to be primarily focused on the concepts of students being field independent or field dependent, as constructed and defined by Witkin and Kolb. Herman Witkin

---

[148] Stephen D. Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986)., 25.

[149] Elie A. Buconyori, "Cognitive Styles and Development of Reasoning among Younger African Students in Christian Higher Education" (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991)., 7.

[150] ibid., 9.

[151] Jerry W. Gilley, "Demonstration and Simulation," in *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*, ed. Michael W. Galbraith(Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991)., 265.

conducted research concerning the "perception of the orientation of the objects, including one's own body, in relation to the upright in space."[152] Witkin describes the nature of his tests as requiring the subject "to make changes in the position of the visual framework, or his own body, or of another object in space."[153] Witkin contends that the tests measure "the ability to deal with a given field analytically, or to perceive a part of a field independently of its surroundings."[154] Witkin also asserts that "difficulty in escaping the influence of the complex field tends to be associated with dependence on the surrounding framework in perception of the upright."[155] On the basis of his research, Witkin constructed a theory concerning learners being either field dependent or field independent. Stephen Brookfield, former professor of higher and adult education at Columbia University in New York and distinguished professor at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Minnesota builds on Witkin's research and concisely summarizes the nature of the two different types of learners, noting that "field independent learners are analytical, socially independent, inner-directed, individualistic, and possessed of a strong sense of self-identity"[156] and "Field dependent learners. . .are extrinsically oriented, responsive to external reinforcement, aware of context, view things holistically, and are cognizant of the effects that their learning has on others."[157]

Stephen Brookfield who relies on Witkin's understanding of field learners, also critiques this traditional understanding of field dependency/independency by asserting that "it is significant that my studies and Thiels'—both of which have concentrated exclusively on

---

[152] Herman A. Witkin, "The Nature and Importance of Individual Differences in Perception," *Journal of Personality* 18, no. 2 (1949)., 146. For a complete description of the tests, see this article in ites entirety

[153] ibid. 148.

[154] ibid., 158.

[155] ibid., 159.

[156] Brookfield., 41.

[157] ibid., 41.

successful self-directed learners—report that the characteristics of learning conducive to success are most emphatically not those traditionally associated with field independent learning styles."[158] Brookfield goes on to posit that this contrasts with "the traditional view that field independent styles and successful self-directed learning are closely linked as reported by Pratt (1984)."[159] Yet in spite of this critique, Brookfield still embraces the concept of learning styles. He observes that "it is important...to distinguish individual from group modes because they involve different kinds of learning, different learning styles, and different kinds of behaviors on the part of facilitators."[160] He also posits that "through individual reflection and personal interaction with a facilitator, adult learners are able to become more aware of their unique learning styles."[161] More recent literature also reflects this tension. Cranton asserts that "although learning style is presented as value-neutral, the concept of learning style is a Euro-American one, and the categorization systems reflect the values of that culture."[162] Immediately after this observation, Cranton surveys the literature on learning styles as it relates to cultural differences.[163] Raymond Wlodkowski, professor emeritus at Regis University asserts that "many social scientists today regard cognitive processes as inherently cultural."[164]

Since East Africa is the focus of this study, the literature related to cultural learning styles will now be considered with special attention given to Africa. Julia Preece, professor of adult education at the University of Kwa-Zulu, Natal asserts that while "there is not a

---

[158] ibid., 43, emphasis in original.
[159] ibid., 43.
[160] ibid., 60.
[161] ibid., 61.
[162] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Learning Styles."
[163] ibid.
[164] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Motivation."

single unique African position since Africa is a vast continent,...some generic African perspectives can be articulated that are in contradistinction to most Western perspectives."[165] The literature dealing with non-Western contexts, will now be discussed, and specifically the African context. Preece acknowledges some common features in the African traditions of education, such as "a tradition of learning by doing ,...an oral tradition,"[166] and so forth. She also notes the collectivist nature of African societies. "The lifelong learning goal in most of Africa is essentially a collective, rather than individual concept."[167]

East African national Dr. Elie Buconyori, claims that "studies on cognitive styles of university level students carry important implications for Christian higher education in Africa. Insight on cognitive style for African students is specifically important for...faculty members who teach in African Christian institutions of higher learning."[168] Buconyori also asserts that "the present educational task needs to be stressed in the area of assessing the cognitive styles of African students in order to discover how they process information."[169] This assertion led to one of his research questions: "What are the cognitive styles evident in African students in Christian higher education?"[170]

Both Westerners and non-Westerners are intrigued with the idea of individual and cultural learning styles, and have sought to examine learning styles in varying cross-cultural

---

[165] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Africa and Adult Education."

[166] ibid.

[167] ibid.

[168] Buconyori., 2.

[169] ibid.,6.

[170] ibid., 7.

contexts. This interest has led writers to use a variety of terms to discuss the broader issue of pedagogical contextualization.[171]

Pedagogical Contextualization

The theory of pedagogical contextualization draws on the works of anthropologists as well as scholars from non-Western cultures on the general patterns of the respective cultures. The literature acknowledges significant differences in cultures that impact the teaching and learning process, thus creating the need for a professor in a cross-cultural context to be aware of and constantly learning about the host culture. Buconyori suggests, "Learning context may be as important as cognitive style for an effective teaching-learning process."[172] Deborah Anderson asserts that "Culturally responsive teaching presumes that culture is to be embraced and included in pedagogy. Culture matters and should be respected. Culture is the mechanics of behavior, the response button to how one learns and interacts with his or her environment."[173]

Iwasko contends that "while some characteristics are true of all learning and adult students worldwide, culture creates some variances. This presents challenges for instructors who teach in a culture different from their own."[174] Professors who teach in such cross-cultural contexts need to be aware of the cultural differences and alert to both consistent and changing aspects of the host culture, as several areas of culture can impact how a professor should approach pedagogical contextualization. Romanowski and McCarthy contend,

---

[171] Some recent literature uses the term 'indigenous knowledge' or 'indigenous learning.' Examples include Sharan B. Merriam, ed., *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing* (Malabar, FL: Krieger), 2007 and Leona M. Englllish, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York, NY: Macmillan), 2005.

[172] Buconyori., 3.

[173] Anderson., 6.

[174] Iwasko., 108.

"Worlds can clash in an overseas classroom when a teacher enters from another culture and worldview and tries to apply his own teaching techniques. A society's philosophy of education is birthed out of that culture's worldview and what it values most."[175] How should the concept of pedagogical contextualization be defined? In relationship to Christian adult education in cross-cultural settings, Iwasko defines "contextualization as the process of developing a Christian adult education program in a way that best suits the program context. That is, the administrators develop all programs with deliberate effort to fit within the existing environment so maximum understanding, acceptance, and involvement in the learning process can occur."[176]

Iwasko observes that "culture is constantly evolving to meet new challenges so we must not take for granted any static descriptions of a particular group. We need careful discernment when educating adults in a culture different from our own. It calls for being a participant-observer, watching and listening and dialoguing with the native-born population, seeking to understand from their perspective."[177] He notes that "understanding culture is vital because of differences in customs, verbal and nonverbal communication styles, leadership structures, time values, [and] educational values."[178] He then explains that "patterns of thinking and approaches to learning differ. All of these shape the teaching and learning approaches that will have the most impact on the target audience."[179] Similarly, Romanowski and McCarthy contend, "Thinking processes vary between cultures so [teachers should] use relevant pedagogies that connect the culture of the students to the culture of the classroom

---

[175] Romanowski and McCarthy.,60.
[176] Iwasko., 137.
[177] ibid., 116.
[178] ibid.,108.
[179] ibid., 109.

and the knowledge being presented."[180] Iwasko goes on to suggest that "to ensure clear meaningful communication and learning, a person must understand the predominant culture as well as his or her own [culture] when instructing adult learners. The goal is not for the students to adopt the instructor's culture but for them to appropriately apply the learning to their own [culture] in a culturally acceptable way."[181] A question that naturally arises out of the presupposition of cultural differences in the teaching and learning process is whether there are cultural learning styles as well as individual learning styles, although some authors contend that the idea of individual learning styles best suits Western cultures rather than non-Western cultures.

Thus, while acknowledging that learning styles discussed in terms of individual preferences are indeed problematic to non-Western cultures, the thesis of non-Western learning styles is based on the theory that non-Western cultures are group-oriented or collectivistic. Geert Hofstede, founder of comparative intercultural studies and a leading representative of intercultural research and studies in psychology and management, asserts the collectivistic nature of some cultures, remarking, "The vast majority of people in our world live in societies in which the interests of the group prevail over the interest of the individual. I will call these societies collectivist."[182] Hofstede describes the groups' perceived benefits as a collectivist society.

> The we group…is the major source of one's identity, and the only secure protection one has against the hardships of life. Therefore one owes lifelong loyalty to one's ingroup, and breaking the loyalty is one of the worst things a person can do. Between

---

[180] Romanowski and McCarthy., 153.

[181] Iwasko.,112.

[182] Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997)., 50.

> the person and the ingroup a dependence relationship develops which is both personal and psychological.[183]

Brian Findsen, Senior Lecturer and Head of Adult and Continuing Education at the Univeristy of Glasgow, Scotland and Lavinia Tamarua, Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the Auckland University of Technology, Akoranga Campus, New Zealand claim that Maori culture is collectivistic in nature. They cite the following cultural proverb:

> He aha te mea nui o tea ao?
> He tangata, he tangata, he tangata
> What is the most important thing in the world?
> It's people, it's people, it's people.[184]

They contend that "knowledge, in Maori traditions, is always a collective entity so that any knowledge acquired by individuals also belongs to the tribe."[185] Hofstede observes, "The purpose of education is perceived differently between the individualist and collective society."[186] Daniel R. Smith and David F. Ayers, professors of education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro state that "educators must understand the cultural perspectives, learning styles, and cognitive and psychological ethos of non-Western peoples."[187] Likewise, Merriam asserts, "There are a number of reasons why we as educators should attend to other than Western systems of learning and knowing, and how knowledge of those systems might enlarge our understanding of learning and enhance our practice."[188] Collectivist societies

---

[183] ibid., 50.

[184] Brian Findsen and Lavinia Tamarua, "Maori Concepts of Learning and Knowledge," in *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, ed. Sharan B. Merriam(Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 2007)., 75.

[185] ibid., 75-76.

[186] Hofstede., 63.

[187] Daniel R. Smith and David F. Ayers, "Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Online Learning: Implications for the Globalized Community College," *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 30, no. 5-6 (2006)., 402.

[188] Sharan B. Merriam, "An Introduction to Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing," in *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, ed. Sharan B. Merriam(Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2007)., 17.

place more emphasis on the group rather than the individual, and considering group decisions more desirable than individual decisions. This affects the way leaders in the group teach and make decisions. This orientation affects the way the group values information taught. Because the information belongs to the group, to fail to share the information with the group is perceived as an individualistic rejection of group values. Because of these factors, a person from an individualistic culture teaching cross-culturally in a collectivist society needs to be aware of the cultural orientation, and teach in a way consistent with the receiving culture when possible.

Talmadge C. Guy, associate professor of lifelong education at the University of Georgia contends, "Identifying cultural differences in a classroom is essential in helping educators mediate the tension between learners' cultural backgrounds and institutionalized educational practices."[189] Guy also posits that "teaching in a culturally relevant way requires that adult educators examine the learning environment for communicative processes, instructional practices, classroom norms and expectations, learning evaluation criteria, and instructional content that is potentially culturally incompatible with the learner's culture."[190]

Guy also contends that the Marchisani and Adams model can assist in pedagogical contextualization. Guy describes this model as consisting of four components: 1) the instructor's cultural identity, 2) the learners' cultural identity, 3) the curriculum, and 4) instructional methods and processes.[191]

---

[189] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Culturally Relevant Adult Education."

[190] Talmadge C. Guy, "Culture as Context for Adult Education: The Need for Culturally Relevant Adult Education," in *Providing Culturally Relevant Adult Education: A Challenge for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Talmadge C. Guy(San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999)., 14.

[191] ibid., 15

A significant number of contributors to Merriam's work from the non-Western world offer their perspectives on non-Western knowledge and learning. In cultures characterized by orality, education is life-long, practical, and participatory. Life lessons are often communicated through various genres of narrative such as storytelling, proverbs, or even drama and poetry. The participatory nature of the instruction reflects the collectivistic nature of the culture, and emphasizes the "how to" for life's experiences over the "what is the correct answer?" approach. Though there is a long history of Western influence and globalization, numerous African cultures still reflect those characteristics. Gabo Ntseane, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Botswana states that "another distinguishing feature of African indigenous education is that informality, collective learning, [and] oral mode of instruction...are common instructional methods."[192] Similarly, Buconyori notes that "the Africans used nonformal and informal structures in education. Non-formally, the most skilled adults brought together the youth and taught them how to do certain skills and tasks. Informally, the young ones were taught in the family around the fire and with other members of the society."[193]

Ntseane contends that current adult education curriculum in Africa is so heavily influenced by Western concepts and education methods that "indigenous knowledge is seldom included in the current teaching methods."[194] At the same time, Ntseane sees both positives and negatives in both types of curriculum, and argues for a "reconstruction" of African indigenous knowledge, which takes advantage of the positives of both curriculum systems. Ntseane explains:

---

[192] Ntseane., 114.

[193] Buconyori., 62.

[194] Ntseane., 128.

> Even in the place of globalization, to be useful, knowledge has to be contextualized. This is critical, in my view because individuals, organizations, and communities must contextualize the information that they receive from within and outside their environments, if that knowledge is to be used productively to solve their own problems.[195]

Likewise, Wright suggests that even the elders of the Dinka tribe desired "a happy marriage of the distinct systems of education. Instead, Western-influenced schooling has rendered both them and traditional education redundant...What I am proposing here is a concrete measure that would make the two systems complementary and that would actually integrate elements of traditional education into formal schooling."[196] Similarly, Buconyori observes, "Some have called for a return to a pre-colonial African way of teaching while others have called for a synthesis between the African and European ways of teaching."[197] Likewise, Iwasko seems to advocate a both/and position, suggesting that "teachers from the West do not need to feel locked into the mentality of the culture in which they are teaching. At the same time, when moving away from the host culture's perspectives, they must be careful to provide a full explanation of why and how this can be beneficial."[198]

Because knowledge must be contextualized, according to these arguments, Ntseane proposes the following emphases in adult education to assist in appropriate indigenization of curriculum. The three main suggestions are: "emphasize participatory instruction...include learning styles in the teaching...[and] acknowledge the diversity of African indigenous

---

[195] ibid., 128-129.

[196] Handel Kashope Wright, "Not So Strange Bedfellows: Indigenous Knowledge, Literature Studies and African Development," in *Indigenous Knowledge in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World*, ed. George J. Sefa Dei, Budd L. Hall, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). 192.

[197] Buconyori., 62.

[198] Iwasko., 233.

knowledge."[199] Vance C. Kirkpatrick, Professor of Theology at Kenya Baptist Seminary in Nairobi agrees that in the African context, attention must be given to learning styles. "What are the learning styles of the prospective students?...The great majority of students of the Third World...are dependent learners. They prefer group interaction."[200] Harrison contends that "in oral cultures, memorization is vital to the preservation of the culture, and is strengthened by songs, dances, or rhythmic repetition."[201] Similarly, Buconyori observes that "teaching-learning methods included recitation, games and stories, poetry, proverbs and parables, observation, music and drama, and trial-and-error. There was no separation between education and life because education was life."[202]

Buconyori, an East African national, focused his dissertation research on two Christian colleges in Kenya. While there was some minor variation between the two schools, his research findings agree with Kirkpatrick. He compared a Christian university offering majors in a variety of disciplines with a Bible College focused on ministerial training. His findings indicated that "there were more field dependent than field independent students among African Christian students in Christian higher education, [and] Bible college students tended to be more field dependent than Christian liberal art college students."[203] Likewise, Larry Poston, Professor of Religion at Nyack College in Nyack, New York contends that

---

[199] Ntseane., 131-133.

[200] Vance C. Kirkpatrick, "Theological Education and Missions: An African Case Study," in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson(Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998)., 534.

[201] Harrison., 205.

[202] Buconyori., 62.

[203] ibid., 174-175.

"discussion groups can therefore be seen as a proper adaptation to a specific cultural style of learning."[204]

These authors point to a need for some participatory modes of instruction in the cultural context of collectivist societies. However, Plueddemann has noted that other factors play into student preferences of learning in another culture. Brookfield seems to agree with Plueddemann's observation, contending that "every learning group comprises individuals with idiosyncratic personalities, diverse learning styles, different cultural backgrounds varying expectations, and a multiplicity of motives for learning."[205] The authors surveyed thus far argue for a contextualization of pedagogy or teaching methodology. Fyre Jean Graveline, professor at the University of Northern British Columbia and former professor at Brandon University, uses the term "indigenous learning" and asserts that this term "refers to learning with or within indigenous peoples, contexts or worldviews."[206] Wlodkowski contends that "the language adults use to think and the ways in which adults communicate cannot be separated from cultural practices and cultural context."[207]

Guy uses the term "culturally relevant adult education" and contends that this term "refers to educational models, programs, processes and strategies that incorporate learners' cultural practices and values in the teaching-learning process with the goal of engaging

---

[204] Larry Poston, ""You Must Not Worship in Their Way": When Contextualization Becomes Syncretism," in *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, Evangelical Missiological Society Series (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006)., 248.

[205] Stephen D. Brookfield, "Discussion," in *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*, ed. Michael W. Galbraith(Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991)., 196.

[206] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York: Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Indigenous Learning".

[207] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York: Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Motivation.*International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Motivation."

learners."[208] Guy goes on to suggest, "When adult educators modify program design and teaching practices to be more reflective of the cultural experiences of the learners they serve, the result is increased engagement in the educational process by participants."[209]

Wlodkowski claims, "There is evidence that instruction that ignores the cultural aspects of learners' behavior and communication provokes their resistance, while instruction that is responsive to cultural perspectives and norms of learners prompts their involvement in learning."[210]

Graveline contends that "indigenous learning occurred long before colonial powers invaded land and continues in spite of and in concert with ongoing assimilationist agendas of educational institutions today."[211] Graveline also posits that "cultural renaissance or the increasing reliance on pedagogies grounded in indigenous worldviews fuels most exemplary models of indigenous education today."[212] Other authors appear to advocate a more hybrid view on the basis of the influence of other cultures on indigenous peoples. Budd L. Hall, professor of education at the University of Victoria, Canada observes, "The countries of the majority...world have similarly contributed to and benefited from international sharing in the field of adult education. Countries which were part of European empires were influenced by the adult education practices of those empires."[213] In some way, many authors appear to advocate that some form of indigenous learning and pedagogies should be incorporated into the local educational context.

---

[208] Ibid.,, s.v. "Culturally Relevant Adult Education."

[209] ibid.

[210] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York: Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "Motivation."

[211] Ibid.

[212] ibid.

[213] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), s.v. "International Adult Education."

Contextualization of educational practices in overseas theological education is advocated by a significant number of missiological authors. The review of the literature now turns to the topic of contextualized theological education.

Contextualized Theological Education

Biblically, Jesus' ministry was the ultimate contextualization. Divine culture was contextualized within human culture. Not only did Jesus contextualize divine culture within human culture, but he also lived in varying cultures during his short life and ministry. As Donald Guthrie, professor of practical theology at Covenant Theological Seminary, points out, "Jesus was Asian born and an African refugee."[214] When Jesus taught, he used storytelling, parables, and proverbs. Jesus often taught within the cultural forms, but at times he also challenged the cultural norms of understanding. Dean Flemming explains, "When Jesus speaks the good news of God's liberating kingdom, he draws on local resources from his cultural world. Jesus uses the earthy images of rural life in first-century Palestine—farming and fishing, weeds and wineskins, salt, and soil."[215] Flemming asserts that Jesus contextualized for specific audiences in his day, noting, "He tailors his theology to specific peoples and occasions. He speaks differently to the crowds than to the Pharisees, differently to a rich would-be disciple (Mt. 19: 16-22) than to a paralytic on his bed (Mt. 9:2-8), differently to Nicodemus (Jn. 3) than to the woman of Samaria (Jn. 4)."[216]

Flemming also contends that "at the same time, although Jesus was at home in Palestinian Jewish culture, he prophetically challenged that culture's religious and social

---

[214] Donald Guthrie, "Dm 825 Educational Ministries of the Church Class Notes," (St. Louis, MO: Covenant Theological Seminary, 2010)., January 11, 2010.

[215] Flemming, "Paul the Contextualizer.", 2.

[216] ibid., 2.

norms, he sought to transform them from within."[217] Guthrie has stated that "Jesus is the great Assumption Checker."[218] This comment agrees with Strauss's assertion "every culture has elements that conform to God's truth and other elements that violate it."[219] If Strauss's assertion is correct then indeed all cultures are flawed due to the human sin nature, and those aspects or assumptions of the culture or individual need to be challenged. Flemming contends that the apostle Paul followed a similar approach in that there were aspects where he affirmed culture, relativized culture, confronted culture, and transformed culture.[220] On the matter of affirming culture, Flemming claims, "Paul does not reject Greco-Roman culture as a whole or preach against it."[221] On the matter of relativizing culture, Flemming states that "former cultural distinctions are relativized in light of God's new creation. . .the gospel relativizes cultural and social distinctions; it doesn't remove them. Paul does not ask Jews to stop being Jews. Nor should Greeks surrender their Greek identity."[222]

Flemming deduces from this that there are "profound implications for contextualizing the gospel. Because no cultural expression can claim to be ultimate, the gospel is free to become meaningful in a rich diversity of circumstances and cultures...Our contextualization of the gospel must be culture-specific, but never culture-bound."[223] On the issue of confronting culture, Flemming states,

> Cultures, along with their worldviews, structures, and social behaviors, are far from simply being neutral channels for the gospel. They are pervaded with the cancer of sin...As a result, when the gospel engages pagan culture, it speaks a "no" as well as a

---

[217] ibid., 2.
[218] Guthrie., January 11, 2010.
[219] Strauss., 270.
[220] Flemming, "Paul the Contextualizer.", 11-15.
[221] ibid., 11.
[222] ibid., 12.
[223] ibid., 12-13.

> "yes." The gospel cannot be good news without prophetically challenging the sinful elements in human cultures.[224]

On the matter of transforming culture, Flemming argues, "When the gospel intersects culture, judgment is not the last word. Paul's optimism of grace opens the possibility for cultures to be transformed from within...One way of engaging culture in order to reshape it is by reinterpreting its language."[225] This particular author asserts that this was part of Paul's strategy in the book of Colossians. Matthew Cook, Professor for Systematic Theology at the College of Theology of the Christian Alliance in Abidjan, Ivory Coast contends, "Contextual evangelical theology strives for faithfulness to the Bible, framed in [a] culturally specific way."[226]

Strauss defines contextualization as "the never-changing truths of scripture to ever-changing human contexts so that these truths are clear and compelling. It is the process of engaging culture in all its varied dimensions with biblical truth."[227] Flemming defines contextualization as "the dynamic and comprehensive process by which the gospel is incarnated within a concrete historical or cultural situation."[228] Paul Siu, Professor of Theology at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York contends that "true contextualization...is primarily concerned with the tradition of the whole gospel of Jesus Christ into the thought forms and the daily lives of the people with whom we communicate in

---

[224] ibid., 13.

[225] ibid., 13.

[226] Matthew Cook, "Contextual but Still Objective?," in *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, ed. Matthew Cook et al.(Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010)., 76.

[227] Strauss., 266.

[228] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission.*, 19.

any given culture."[229] Strauss notes that contextualization is "living out Christian faith in ways that are both faithful to biblical truth and relevant to specific cultural contexts."[230] Similarly, Flemming asserts that "contextualization seeks to enable the people of God to live out the gospel in obedience to Christ within their own cultures and circumstances."[231] Scott Moreau, professor of intercultural studies and missions at Wheaton College adds, "Evangelical missiologists and theologians have proposed literally dozens of terms or labels for contextualization, ranging alphabetically from 'appropriate Christianity' to'vernacular theology.'"[232] Strauss argues that some individuals have preferred the term "'contextualization' over other terms because it stresses the inadequacy of simply adopting Western theological forms to non-Western contexts."[233]

In recent years, evangelical missiological scholars have debated the term contextualization. Writers who appear to use "contextualization" for what others would describe as "syncretism" have fueled this debate. In the view of many evangelical missiologists, contextualization refers to the appropriate "translatability" of the gospel into local cultural forms of expression, and syncretism refers, in their view, to inappropriate combinations of biblical Christianity with indigenous religion. Strauss summarizes the viewpoints of authors from a spectrum of perspectives on this matter.

---

[229] Paul Siu, "Theologizing Locally," in *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, ed. Matthew Cook et al.(Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010)., 156.

[230] Strauss., 266.

[231] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission.*, 19.

[232] A. Scott Moreau, "Evangelical Models of Contextualization," in *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, ed. Matthew Cook et al.(Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010)., 168.

[233] Strauss., 266.

In discussing the matter of how one can contextualize and yet avoid the dangers of syncretism, Strauss refers to Moreau's definition. Moreau defines syncretism as "the replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements."[234] Van Rheenen defines syncretism as "the blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture so that Christianity loses its distinctiveness and speaks with a voice reflective of its culture."[235] Strauss maintains that a contributing factor to this debate is that "some of the work of contextual theologians around the world validates the fear of those who believe that contextualization inevitably leads to syncretism."[236] Strauss posits that this tension is a theological dilemma, noting the trustworthiness of the scriptures, the danger of cultural relativism, and the fact that human theological expression in various cultures is not equal in authority to the inspired scriptures. He continues, "The idea of contextual theology provokes uncertainty among many evangelical theologians. . .since they employ a hermeneutic that assumes God's Word can be understood and applied in every culture, it seems natural to assume that theology itself is equally truthful and equally sufficient for all peoples."[237]

Strauss goes on to note the fear of some in this matter. He explains, "To suggest that theology varies according to cultural and historical contexts seems to introduce a dangerous element of relativism that contradicts the certainties and absoluteness of Scripture."[238] As

---

[234] *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), s.v. "Syncretism."

[235] Gailyn Van Rheenen, "Syncretism and Contextualization: The Church on a Journey Defining Itself," in *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen(Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006)., 7-8.

[236] Strauss., 275.

[237] Stephen Strauss, "The Role of Context in Shaping Theology," in *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, Evangelical Missiological Society Series (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006)., 99-100

[238] ibid., 100.

noted before, Strauss and others suggest that this fear is not totally unfounded. "Some of the most prominent contextual theologians seem to base their theologies more in culture or political ideologies than on the Bible. The theologies they develop seem to contradict theologies historically accepted as orthodox, further confirming suspicion that the whole idea of contextual theology is suspect."[239] Yet at the same time, "evangelicals recognize that no individual's theology is absolute."[240]

The late Paul Hiebert, missionary anthropologist and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Missions and South Asian studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School frames the tension by putting the two concepts into a simple question: "How can we put the gospel in human contexts and avoid cultural relativism?"[241] David Hesselgrave, professor emeritus of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School claims that "both the under-contextualization and the over-contextualization of the Christian faith constitute open invitations to syncretism."[242] Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and World Christianity at Yale University has developed the thesis that the Christian scriptures and the gospel message are "translatable" to all cultures, and this has contributed to the growth of world Christianity.[243] Strauss proposes that the Bible as divinely revealed and inspired scripture should be the basis or foundation of all contextual theology. He argues, "To say that theology is contextual is not necessarily to reject the Bible as the authoritative source for theologizing.

---

[239] ibid., 100.

[240] ibid., 100.

[241] Paul G. Hiebert, "Syncretism and Social Paradigms," in *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, Evangelical Missiological Sociiety Series (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006)., 32.

[242] David J. Hesselgrave, "Syncretism: Mission and Missionary Induced? ," in *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, Evangelical Missiological Society Series (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006)., 79.

[243] See Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.)

Instead, a responsible translation model of the role of context in shaping theology begins with the very assumptions that the Bible makes about itself: that [it] is God's message for people of all contexts."[244] The question arises then as to how one should proceed if one is going to practice contextual theology based on the divinely revealed scriptures. Strauss contends that "even though interpreters and theologians from different times and places can discern the same essential message of Scripture, their particular cultural, historical, and personal contexts will affect their awareness of aspects of the text." [245] Strauss, like others, suggests that this awareness is impacted both positively and negatively by the world's cultures, and this is why it is so important to dialogue and listen to one another in the multi-cultural body of Christ.

When we dialogue, our eyes may be opened to legitimate observations about the biblical text that our particular culture might otherwise cause us to miss. Strauss elaborates, "Positively, their context will sensitize them to details that readers from another context might ignore. Negatively, their context will limit their awareness of details of the text that theologians from other contexts will see."[246] Strauss goes on to suggest:

> Because no one culture can understand all the traits of Scripture, and because each culture contains elements that will help it uncover what another culture might overlook, intercultural theologizing is essential for the universal church. . Intercultural theologizing is the cross-pollination of many contextual theologies between churches of different contexts.[247]

Flemming describes this ambivalent tension between contextualization and syncretism, reasoning:

---

[244] Strauss, "The Role of Context in Shaping Theology.", 101.

[245] ibid.,110.

[246] ibid., 110.

[247] ibid., 119., emphasis in original.

> There is still a great deal of confusion about what it means and how it should be practiced. Many sincere Christians are still suspicious that attempts to contextualize theology and Christian behavior will lead to the compromising of biblical truth. Christians throughout the world find themselves caught between the desire to communicate the Word of God in culturally relevant ways and the fear of giving away too much of the gospel in the process.[248]

He contends that most thinking about contextualization "has drawn upon models from the fields of linguistics, anthropology, crosscultural communication studies, or contextual theology."[249] While insights from these academic disciplines have done much to inform theology, theory, and practice, Flemming thinks that the primary study of contextualization and examples of appropriate contextualization should come from the scriptures themselves. He explains, "Although the term contextualization was quite recently minted, the activity of expressing and embodying the gospel in its context-sensitive ways has characterized the Christian mission from the very beginning."[250]

Historian Thomas Oden concurs with Fleming and contends that Africa's role in the beginning of the Christian mission is more extensive than perhaps originally thought. He expounds,

> Not only Westerners but tragically many African scholars and church leaders also have ignored their earliest African Christian ancestors. Some have been so intent on condemning nineteenth-century colonialist missionary history that they have hardly glimpsed their own momentous premodern patristic African intellectual heritage.[251]

Oden also asserts that both written and oral traditions played a role in this development, and he includes Christianity in the term "African traditional religions." He continues,

> Scholars and advocates of African traditional religions are justifiably grateful for their oral traditions. They have shaped tribal communities and villages all over Africa for

---

[248] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission.*,14.

[249] ibid., 14.

[250] ibid., 15, emphasis in original.

[251] Thomas C. Oden, *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press 2007)., 11.

> untold generations. The genre of "African traditional religions" has sometimes been defined so narrowly as to rule out the great written traditions as if they were not also truly African, and not so profoundly "traditional African."[252]

Oden does, however, seem to distinguish somewhat between north of the Sahara and south of the Sahara. "African traditional religions south of the Sahara were largely conveyed by oral means...north of the Sahara,...[they] were conveyed historically by both oral and written traditions."[253] Oden further contends,

> It is a category mistake to rule the interpretation of Jewish and Christian Scriptures out of early African history…the best of African theologians have been tempted to fall into the stereotype that Christianity came from Europe. This is a narrow, modern view of history, ignoring Christianity's first millennium, when African thought shaped...virtually every diocese in Christianity worldwide.[254]

He warns,

> It would be a vast exaggeration to claim that African theology became normative for all aspects of ancient ecumenical Christianity. But it is not an exaggeration to say that African exegetical skills and competencies in interpreting the Old Testament provided the patterns by which Africans, especially Origen, Augustine, and Cyril supplied the scriptural basis for the dogmatic work.[255]

Oden further reasons, "Early Christianity tells an historical narrative that deeply involved Africa from the very beginning, from Joseph to Moses to the exodus to the flight of the holy family to Egypt to the Ethiopian eunuch. These are African events that define the whole subsequent narrative of salvation history."[256]

Flemming argues that two factors in the biblical record support his own assertion. He explains,

> First, it provides "stories of contextualization"…in which Jesus and the apostles tailor the gospel message to address different groups of people…Second, the New

---

[252] ibid., 23-24.
[253] ibid., 24.
[254] ibid., 25.
[255] ibid., 76.
[256] ibid., 96-97.

> Testament writings are themselves examples...All four Gospels...are attempts to contextualize the story of Jesus for different audiences...Paul's letters are models...for diverse churches and situations.[257]

From his discussion of the New Testament literary corpus, Flemming concludes that "the New Testament documents show us the process as well as the product of this contextualizing activity."[258]

If these writers are correct, then missionaries and nationals assigned to educational contexts must consider the contextualization not only of the message, but also of methodologies, paying attention to indigenous approaches to the teaching and learning process. Harrison speculates, "If we accept the need to practice and teach deep, comprehensive contextualization, our mission statements, educational objectives, policies, curriculum, and actual practice should all reflect that choice."[259] She asserts that "storytelling is central to many cultures, and suits much of our Bible teaching. Where appropriate, stories usually communicate better than lectures and are better remembered."[260]

Strauss agrees and contends that a most effective method of teaching in non-Western cultures is "to use the stories and proverbs embedded in the people's culture and worldview."[261] He asserts that "most people in the world learn orally by passing on stories, proverbs, poems, songs, and riddles."[262] Further, he states, "Missionaries must make sure they learn and use the local patterns of education...whenever possible."[263] Yau Man-Siew, Professor of Christian Education and Formation at Tyndale University and former professor

---

[257] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*. 15.
[258] ibid., 15, emphasis in original.
[259] Harrison., 197.
[260] ibid., 205.
[261] Strauss, "Contextualization and Mission.",281.
[262] ibid., 281.
[263] ibid., 286.

at Singapore Bible College observes that "a blind copying of the Western models of training, including wholesale adoption of curricula and philosophies without thoughtful critique or recognition of contextual differences is disastrous."[264] This author contends that what is needed in non-Western contexts of theological education is "a cogent indigenous philosophy of theological education based on sound biblical and theological principles."[265]

Biblical scholars within the evangelical tradition generally agree that a primary literary genre of scripture is narrative or storytelling. Proverbs, poems, riddles, and songs are reflected in scripture as well. J. Scott Duvall, professor of New Testament at Ouchita Baptist University in Ouchita, Arkansas and J. Daniel Hays, professor of biblical studies at Ouchita Baptist University contend "The Christian today is separated from the biblical audience by differences in culture, language, situation, [and] time. These differences form a river that hinders us from moving straight from the meaning in their context to meaning in ours."[266] Duvall and Hays go on to assert "The width of the river . . .varies from passage to passage. Sometimes it is extremely wide, requiring a long substantial bridge for crossing. Other times, however, it is a narrow creek that we can easily hop over."[267] Similarly, Steve Strauss asserts "Even though interpreters and theologians from different times and places can discern the same essential message of Scripture, their particular cultural, historical, and personal contexts will affect their awareness of aspects of the text."[268] In speaking of cultural context, Strauss goes on to explain "Positively, their context will sensitize them to details that readers from

---

[264] Yau-Man Siew, "With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st Century Essays in Honor of Ted Ward," in *With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st Century*, ed. Duane Elmer and Lois McKinney(Monrovia, CA: MARC Publishers, 1996)., 58.

[265] ibid., 58.

[266] J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, Second ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005)., 22.

[267] ibid., 22.

[268] Strauss, "The Role of Context in Shaping Theology.", 110.

another context might ignore. Negatively, their context will limit their awareness of details of the text that theologians from other contexts will see."[269] If these authors are correct, then for some passages, there is less of a "river" to cross in biblical interpretation in non-Western cultures. For other passages, there would be less of a river to cross in biblical interpretation in Western cultures.

Duvall and Hays relate a story concerning Daniel Hays missionary experience in Ethiopia. He attended a Christmas pageant put on by a local church in which midwives accompany Mary and Joseph and deliver the baby, because that is something their culture would assume would have happened. Hays compares this to how American culture tends to skip over the question of who delivered the baby Jesus.[270] The point being made of course is that culture, any culture, can influence our reading of the biblical text, sometimes negatively and sometimes positively. Duvall and Hays conclude the story by asking the provocative question, "Whose culture. . .is closer to that of the Bible?" [271] Yet this is no easy task, as most countries and cultures are not monolithic. Harrison contends that "every context has multiple components—a complex, more-or-less integrated range of traditions, activities, values, and beliefs. There are both traditional and modern aspects to culture and worldview."[272] From this observation, Harrison deduces that "since cultures and contexts are always changing, contextual education means preparing students to relate creatively and biblically to the evolving environment in which they are called to serve."[273]

---

[269] ibid., 110.

[270] Duvall and Hays., 88-89. See these pages for the complete story and comparison.

[271] ibid., 89.

[272] Harrison., 201.

[273] ibid., 201.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a number of authors that believe that it is appropriate to use cultural methodologies in contextualized theological education. These authors contend that those teaching in host cultures should be sensitive to individual and cultural learning styles and adjust teaching methodologies when appropriate, recognizing that no culture is monolithic. These same teachers should also contextualize theological content when appropriate, while guarding against relativism and syncretism. While the review of the literature has provided valuable insights into the three broad subject areas of learning styles, pedagogical contextualization, and contextualized theological education, no author has answered the primary research questions. The primary research questions focus on how students express their learning experiences with Global University courses, how students identify their preferred learning styles, and how students explain their culture's influence on their preferred learning styles in the Kenyan context. Since no author has answered these primary research questions, this study should fill an important gap in the literature, and assist missionaries in more effective cross-cultural theological teaching in East African contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to discover the preferred learning styles of East African students studying with Global University on the East Africa School of Theology campus in Nairobi, Kenya. This study focused on the students' perceptions of the learning experience in the East African context. In order to arrive at this fuller understanding of the student learning experience, the following research questions were used:

1) How do students express their learning experiences with Global University courses?
2) How do students identify their preferred learning styles?
3) How do students explain their culture's influence on their preferred learning styles?

Design of the Study

In this study, a qualitative approach to the research was utilized. Sharan B. Merriam, in *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, defines a qualitative method as "understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in their world."[274] She describes qualitative researchers as being "interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their

[274] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2009)., 13.

experiences."[275] Merriam gives four specific characteristics of qualitative research: "the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process inductive; and the product is richly descriptive."[276] Norman Denzin, professor of communications at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and Yvonna Lincoln, professor of higher education and educational administration at Texas A & M University, assert that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them."[277] Merriam concurs, citing this definition in her own work on qualitative research.[278] She also contends that "basically, culture consists of the shared behavior and symbolic meaning systems of a group of people."[279] The researcher sought to discover the meanings students brought to their educational experiences in cross-cultural settings.

The researcher interviewed seven Global University undergraduate students residing in Kenya who were current students at the East Africa School of Theology in Nairobi. The researcher originally intended to interview eight students, but one student decided not to be interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and were the primary source of data gathering. This method facilitated comprehensive and descriptive data from participant perspectives. Merriam notes that in an emic or insider's perspective, "the key concern is

---

[275] ibid., 5.

[276] ibid., 14.

[277] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln(Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005)., 3.

[278] Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation.*, 13.

[279] Merriam, "An Introduction to Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing.", 7.

understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's."[280]

The study used participant criteria to minimize variables for this in-depth research. All participants were students currently studying at EAST. Because the variables involved in the data analysis are more focused, this narrow criterion for participants provides means for in-depth exploration of the preferred learning styles of Kenyan Global University students, and the intricacies of contextualized theological education. Another benefit of the study analysis is that it provides a fuller understanding of the student learning experience and the single context of Kenyan students enrolled at EAST. Thus, the research facilitated a more complete emic perspective of Kenyan students' learning experiences with Global University on the EAST campus.

A qualitative approach allowed the researcher, who chose to stay on campus, to interact with interviewees during the normal daily routines of campus life and engage in personal conversations in informal settings on campus. This enabled the researcher to get to know students on a more personal basis in harmony with their relationship-oriented culture. This assisted the researcher in understanding each individual student's background, culture, and educational goals. During the interviews, the researcher was able to follow up on specific issues that arose during the interview process.

Design Tools

This study used semi-structured interviews for primary data gathering in order to explore preferred learning styles. Sharan B. Merriam describes semi-structured interviews as:

> ...either all of the questions are more flexibly worded or the interview is a mix of more or less structured questions. Usually, specific information is desired from all the

[280] Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation.*, 14.

> respondents, in which case there is a more structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is to be determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic.[281]

This particular format permitted the researcher to pursue questions which arose as part of the interview process in a cross-cultural setting. This method helped the researcher to discover common themes and patterns, as well as any variations among participants. Initial interview protocol categories came from the literature, but sometimes changed during the interview process because of descriptions that emerged from the interviews and the constant comparative methodology. Sharan B. Merriam says that this method "involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences."[282] Merriam also asserts that

> The basic strategy of the method is to do just what its name implies—constantly compare. The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances.[283]

The data was coded and categorized during the interviewing process. This allowed for the emergence of other sources of data.

Before each interview, the student received a letter explaining the purpose of the research, the consent form, and the protocol questions to be asked. At the request of the administrative officials at EAST, a group meeting was also held with potential participants to explain verbally the purpose of the research and the questions to be asked. After this meeting, one potential participant chose not to be interviewed. At interview time, each interviewee

---

[281] *ibid.*, 90.

[282] ibid., 30.

[283] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, Second ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998)., 159.

was informed again of the purpose of the research, signed a consent form, answered initial demographic questions, and then proceeded to the semi-structured portion of the interview. Interviews were somewhat informal and unhurried in accordance with the more event-oriented rather than time-oriented culture, and focused on the learning style area of research interest.

Since English is commonly spoken in Kenya, the interviews were conducted in English. A battery powered cassette recorder was used to record each interview in order to prevent interruption from loss of power. Due to student schedules, all interviews were conducted between February 21, 2011 and March 1, 2011. All interviews were personally transcribed by the interviewer. Pseudonyms were assigned at the beginning of the interview process in order to maintain proper confidentiality and to protect the identities of all participants. Transcriptions and analysis were also conducted in English in order to harmonize with the emic perspective.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview protocol contained the following questions:

1. What did your parents do to teach you?
2. How did you seek learning?
3. Why did you seek learning?
4. What did you like most about learning?
5. What did you spend most of your time doing in order to learn?
6. Tell me about a time when you did not understand an assignment.
7. Tell me about a time when an assignment really helped you.

Limitations of the Study

Due to limited time and resources, only seven students were interviewed for this study, and participants were limited to Global University undergraduate students enrolled with the East Africa School of Theology. Both male and female students were interviewed, without regard to denominational affiliation of the student. Four male students and three female students were interviewed. Each interview took approximately one hour to an hour and a half, depending on the student's class and work schedule. Some of the findings may be able to be generalized to other cross-cultural theological education settings. However, caution should be exercised in this area. Readers who desire to generalize some of the specific aspects of these findings on Kenyan learning preferences to other cultures should test those aspects in their particular cultural context. In qualitative studies, readers are the ones who hold the responsibility to determine what can or cannot be appropriately applied in their specific cultural context.

Participant Descriptions

Several students who were interviewed were already actively engaged in various forms of vocational ministry. Since the Assemblies of God credentials women as well as men, some women were pastoring or co-pastoring churches in addition to being full-time students. Each student will now be introduced, with pseudonyms used to protect their identities.

Daniel has been involved in short-term missionary work among the Maasai tribe, living among them and learning their language and culture first hand. Mary oversees a home for abused women and has done undergraduate studies in both the United States and East Africa. Rachel is married, has a two year-old baby, pastors a church, and oversees an

orphanage for street children. Isaiah is currently a youth pastor, and his father works with a well-known international missionary relief agency. James has a background in agriculture and desires to be a pastor. Abraham has served as an associate pastor. Elizabeth has been an engineer and is currently an intercessor. Most interviewees had parents who were from two different tribes and had grown up in various locations within Kenya. One participant grew up in Malawi. Most participants also grew up in an environment where their parents professed some type of Christian faith, such as Anglican, Catholic, or Pentecostal. Some interviewees grew up in rural villages, and others grew up in urban areas or cities such as Nairobi.

Daniel is a third year student at EAST, and his dominant learning style is primarily visual, preferring pictures, videos, and hands-on demonstration. Mary's dominant learning style is individual internalization, and she prefers to study individually rather than in groups. Rachel is a primarily visual learner, learning best from demonstration, observation, and discovery. Isaiah is primarily an oral learner, and he remembers a significant amount of material he hears or reads, even though he does not like to read. He also does well learning visually through hands-on demonstrations. James prefers to learn individually and enjoys drawing art, reading, and hands-on demonstration, so he appears to also be a primarily visual learner. Abraham is a second-year student who prefers hands-on demonstration or learning by doing and discovery, and he is also primarily a visual learner. Elizabeth prefers group learning and taking notes to help her remember things. These approaches to learning and the findings will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Researcher Position

At least three specific areas or biases affect the researcher's stance. First, the researcher is an appointed missionary in the Assemblies of God, which is the denomination

that sponsors Global University and the East Africa School of Theology. Second, the researcher is a faculty member with Global University at the undergraduate level. Third, the researcher worked in Kenya for one year as a missionary associate with Global University in the 1970's. Also, while on campus conducting this research, the researcher facilitated a Global University course, Introduction to Missions.

This could be considered a bias that is counterproductive. However, the researcher's extensive familiarity with the denomination and with Global University facilitates a better insider perspective. Finally, the researcher has a significant amount of experience in working in cross-cultural settings. This facilitates an insider-outsider perspective that could benefit both the East Africa School of Theology and Global University.

Conclusion

This chapter described the qualitative research method the researcher used in order to determine the preferred individual and cultural learning styles of East African Global University students studying with the East Africa School of Theology in Nairobi, Kenya. The researcher analyzed the transcribed interviews using the constant comparative method by noting themes, similarities, and differences in the responses of the interviewees. The following chapter will describe the responses of the interviewees and describe the findings of the qualitative research employed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to discover the preferred learning styles of East African Global University students on the East Africa School of Theology campus in Nairobi, Kenya. This study focused on the students' perceptions of the learning experience in the East African context. In order to arrive at this fuller understanding of the student learning experience, the following research questions were used:

1) How do students express their learning experiences with Global University courses?
2) How do students identify their preferred learning styles?
3) How do students explain their culture's influence on their preferred learning styles?

In order to discover preferred individual and possible dominant cultural learning styles, seven students, both male and female, were interviewed who were currently enrolled Global University undergraduate students. The students were studying on the East Africa School of Theology campus in Nairobi, Kenya. The research participants will now be introduced and the findings will be described.

Introduction to Research Participants

Six of the seven participants had parents who were from two different tribes and had grown up in various locations of Kenya. One participant grew up in Malawi. All participants grew up in an environment where at least one parent professed some type of Christian faith, such as Anglican, Catholic, or Pentecostal. Two interviewees grew up in rural villages, three

participants grew up in cities, and two participants grew up partially in a village and partially in a city. All research participants were assigned pseudonames.

Daniel

Daniel grew up in Nairobi, but his father is from the coastal area of Kenya and is a member of one of the coastal tribes. His mother is from the Kikuyu tribe. His father is from an Anglican background, and his mother is from a Catholic background. One of his brothers is a missionary to Europe, pastoring a church in Germany. Daniel came to his own personal faith in Christ about ten years ago.

He has been involved in short-term missionary work among the Maasai tribe, living among them for five months and learning their language and culture first-hand during this period. When speaking about this time that he spent with the tribe, he notes that at first he was not accepted, but once a Maasai pastor arrived to introduce him, he was accepted. Daniel described his time among them as follows:

> They accepted me, so I lived there with them. I had to learn some Maasai, as I would prepare my sermons in Kiswahili and Maasai from time to time. And I learned how to relate to them in a culturally appropriate way. I had to eat what they ate. However, I did not adopt their mode of dress. I was there about five months, and I journaled during that time. At times, things would be tough. At times, I would look at Mt. Kilamanjaro, and God would remind me that those who trust in the Lord are like Mt. Zion, and they can never be shaken. I learned a lot from nature and from the Maasai community itself.

Mary

Mary oversees a home for abused women and has done undergraduate studies in both the United States and East Africa. Mary grew up in Nairobi, where her father was a pastor and church planter. Her father also graduated from EAST. He now pastors in the town of Nakuru. Mary is also a Christian musician and songwriter, and she has recorded albums and

been interviewed on television. Mary began singing in her church choir when she was nine years old. Concerning her present ministries, Mary stated:

> We work with . . .battered women . . .and provide a shelter and employment for them. We have a daycare for the women who have children and . . . want to find work so they can provide for their children. They bring their children in the morning to the center, and we take care of them while their mothers work. For those of a particular age, we provide a free nursery or kindergarten school. We also provide breakfast and lunch for them and a snack at 4 pm before they go home. These families cannot afford a fee, so this is a ministry to them. We trust God to provide for the employees, the teachers,...the food, the bills. We have done this for the past two years, and so far God has been faithful.
>
> I wrote the first song when I went for holidays. I sang to my mom, and she said it was good...I started recording my music when I was in the states – I did most of my recording there. When I was in the states, I had the opportunity to sing live at ...a Christian broadcasting station in Atlanta, Georgia....When I came back to Kenya, I did some more music and some more recording which are presently playing on the air.

Rachel

Rachel is married, has a two year-old baby, pastors a church, and oversees an orphanage for street children. Rachel grew up in a village in a mountainous area of Kenya close to the top of the mountains. She is one of eight siblings. Her father was an alcoholic, but her mother was a committed Christian. Because her father's alcoholism caused him to be violent, she was afraid to become a Christian because of the way her father treated one of her brothers. However, she did become a Christian, and eventually the father was brought to faith in Christ.

Rachel recently went on a short-term mission trip to a village. When she asked a man if he knew Christ, the man thought she was talking about another village resident, and he said he would ask around to see if someone knew him. This experience caused her to realize how many people still do not know who Jesus Christ is. Rachel has participated in cross-cultural

seminars, but realized she needed to be trained further and so enrolled in the East Africa School of Theology.

Potential students at EAST are interviewed before they are enrolled. Rachel was very ill and could not walk at the time of her enrollment interview. She had friends bring her to the campus for the interview, and she completed the interview during her time of illness. While growing up, she worked on a farm. Rachel recounted the beginning of the orphanage she oversees.

> We had gone to a town nearby to share the gospel. After we preached about the love of Christ, a street boy came to us and said "You are not going to leave me here. I have never heard about love. I want you to take me to where that love is." We tried to convince him that we could not take him. The boy responded "If there is truly that love you talk about, I don't understand it any other way unless you take me to that love."

They took the boy, and the orphanage began. Now the orphanage houses and cares for eighty-seven street children in an environment where God's love is demonstrated. At the time of the interview, the first boy the orphanage sheltered was ready to enter college, pending his high school results. The church that Rachel and her husband started has sent out missionaries to seven African countries.

Isaiah

Isaiah is currently a youth pastor, and his father works with a well-known international missionary relief agency as a strategic specialist. His father is based in Kenya with the organization but frequently travels nationally and internationally. Isaiah is from a city in Malawi but resides in Kenya. He grew up in a Christian home, but in his teenage years, developed a lifestyle of alcoholism. At the age of twenty-one, Isaiah had an encounter with Christ and came to faith in Jesus Christ. He stated: "As I was growing up, my mum taught me the word of God. So I had some knowledge of what God wants us to do. But as I

was in my teenage years, I started drinking heavily and became addicted to alcohol until God intervened in my life....I had a personal encounter with Christ and was restored."

Isaiah's father holds a Bachelor's degree in social sciences and a Master of Arts degree in rural development. Isaiah has two sisters and one brother, and he is the firstborn. His father and uncles are all graduates in secular studies. They strongly encouraged him to go that direction as well. As a result of that influence, Isaiah has previous education in secular studies from a major university in Malawi. However, he believes that God called him into vocational pastoral ministry. He is the first in his family to pursue a theological education, and he is the first pastor in his family. Isaiah described his experience as follows:

> I'm here at EAST through my desire, my passion after I got this calling, because formerly I was studying at a secular college. Yes, I was studying much of community involvement. But...I had this calling over my life...I had no satisfaction, no fulfillment as I studied. My dad noticed [this dissatisfaction]...and said, "I might help you enroll in a school of ministry." So I agreed to that. I began to feel this motivation of coming to a theological college.

James

James has a background in agriculture and noted his desire to be a pastor. He was born and raised in Kenya. Part of the time, he lived in a village past the jungle, but most of the time, he lived in the Nairobi area. James' father was a postal worker and is now a missionary to the United States, spending some time in the United States and some time in Kenya. James has two brothers and one sister.

Abraham

Abraham has served as an associate pastor. He is from a village at the foot of Mt. Kenya but has lived in Nairobi for many years. His father worked for the Nairobi City Council as a cleaner. Abraham's mother does not know how to read or write. When his father secured a job with the Nairobi City Council, he also took advantage of adult education, and

became very good at reading and writing. Abraham's parents are Christians who attended church regularly, and they wanted their children to attend Sunday school. However, Abraham felt that his parents' commitment to Christianity was not what it should have been until 1984, when they made a strong commitment and were baptized.

Abraham came to his own personal faith in Christ in 1994, while in school in Mombasa studying accounting and bookkeeping. Due to a lack of funds to complete his schooling, Abraham sold goods as a street vendor. During this time in 1994, Abraham felt God calling him to serve in full-time vocational ministry. He has served as an associate pastor in two different churches, one for two years and another for three years, and attended schools connected with these churches before applying to study for a recognized degree at East Africa School of Theology.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth has been an engineer and is currently an intercessor. Elizabeth's parents are Christians who took their children to Sunday school and taught them about Jesus Christ in the home. When she was thirteen, Elizabeth came to her own personal faith in Christ. She described this time in the following way: "When I was thirteen years old, I thought it was good for me to surrender my life to Christ because I was only going to Sunday school, doing all those things—I used to think those things—those works would take me to heaven. But the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sins, and I repented." Elizabeth desired to attend Bible college but did not have the funds. She prayed about this, and God assured her that the time would come when she would be able to attend. In 2010, some friends began to support her education financially so she could attend Bible college. Elizabeth grew up in a village in Western Kenya where it was necessary to gather water for cooking and cleaning. Before

enrolling in Bible college, she studied engineering and communications at a university in Nairobi.

The seven research participants have been introduced. The primary research questions will now be addressed. These questions focus on learning experiences, learning styles, and cultural influences on learning styles. The learning preferences of the interviewees will be considered and grouped according to common themes. Both similarities and differences in learning preferences will be noted.

Learning Experiences

The first research question dealt with how participants described their learning experiences with Global University. Since the East Africa School of Theology is an agreement school with Global University, the research participants were jointly enrolled in Global University and EAST. All participants were students in the Bachelor of Arts degree program. The descriptions of their experiences were noted.

Vocabulary Difficulties

In responding to an interview guide question concerning a time when she did not understand an assignment, Elizabeth described her difficulty in understanding some of the terms used in Global University undergraduate courses. She recalled,

> There was a time when I did not understand what "enumeration" meant...concerning the topic, I had read the whole of that topic, but now the question was "enumerate." And I was wondering how to answer that question...because I didn't understand what the term "enumerate" was...I kept on wondering whether it was standing, whether it is an illustration...so I became confused.

Abraham noted that he had difficulty studying the discussion in an undergraduate course on pneumatology, and he struggled during a discussion on whether or not 1 Corinthians 12:13 should be translated "by," "with," or "in" the Holy Spirit. At the same

time, Abraham also noted that he was glad this discussion was there, because "to me it was a new idea or knowledge I received." Abraham also commented at the end of the interview, "I've liked the kind of material we get from Global University. I've even used a lot of it in my preaching and teaching."

Mary also noted her difficulty in understanding some questions. She recounted,

> This question...seemed like a paragraph to me—it said it was one question but there were about three questions in it. So I didn't realize I should take all the questions as three or four questions—they say...identify sanctification, comma, regeneration, comma, adoption, and they keep going...am I supposed to do paragraphs for each of them or am I just supposed to pass by and say something about all of them?...So as a first year [student] it can be quite tricky.

Mary also commented about the courses, "I like the projects, because you get to read this material and then internalize it and bring it out."

Similarly, Daniel mentioned that some aspects of the pneumatology course were difficult. He observed, "That was another challenging course—just trying to understand the concept of the Trinity...I'm still wrestling with that...I hope at some point I will be able to grasp some of these things but in part I can say I really appreciate the learning."

Isaiah had difficulties understanding some things, but attributed this to what he perceives to be his poor study habits. "The reason for that could be that my habit of studying, since I only study when I know I am having an exam, I believe that was a contributing factor...I do know that not every subject will I understand...nor will I understand everything within it."

In contrast to the difficulties, James noted the practicality of some of the assignments. He described what his pastoral ministries class would be doing the Sunday following the interview. "Usually we are doing a practicum. This Sunday we are going to a church. Each one of us will be given a job to do there...the teacher will be...looking at how we behave, and how we interact with people. Then they will mark and give the results."

Elizabeth also preferred frequent feedback on assignments. She discussed two different English courses. She observed that the introductory course saved the feedback for the end of the course, and she had great difficulty during the final exam. In contrast, she noted that the writing English course gives "quizzes after every portion. And that [course] has been really good for me." Similar to other interviewees, Isaiah expressed a preference for frequent feedback. "They usually go by continuous assessment...whereby we have projects and so the marks that we attain the projects contribute in the final paper. I feel so much helped when I perform [well] in the projects...because I know that is boosting my results in the final paper."

Independent Instruction

Rachel reflected on a time when she studied a Global University course on world religions independently, rather than in a classroom setting such as EAST, and had some difficulty.

> Sometimes it becomes very difficult when you are studying independently...that course to me is one of the toughest I have done so far. And so there are some things that I really did not understand. But I...never knew who to ask because...I am not connected to any teacher...so I could not go to anybody to ask unless I go to my co-students, who also may not explain it to my satisfaction.

Learning Styles

The second research question explored how students described their learning style preferences.

Learning in Groups

Two of the seven participants preferred group learning environments. Elizabeth noted, "There are times when I have felt like I have not understood an assignment. And during that time, what I have actually been doing is to seek assistance...If I want to seek

assistance, it's either my classmates, or I also go to the teacher." In responding to one of the interview guide questions about a time when an assignment helped her, Elizabeth noted her preference for group learning by discussing a speech course. "I was really assisted because the assignment we were given was to go and discuss how we can become effective speakers. And in the process of discussing, that is when I came to realize that when you are a good listener [to other speakers], you become a good speaker."

Rachel also preferred group study and observed how this approach has helped her. Speaking of an introductory English course, she commented, "I did not understand the assignment. I had to talk to many colleagues about the assignment...and I really put in a lot of effort, even consulting other women in college to help me with the assignment." Rachel observed that this was during a great time of difficulty in her life, when she struggled with numerous health problems, and while she was also expecting a baby. As a result, she appreciated the group support.

In contrast to the two who preferred group learning, four of the seven participants preferred learning on their own. Abraham commented, "I like when I take the books, and I sit alone, and I do things alone...That's the kind of learning I find to be good—no interruptions from the [other] students." Likewise, James mentioned, "I usually did things alone, and that gave me time to study and to enjoy when I am by myself." Similarly, Isaiah expressed a strong preference for individual study. "I prefer individual assignments...because of one of the challenges I have encountered [for group assignments]...I was appointed a group leader...I might propose a date on which we need to discuss. But people are busy...we happen to postpone the days, and that is a challenge."

Mary also expressed her preference for studying alone by strongly critiquing group learning. Mary stated "Sometimes we have to do group work. And this group does Unit One, the other one Unit Two, the other Unit Three, and then they all present. I don't like that...I prefer that we go through with the teacher thoroughly so that I don't miss any unit." She further explained, "That way, I am not missing out on anything. Or, if I have a question that I would like to ask the professor, I will be able to do that." Mary also expressed her belief that individual assignments facilitate internalization. She noted, "Once you've internalized that, it's not going anywhere. It's not coming out of you. You cannot erase it—it's inside you. And when you speak especially on a certain topic, it just comes out so naturally."

In contrast to the two who preferred group learning, and the four who prefer individual learning, Daniel expressed his preference for a combination of group and individual learning. He commented about current practice on campus. "Most of the time we have lectures, and then in between the lectures we would interact and they would also give us group assignments, so you find they are well balanced."

Learning Visually

All seven research participants expressed a preference for learning visually in one or more ways. Participant descriptions noted a preference for visual learning through three major categories: observation and demonstration, reading and note-taking, and media and pictures.

Through Observation and Demonstration

Six (James, Abraham, Isaiah, Rachel, Daniel, Mary) of the seven research participants expressed a preference for learning visually through observation and demonstration. James described how the subject of agriculture helped him when teachers demonstrated what to do.

"It helped me to learn how to take care of my things properly…[you] cut the weed, water the plants, and then [the teachers] come after you and check what you did. It was constant, so it helped me improve." As part of this class, students were also given some measure of flexibility on what they did with the crops such as cabbage, carrots, and onions. "Some they give you, and some they take. And you can decide to sell them, or give to your parents, or you can just cook them if you want."

This preference for learning visually through observation and demonstration was confirmed when James expressed his regret that both the speech course and the pastoral ministries course no longer emphasized this aspect of learning. He recalled, "Nowadays, you can take the public speaking course without speaking in public, [and] we were wondering…In the olden days, people were going [to the chapel] and were being critiqued…We are so many that they cannot check each one of us." In reference to the pastoral ministries course, James noted, "About ten years ago now,…there was a baptismal pool…So usually people [were] going there and showing how to do [baptisms]. After the development [of the campus],…the pool was cemented. They don't do it anymore."

Abraham connected visual learning through observation and demonstration to the idea of discovering new things. He also connected visual learning to practical application. He commented, "One of the things that I like about learning is getting to know new things." Abraham gave the example of when he learned how to ride a bicycle. "There was a lot of excitement. It was not so easy to balance that wheel or to keep a balance on top of a bicycle – I could lose balance and fall – but learning how to balance a bicycle was a new experience for me." He reflected on this experience and observed,

> I think discovering new ideas is one of the things that gives me joy in life – how to hold a pen, how to write the alphabet and the numbers. Before I could [read or] write,

> I would hold the book upside down and the teacher would say it's not like that…I enjoyed that. Getting to know a new thing gave me excitement…I have learned a new knowledge; I have come to know a new idea.

Isaiah also preferred learning visually by observation and demonstration. Isaiah reflected on a computer course. "I only had the knowledge in practical, not in theory…The problem that I had was—the question posed I was familiar with it…but to put it on paper was an issue. How do I explain how this functions? So…it was like if I was put on the computer, I could demonstrate how."

Rachel also observed that she learns visually through observation and demonstration by being observant of the way others do things. She shared, "I have learned from other people…learning from people as in when I interact with them…Not only do I learn from books, I have also learned from other ministers…who are here [at EAST], who are better at organizing the task or organizing missions." Rachel noted the practical implications of learning from observation and demonstration. "The way they do things in their churches and in their denominations, I have imparted that to my church…I like the way people interact because it gives us variety in the ways we can minister."

Daniel also prefers visual learning through observation and demonstration. He commented on what he liked to do when growing up, "At times, I really used to like going out and just looking at nature—looking at things like plants and animals…I would visit…animal orphanages. I would ask questions about the animals…just to get to know more." Daniel recounted that this is the way he learned the language when working among the Maasai tribe. "At times, they would talk, and I would repeat what they were saying. At times I would ask them 'How do you say this?' At times I would make mistakes. They would laugh. I would laugh. We would laugh together." Daniel noted that some of the Maasai spoke

a little bit of Swahili, so Daniel would on occasion ask in Swahili what they called something in Maasai.

Mary indicated that she would have preferred to learn visually through observation and demonstration growing up. Due to her parents' ministry involvements, this learning method was not as common in her home. As a result, she felt unprepared for family responsibilities she was expected to begin in high school. She noted, "I had to start learning how to cook, how to clean up, . . .and I wasn't comfortable with that because I was not used to so much responsibility. These responsibilities came on me suddenly."

Through Reading and Note Taking

Three of the seven interviewees preferred learning visually through reading and note taking. Elizabeth is one of these participants. She commented, "I like reading. I like reading, even if I have no assignments. I just like reading...When I'm reading, one of the things that helps me...is connecting with notes—making my own notes, my own short notes." Abraham also discussed his love for visual learning through reading and note taking, explaining, "I like when I take the books, and I sit alone, and I do things alone taking notes. That's the kind of learning I find to be good." Daniel also mentioned his love of reading, sharing "From a very early age, I really liked reading books long before we had the Internet."

In contrast to the three that preferred reading and note taking, one participant expressed a preference for oral learning. Isaiah narrated reasons for this preference, "I love the way it is that I have to attend classes and then I study...I have a really good memory...and I retain a lot when I listen to lectures." Isaiah also observed that even though he studies the Bible, he dislikes reading. "Most of the time, I spend studying the Bible...but

to be frank, I am not getting deep into books, which is one of my weaknesses as a student which I need to work on."

Through Pictures and Media

Two research participants (James and Daniel) noted their preference for visual learning through media and pictures. James observed his preference for learning through drawing pictures. "Most of the time I was alone reading or drawing, and when we [were] doing arts and crafts, I would draw. Most of my time was drawing, reading, and reading the Bible." Daniel also commented on his preference for visual learning, which he felt could have helped him in his earlier education. He explained, "I would have appreciated it if we would have had things like slide projectors, things like documentaries, to make me see things. I really am able to understand concepts like pictures, movies, stuff like that. Things like that would have made learning easier and more attractive to me."

All seven research participants expressed a preference for visual learning in one way or another. These participants learn visually through one or more of the categories mentioned above. Due to a preference for more than one style of visual learning, the number does not add up to seven. In order to provide a visual overview of the findings, each participant's visual learning preferences have been categorized in a graph (see Appendix).

Learning by Discovery

Rachel noted her preference for learning new things, sharing, "I like knowing something new. As I have continued learning…I have learned that there are things I have always known, but what I have known is not [always] the truth." Rachel recounted her experience and previous knowledge about the book of Psalms as an example. "Before I came to college, I knew that the book of Psalms was written by David, but when I came to college

I realized that Psalms had so many writers, and that not only David wrote the book of Psalms…I keep on learning, and every time I learn something new, it shows me that I need to keep learning."

Daniel noted his preference for discovery, for learning new things and concepts he can use. "I loved history because it taught me. I could learn about events, things, great stuff like inventions…I learned English and mathematics – things I can use." Daniel also commented that what he likes most about learning is "the new things that I discovered…like getting to know people, learning about how the world works, concepts about life. I am really fascinated by adventure, and for me, everything I was discovering was an adventure."

Learning Relationally

Isaiah noted that he preferred a relational style of learning. He discussed both positive and negative aspects of relationships with instructors and parents. He spoke of previous experiences in two schools, contrasting the approaches. In the first school, he remembered, "The teachers were just so relational. That is, they would…be interested to get us closer [to good marks]. But when I moved from that school to another because of my dad's job…one thing I discovered was there was not that close relationship with the teachers. And so my performance began to lower down…mainly that was the reason."

Isaiah also felt that his father's comments influenced him negatively in the new school situation. Isaiah reflected on this, stating, "When my performance in class was bad, my dad would [use] some words like 'you unintelligent child' or 'you dull child.' Now that confused me a little because I was reminded of the highest performance I used to have in the former school, and he congratulated me." Isaiah noted that the negative comments from his father "began to demoralize me to the extent that I lost self-esteem."

Learning through Music

One participant expressed what she learned through writing music and being interviewed. In responding to an interview guide question concerning an assignment that helped her, Mary reflected on a specific experience. She explained,

> I was doing [the course on] humanity and sin...I am a gospel music artist...I had an interview on TV. I was going to launch my song on the media, which involves...a live interview...They asked me lots of questions about morality...[I said] man was created—he was born as a sinner, but God embedded in him the conscious, the moral standards...And I was able to answer the question...A lot of the questions they asked—I took most of my answers from that assignment.

Cultural Influences on Learning Styles

The third research question focused on how students described their culture's influences on their preferred learning style. Five of the seven participants mentioned learning visually, one mentioned learning orally, and two mentioned group learning.

Learning Visually

Five (Elizabeth, Rachel, Abraham, Daniel, Mary) of the seven participants noted the cultural influence on the preference for learning visually. All five of the seven participants who mentioned learning visually all mentioned learning visually through observation and demonstration. One participant (Abraham) mentioned cultural influences on learning visually through media and pictures. One participant (Abraham) mentioned learning visually through reading and orally by retelling the story. Isaiah, who explicitly mentions visual learning as a preference does not explicitly mention cultural influence on this learning style.

Through Observation and Demonstration

Five of the seven participants (Elizabeth, Abraham, Rachel, Daniel, Mary) observed a strong cultural influence on learning through observation and demonstration. Elizabeth narrated the cultural influence in her early family life in a village:

> I was the firstborn daughter. In our culture, girls are supposed to do all the tasks in the house...I was actually the one who made sure...things were in place...I did washing. I did collecting or fetching water. So we had a lot of work, washing up, and actually taking care of the animals, cooking, all that in fact. I organized all the duties in the house. It was like I was the response manager. I think one thing my mom was doing was she was actually training me to be more responsible, because of most of the duties I was given. So it was my responsibility to get [things] to the young ones and also make sure that things were done well and on time.

Abraham also described his family life in a village in a rural area. "That was the city Mum was from [in] the rural areas. Mum gave us lots of responsibilities. That helped me personally to learn a lot of things...We kept livestock so I could go out and graze in the bush. We were not doing the type of tethering or farming or keeping of the livestock, but we went out in the bush for the animals." Abraham also depicted crop farming. "We also had a farm, not [a] very large farm, but it was able to feed us and get some money for the sale of crops. We would sow the seeds and work the farm." Abraham also noted that there were challenges with the crop farming in order to ensure that the family received the needed money. "We were growing the crops for sale. So when the crops were almost ripe, almost ready for harvest, the birds would start coming and want to eat the crops, so we had to scare them away."

He recounted how he learned in this family farming context, as well as through their family's cultural influence. Referring to his mother, Abraham observed that a common way of learning in the culture and family is learning visually by observation and demonstration. "She would tell us to go with those who are older than us so we could watch them. So as they

took the animals out, she would tell us to accompany them. In the process, we also came to know how to graze animals in the field."

Rachel described learning in her culture and family as observation and demonstration. "There was a lot of cooperation…my mother did [the work] with me in the beginning. If it was cooking, she would show me and demonstrate it. Then I would follow whatever she did, and that way I was able to learn, and even the same with farming…the way you plant cabbages is not the same way you plant beans." Rachel reflected on this and noted, "She had to really demonstrate it and then ask us to do it together…Then she was confident that we could do it alone, and she would let us do it alone." Rachel noted that her mother was patient, but her father exhibited anger and used fear to attempt to teach the children. "My father would really push it…so even fear helped me learn."

Daniel mentioned demonstration as a primary method of learning in his culture and family. He recalled, "First we would see how they were doing things, and then we would do them together. Then finally we would be able to do them gradually because we had done it with them and we had done it together as brothers and sisters. Then we could do it by ourselves."

Mary noted that her own tribal culture is in a period of change. "In [my tribe] women are not supposed to speak. They are supposed to be quiet and talk when they go home. But now…things have changed, and women can speak." Mary also observed that in her home, she was never really shown how to do things, and that would have been helpful to her. "Growing up, I did not have a lot of responsibilities, but when I reached high school I had to take care of my siblings because the ministry was growing. That meant that some of the time my parents were not at home, and I had to start learning how to cook, how to clean up…I

wasn't comfortable with that because I was not used to so much responsibility...These responsibilities just came on me suddenly."

Through Reading and Note Taking

Abraham is the participant who observed that there is a cultural influence that involves both learning visually through reading and note taking and also learning orally. He commented, "We would read stories, and the next day we would narrate or try to tell others what we had learned about this story."

Through Media and Pictures

Abraham noted that there is an African cultural influence, a British cultural influence, and an American cultural influence. He noted that the British culture's influence responded to the learning through pictures by developing assignments using pictures. "There are some...kinds of assignments where you are given a picture of a tree, and you are to label the parts, or a flower, and label the stems."

Learning Orally

As noted above in learning visually through reading and note taking, Abraham noted the cultural influence on oral learning, connecting that to reading and note taking. He observes, "We would read stories, and the next day we would narrate or try to tell others what we had learned about this story."

Learning in Groups

Two (James, Isaiah) of the seven participants mentioned their culture's influence on their preference for group learning. James also mentioned that in his culture, extended family members visited frequently, and group learning was involved. He recalled, "There was always interaction of cousins, [and] relatives."

Isaiah discussed cultural influences on his parents and family, observing that his father used a form of group learning by gathering the family together for instructions. Referring to his parents, he noted, "They would expect me to be responsible enough and to be involved in one of the home chores, but for different times...my father...would call for a [family] meeting...Then he will begin to address [areas] where we need to cooperate, [saying,] 'We need to do this and that.'" Isaiah observed that his father would also say, "Be aware that in this house, there is no such thing as ladies do this and boys do this. So...when he saw that we were not performing according to his expectations, he would come out and enlighten us."

Conclusion

This chapter has described the findings of the interviews with the seven research participants, focusing on the three primary research areas: learning experiences, learning styles, and cultural influences on learning styles. The findings indicated that two of the seven participants preferred group learning, four preferred individual learning, and one preferred a combination of group and individual learning. All seven participants preferred learning visually, though this preference was not necessarily exclusive. Six participants preferred learning visually through observation and demonstration. Three participants expressed a preference for learning visually through reading and note-taking. One participant noted a preference for learning orally as well as learning visually through observation and demonstration. Since the participants expressed a preference for more than one visual learning style, the number of preferences does not equal seven. Three participants expressed a preference for learning by discovery, one expressed a preference for learning relationally, and one expressed a preference for learning through music.

When the participants responded to the question on cultural influences on their preferred learning style, five of the seven noted the culture's strong influence on learning visually through observation and demonstration. One observed the culture's influence on learning visually through media and pictures. One noted the culture's influence on learning visually through reading and note-taking and how that connected to the culture's preference for oral learning. Two mentioned the collectivist society influence on group learning. The findings indicate that all seven participants noted more than one preferred learning style, and that there was a variety of preferred learning styles among the participants.

While the findings have indicated several different cultural influences on learning styles, the cultural contextualization on individual participants preferred learning styles appear to be minimal. Individual preferred learning styles appear to be more dominant than cultural learning styles among the research participants in this particular study. Due to the high number of participants that expressed preferences for visual learning in three different areas, a visual overview of the visual preferences has been prepared and is titled Visual Learning Preferences (see Appendix).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to discover the preferred learning styles of Global University East African students. The study focused on the students' perceptions of their learning experiences in the East African context, and specifically on the East Africa School of Theology campus, an agreement school with Global University. Three primary research questions guided the study:

1) How do students express their learning experiences with Global University courses?
2) How do students identify their preferred learning styles?
3) How do students explain their culture's influence on their preferred learning styles?

A literature survey was provided in chapter two, focusing on three broad areas of study: learning styles, pedagogical contextualization, and contextualized theological education. In chapter three, the research methodology was identified, noting that a qualitative approach was utilized. The methodology involved descriptions of participant selection, data collection, and analysis. Interview findings were described in chapter four. This chapter brings the interview findings of the last chapter together with the data from the literature review in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations for further study.

Learning Experiences

The first research question focused on how students described their learning experience with Global University courses. The participants in this study were jointly enrolled with Global University and the East Africa School of Theology.

Vocabulary Difficulties

We learned from the findings chapter that some students (Elizabeth, Abraham, Mary, and Daniel) had difficulty understanding the vocabulary used and the concepts discussed inside the classroom. Elizabeth mentioned, "I did not understand what 'enumerate' meant...concerning the topic, I had read the whole of that topic, but now the question was 'enumerate.' And I was wondering how to answer that question." Abraham observed that he had difficulty understanding the discussion on 1 Corinthians 12:13. He said, "We were told to explain...different possible translations...as by, with, or in the Holy Spirit." Daniel talked about how difficult the concept of the Trinity is to understand, noting that he was "just trying to understand the concept of the Trinity...I'm still wrestling with that." Mary noted that she did not understand some questions. "The question seemed like a paragraph to me. It said it was one question, but there were about three questions in it...identify sanctification, regeneration, adoption...Am I supposed to do paragraphs for each one, or am I just supposed to pass by and say something about all of them?"

While a concept like the Trinity is difficult to understand in any culture, some difficulties noted above, including vocabulary, could be due to cultural differences. For example, we learned in the literature that cultural differences can pose challenges for professors and curriculum developers. Representative of this perspective is Iwasko, who states, "Culture creates some variances. This presents challenges for instructors who teach in

a culture different from their own."[284] Similarly, Romanowski and McCarthy eloquently assert, "Teachers, no matter how experienced, will face new and unfamiliar challenges in another culture and some of their...approaches to teaching simply will not work."[285]

In contrast to the difficulties, certain participants (Elizabeth and Isaiah) expressed appreciation for frequent feedback which some courses provide, and another one (James) praised the practicality of the assignments for application. Concerning the writing English course, Elizabeth commented that it "gives quizzes after every portion. And that has been really good for me." Isaiah stated, "I feel so much helped when I perform [well] in the projects...because I know that is boosting my results in the final paper." James was eager for the coming Sunday's practicum, stating, "We are going to a church. Each one of us will be given a job to do there...the teacher will be looking at how we behave, how we interact with people, and they will...give the results." The student comments support Galbraith's assertion that "knowledge of the current proficiency level...will also aid in the selection of the most appropriate learning activities."[286] Plueddemann observes, "Factors such as the amount of schooling people have received can predict wide variations in thinking patterns even within the same culture."[287]

Independent Instruction

One participant (Rachel) noted that she had difficulty when studying a Global University course independently rather than in a classroom setting. She observed that there were "some things I really did not understand. But I...never knew who to ask because...I am not connected to my teacher." Rachel's dilemma may be due in part to the cultural protocol

---

[284] Iwasko., 108.

[285] Romanowski and McCarthy., 57.

[286] Galbraith., 13.

[287] Plueddemann., 7

of respecting the teacher, and the relationship to the visible teacher as a student. We learned from the literature review that in some cultures as Bailey asserts, "the student shows respect for the teacher by standing to recite."[288] Rachel most likely wanted face-to-face instruction where she could ask a question of a teacher whom she would respect and be confident of receiving an accurate answer.

Learning Styles

The second research question explored how students described their learning style preferences. In the findings chapter, we noted several categories of the narrated learning style preferences: learning in groups, learning alone, learning visually through observation and demonstration, through reading and note taking, and through media and pictures, learning by discovery, and learning relationally. Each learning style category and sub-category will be discussed and compared to the literature.

Learning in Groups

The findings indicated that two research participants (Elizabeth and Rachel) preferred learning in groups, one participant (Daniel) preferred a combination of group learning and learning alone, and four participants (Abraham, James, Isaiah, and Mary) preferred individual learning.

Representative of the two who preferred group learning is Elizabeth, who mentioned a group assignment she found very helpful. "The assignment...was...to discuss how we can become effective speakers. And in the process of discussing that is when I came to realize that when you are a good listener...you become a good speaker." Daniel, the participant who preferred a combination of group and individual learning, expressed his appreciation for both

[288] Bailey., 286.

approaches by observing, "We have lectures, and then in between the lectures we would interact, and they would give us group assignments, so...they are well balanced."

Four participants (Abraham, James, Isaiah, and Mary) preferred learning alone. Two of these participants observed the benefits of studying alone. Abraham commented, "I like when I take the books and I sit alone and I do things alone...That's the kind of learning I find to be good—no interruptions from the other students." Likewise, James mentioned, "I usually did things alone and that gave me time to study and to enjoy when I am by myself." In contrast, the other two participants (Isaiah and Mary) noted the disadvantages of studying in groups. Isaiah observed, "I was appointed a group leader...I might propose a date on which we need to discuss. But people are busy...we happen to postpone the days, and that is a challenge." Mary felt that a disadvantage to group study is that it prevents internalization of the entire course content. She stated, "This group does Unit One, the other does Unit Two, and the other does Unit Three, and then they all present...I prefer that we go through with the teacher thoroughly so that I don't miss any unit." Mary also observed, "Once you've internalized that, it's not going anywhere. It's not coming out of you. You cannot erase it—it's inside you."

Isaiah's and Mary's comments appear to focus primarily on the logistical difficulties with group study when students are involved in various ministries, rely on public transport, have varied class schedules, and have other responsibilities to family. Even if one includes the participant that preferred a combination of group learning and learning alone, the findings indicated that less than half of the research participants preferred group learning. These findings contrast significantly with assertions in the literature. For example, Kirkpatrick, a Baptist professor in Kenya, contends that "The great majority of students of the Third

World...are dependent learners. They prefer group interaction."[289] Likewise, Buconyori's doctoral dissertation found, "There were more field dependent than field independent students among African Christian students in Christian higher education, [and] Bible College students tended to be more field dependent than Christian liberal arts college students."[290] While the findings here depart from the literature, this is likely due to the small sampling size.

It should be observed that Buconyori's dissertation research was conducted more than twenty years ago, his research had a much larger sampling size, and numerous changes have occurred in African cultures. As an example of cultural changes, research participant Mary noted several changes in her own tribal culture during the interview. In one example she gave, which was cited in the findings chapter, she observed, "In [my tribe], women are not supposed to speak. They are supposed to be quiet and talk when they go home. But now...things have changed and women can speak."

In addition to Mary's observation and Kirkpatrick's and Buconyori's statements, Plueddemann and Anderson observe other factors at work in the development of preferred learning styles that call for more caution in the assertions noted earlier by Kirkpatrick and Buconyori. Plueddemann states, "Not only are there significant similarities within all cultures, but also there are important differences within each culture. Factors such as the amount of schooling people have received can predict wide variations in thinking patterns even within the same culture."[291] Likewise, Anderson notes that learning style preference

---

[289] Kirkpatrick., 534.

[290] Buconyori., 174-175.

[291] Plueddemann., 219.

may be linked to "family practice, cultural preference, cognition, or a combination of all of them."[292]

It is this researcher's opinion that while the findings of this study question the assertion that the majority prefer group learning, further study is needed in this area. The matter of factors contributing to student preferences and logistical challenges to group study should be addressed. Individual student preferences in this particular study seemed to dominate over the cultural preferences areas. While there were cultural preferences and influences on the preferred styles, these appeared to be minimal. It is this researcher's opinion that a variety of methods should be used, and group study should not be eliminated. However, there may be better ways to approach group study in the East African context that would facilitate addressing the concerns expressed by Isaiah and Mary.

Learning Visually

We learned from the findings that all seven participants preferred learning visually. Three major ways of learning visually were described by the participants as their preference or one of their preferences: observation and demonstration, reading and note taking, and media and pictures.

Through Observation and Demonstration

Six of the seven participants (James, Abraham, Isaiah, Rachel, Daniel, and Mary) specifically mentioned a preference for learning visually through observation and demonstration. James recounted enjoying the subject of agriculture because the teachers demonstrated how to plant crops. He stated, "It helped me to learn how to take care of my things properly…cut the weed, water the plants. [The teachers]…check what you did, it was

[292] Anderson., 4.

constant, so it helped me improve." Abraham also expressed a preference for this learning style of observation and demonstration when he noted, "Before I could [read or] write, I would hold the book upside down, and the teacher would say, 'It's not like that.'...I enjoyed that...I have learned a new knowledge".

Isaiah observed that initially he had learned to use computers by observation and demonstration, but when he was faced with a class on computer theory, he was unable to answer the question on paper. He commented, "I only had the knowledge in practical, not in theory...the question posed I was familiar with...to put it on paper was an issue. How do I explain how this functions?...If I was put on the computer, I could demonstrate how." Rachel narrated the benefits of learning by observing people and the ways they do things. She specifically mentioned learning by observing other ministers. "I have learned from other people...I have also learned from other ministers...who are here, who are better at organizing the task or organizing missions." In describing several benefits to learning by observing people, Rachel commented, "The way they do things in their churches and in their denominations I have imparted that to my church...I like the way people interact because it gives us variety in the ways we can minister." Daniel also recounted his missionary experience in working with the Maasai tribe and learning their language. "At times they would talk, and I would repeat what they are saying. At times, I would ask them, 'How do you say this?' At times I would make mistakes. They would laugh—I would laugh, we would laugh together."

Mary expressed her belief that she would have benefitted learning visually through observation and demonstration growing up. Due to busyness in ministry by her parents, this learning method was not as common in her home. As a result, she felt unprepared for family

responsibilities she was expected to begin in high school She noted, "I had to start learning how to cook, how to clean up, . . .and I wasn't comfortable with that because I was not used to so much responsibility. The responsibilities came on me suddenly."

The fact that six of the seven research participants specifically mentioned learning visually through observation and demonstration is significant in that it demonstrates agreement with the literature. Harrison asserts, "In tribal societies, people often learn by observing a complete process several times with little commentary, and then trying it themselves."[293] Likewise, Buconyori contends, "The Africans used nonformal and informal structures in education. Non-formally, the most skilled adults brought together the youth and taught them how to do certain skills and tasks."[294] Buconyori also states that "Teaching-learning methods included...observation...and trial-and-error."[295]

Through Reading and Note Taking

The findings revealed that three of the seven who preferred learning visually preferred the method of reading and note taking. Elizabeth observed, "I like reading...When I'm reading, one of the things that helps me...is connecting with notes." Abraham mentioned, "I like when I take the books and I sit alone and I do things alone taking notes." Daniel commented, "From a very early age, I really liked reading books." These findings reflect agreement with the literature. As the Bowens eloquently stated, "If a student is found to be more visual than auditory, then the student will function best with a textbook or...notes." [296]

---

[293] Harrison., 205.

[294] Buconyori., 62.

[295] ibid., 62.

[296] .Bowen and Bowen., 212.

Through Pictures and Media

We learned from the findings chapter that two (James and Daniel) of the seven participants who like to learn visually explicitly mentioned learning through pictures and media. James likes to learn by drawing pictures. "I was alone reading and drawing, and then we are [sic] doing arts and crafts. I would draw—most of the time I would draw." Daniel regretted not having certain visual tools earlier in his education to help him learn. "I would have appreciated it if we would have had things like slide projectors, things like documentaries, to make me see things. I really am able to understand concepts [with] pictures, movies, stuff like that. Things like that would have made learning...easier and more attractive to me." This preference for this style of learning coincides nicely with the following comment from the literature: "Visual aids of all kinds are essential."[297]

All seven participants prefer to learn visually. Six prefer to learn visually through observation and demonstration, three prefer to learn visually through reading and note taking, and two prefer to learn visually through pictures and media. Certain participants explicitly mentioned more than one style of learning visually that they find helpful so the total does not add up to seven. The fact that all seven participants preferred one or more styles of visual learning harmonizes with the literature. This suggests that missionaries working in cross-cultural theological education contexts should do their best to include visual methods in their instruction. A visual overview of the visual learning preferences expressed by the participants has been provided in a chart titled Visual Learning Preferences (see Appendix).

[297] ibid., 212

Learning by Discovery

Three participants (James, Rachel, and Daniel) expressed a preference for learning new things or by "discovery." James commented that he had "the desire to know [new] things." Rachel remarked, "I like knowing something new...I have learned that there are things I have always known, but what I have known is not [always] the [full] truth." As an example of this, she mentioned that in her education at EAST, she learned that David was not the only author of Psalms. She realized that David wrote some Psalms, and other individuals wrote other Psalms. Daniel also enthusiastically embraces learning through discovery. He commented, "What I like most about learning is the new things that I discovered...like getting to know people, learning about how the world works and concepts about life. I am really fascinated by adventure and for me everything I was discovering was an adventure."

The participant comments emphasize the fact that discovery can happen from lecture, visual observation, experimentation, or interaction with other people. How it happens does not seem as important to them as the fact that it happens. Notice the three things Daniel mentions: "getting to know people...how the world works,...,concepts about life." Participant comments synchronize with Cranton's comment that there are "six approaches to learning style. . . a) experiential, b) social interaction, c) personality, d) multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence, e) perception, and f) conditions or needs."[298] Daniel's preference for "getting to know people" fits in the category of social interaction. The comments by James, Rachel, and Daniel that they like to discover or know new things fits into the experiential category.

---

[298] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Learning Styles."

Learning Relationally

Isaiah mentioned a preference for learning through a good relationship with both professors and parents. He both complimented and critiqued past relationships that assisted and hindered his learning process. He compared two previous schools that he had attended. He observed that at the first school, "teachers were…so relational…they would…be interested to get us closer to good marks." At the second school, he noted "there was not that close relationship with the teachers…so my performance began to lower down." Isaiah also commented on his relationship with his father, noting that when he received good marks, his father praised him, but when he received poor marks, his father criticized him. He commented that when he was "in the former school…[his father] congratulated him." In the second school, he commented, "My dad would [use] some word like you unintelligent child or you dull child….that began to demoralize me to the extent that I lost self-esteem." Isaiah's comment about the relationships fits into Cranton's "conditions or needs"[299] approach to learning styles. The fact that Isaiah cited certain experiences to illustrate his point harmonizes with Anderson's suggestion, "learning style preference may be linked to family practice, cultural preference, cognition, or a combination of all"[300] of these. Family practice, both positive and negative, appeared to have played a role in Isaiah's preference to learn relationally.

Learning through Music

Mary, who has written gospel music and made recordings, likes to put what she has learned to music and also to discuss what she has learned when she is interviewed on television. Mary comments, "I had an interview on TV. I was going to launch my song on the

---

[299] ibid.

[300] Anderson., 4.

media, which involves...a live interview...They asked me lots of questions about morality... A lot of the questions they asked—I took most of my answers from that assignment." Mary was referring to the course on Humanity and Sin.

The fact that Mary likes to put what she has learned to music coincides nicely with Romanowki and McCarthy's learning style categorizations, and specifically their category of musical/rhythmic learners. They categorize learning styles as visual/spatial...verbal/linguistic...logical/mathematical...bodily/kinesthetic...musical/rhythmic...interpersonal...[and] intrapersonal."[301] Romanowski and McCarthy contend that musical/rhythmic learners tend to "think in sounds, rhythms, and patterns. They immediately respond to music, either appreciating or criticizing what they hear."[302] Mary's music assists her in reinforcing what she has learned.

Cultural Influences on Learning Styles

We learned from the findings chapter that when discussing cultural influence on *learning styles, five of the seven participants* (Elizabeth, Rachel, Abraham, Daniel, Mary) mentioned learning visually through observation and demonstration, one participant (Abraham) mentioned learning visually through media and pictures, and the same participant (Abraham) mentioned learning orally. Two participants (James and Isaiah) mentioned learning in groups.

Learning Visually

Five of the seven participants (Elizabeth, Rachel, Abraham, Daniel, and Mary) specifically identified learning visually through observation and demonstration. Their comments will be compared with the literature.

---

[301] Romanowski and McCarthy. 215-217.

[302] ibid., 216.

Through Observation and Demonstration

Elizabeth noted her mother's role in demonstrating how to cook and clean. From that demonstration, Elizabeth was then expected to demonstrate to the younger children how to clean and cook. She commented, "I think one thing my mom was doing was she was actually training me to be more responsible, because most of the duties I was given, and so it was my responsibility to get them to the young ones and also make sure things were done well and on time."

Rachel also described her culture's role in learning how to cook and farm. Again, the mother played a key role. "My mother did [the responsibility] with me in the beginning. If it is cooking, she would show me and demonstrate it, and then I would follow whatever she does, and that way I was able to learn." Rachel also observed that this was the same way farming was approached. She commented that it is "even the same with farming...the way you plant cabbages is not the way you plant beans." She mentioned that her mother "had to really demonstrate it and then ask us to do it even together with us. When she was confident we can...do it alone, then she would...let us do it alone."

Abraham also observed how as a younger child he was taught by observing the older siblings in taking care of animals. Speaking of his mother, Abraham remarked, "She would tell us to go with those who are older...so we could watch them. So as they took the animals out, she would tell us to accompany them. So in the process, we also came to know how to graze animals in the field." Likewise, Daniel mentioned the culture's influence in this regard and commented, "First we would see how they were doing things, and then we would do them together." Daniel noted how this style of learning was effective over time. "Finally [we]

would be able to do them gradually because we had done it with them and...together as brothers and sisters and then we could do it by ourselves."

While Mary mentioned this cultural influence, she observed that due to the busyness of her parents in ministry, she was rarely the benefactor of such instruction. She expressed regret that this was not more common in her family. She observed: "Growing up, I did not have a lot of responsibilities. But when I reached high school, I had to take care of my siblings because the ministry was growing." She also commented, "I had to start learning how to cook, how to clean up,...and I wasn't comfortable with that because I was not used to so much responsibility. These responsibilities came on me suddenly."

Though all five of these participants mentioned learning visually through observation and demonstration as a common cultural learning style, only one (Mary) departed somewhat from learning through this method due to family circumstances. However, she (Mary) indicated that she would have preferred to learn through this visual method growing up so that she would have been better prepared for certain responsibilities. These findings align with the literature. Speaking of the commonality of cultural influences, Lesser states, "people who share a common cultural background will also share, to a certain extent, common patterns."[303] In discussing tribal cultures, Harrison suggests that "people often learn by observing a complete process several times with little commentary, and then trying it themselves."[304] Similarly, Preece affirms that there are some common features in the African traditions, such as "a tradition of learning by doing."[305] Buconyori states eloquently: "Non-formally, the most skilled adults brought together the youth and taught them how to do

---

[303] Lesser., 137.

[304] Harrison., 205.

[305] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education*, s.v. "Africa and Adult Education."

certain skills and tasks."[306] It is this researcher's conclusion that it is significant that four of these five participants specifically described the process that is affirmed by Harrison, Preece, and Buconyori.

Through Media and Pictures

Abraham noted more than one cultural influence on the preference for learning visually through media and pictures, suggesting that all three cultures (African, British, and American) play a role in this. He commented, "There are some...kinds of assignments where you are given a picture of a tree, and you are to label the parts, or a flower, and label the stems." The preference for learning visually through media and pictures is also present in the literature. Bowen and Bowen contend that in African cultures, "visual aids of all kinds are essential."[307]

Learning Orally

Abraham is the participant who also observed a cultural influence on learning styles that involves learning not just visually but orally. He stated, "We would read stories, and the next day we would narrate or try to tell others what we had learned about the story." Preece acknowledges this as a common feature of African traditions of education, specifically mentioning "an oral tradition."[308] Likewise, Ntseane observes that "Another distinguishing feature of African indigenous education is...[an] oral mode of instruction."[309] It is this researcher's opinion that this aligns with the storytelling or narrative nature of the culture.

---

[306] Buconyori., 62.

[307] Bowen and Bowen., 212.

[308] *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education,* s.v., "Africa and Adult Education."

[309] Ntseane., 114.

Learning in Groups

Two participants (James and Isaiah) mentioned the cultural influence on group learning. James observed that the culture places great emphasis on family and extended family. He commented, "There was always interaction of cousins [and] relatives." Isaiah described the cultural influences on his parents and family, and he noted that his father used a form of group learning when calling the family together. Isaiah observed that at "different times...my father would call for a [family] meeting...Then he will begin to address that where we need to cooperate. We need to do this and that."

The observations of these participants reflect aspects of collectivist societies discussed in the literature. Hofstede states this eloquently when he says, "In [these] societies. . .the interests of the group prevail over the interest of the individual."[310] We see this exercised in Isaiah's father's concern for family interests prevailing over individual interests within the family. Hofstede also contends that "The we group...is the major source of one's identity and the only secure protection one has against the hardships of life."[311] As a result, the family or tribe becomes the source of identity which enables people to deal with life's problems. Ntseane asserts, "another distinguishing feature of African indigenous education is that informality, collective learning, [and] oral mode of instruction...are common instructional methods."[312] We see these methods reflected in the family gatherings. It is interesting to note that though Isaiah observed the cultural influence on group learning, he personally did not prefer group learning in the academic context.

---

[310] Hofstede., 50.

[311] ibid., 50.

[312] Ntseane., 114.

The comparison of the findings of the researcher's interviews to the literature raises the question of how one should contextualize pedagogy in contemporary changing East African cultures. The recommendations for pedagogical contextualization as well as areas for further study follow.

Recommendations

For Pedagogical Contextualization

We have seen from both the findings and the literature that there are differences between non-Western and Western cultures. Yet there are both traditional and changing aspects of culture. We have also learned that culture is not monolithic. As Brookfield states, "Every learning group comprises individuals with idiosyncratic personalities, diverse learning styles, different cultural backgrounds, varying expectations, and a multiplicity of motives for learning."[313] Similarly, Iwasko asserts, "Culture is constantly evolving to meet new challenges so we must not take for granted any static descriptions of a particular group."[314] This, of course, presents challenges to those who are engaged in cross-cultural theological education, as they must discern the traditional and changing aspects of culture, so that teaching can be more effective. Smith and Ayers contend, "Educators must understand the cultural perspectives, learning styles, and cognitive and psychological ethos of non-Western peoples."[315]

We learned from the interviews that there were a variety of preferred learning styles among the participants, and that each participant appeared to prefer more than one style of learning. All participants possessed a preference for learning visually. A variety of visual

---

[313] Brookfield, "Discussion.", 196.

[314] Iwasko., 116.

[315] Smith and Ayers, "Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Online Learning: Implications for the Globalized Community College.",402.

learning methods were mentioned by the participants. While there is a strong cultural influence on group learning, the findings indicated that only two (Elizabeth and Rachel) preferred group learning, one (Daniel) preferred a combination of group learning and learning alone, and four (Abraham, James, Isaiah, and Mary) preferred learning alone. Ntseane affirms variety in African culture when she suggests to professors that they should "emphasize participatory instruction...include learning styles in the teaching...[and] acknowledge the diversity of African indigenous knowledge."[316] Similarly, Buconyori affirms that in East African culture, "teaching-learning methods included recitation, games and stories, poetry, proverbs and parables, observation, music and drama, and trial-and-error."[317]

In view of the variety of the findings, and the affirmation in the literature that there are several different common modes of instruction in African culture, it is this researcher's opinion that the following approaches to instruction should be utilized by Global University and the East Africa School of Theology.

1. The instructor should use a variety of methods to meet the varying needs of the students.
2. The instructor should demonstrate how to do required assignments.
3. The instructor should use a variety of visual aids to assist the student in learning. These should include such items as handouts of the professor's notes, Power Point, pictures, videos, films, charts, and graphs.
4. The instructor should include stories common to the culture, cultural proverbs and parables, and music.

---

[316] Ntseane., 131-133.

[317] Buconyori., 62.

When these items are used effectively, they can enhance learning. When stories are told effectively, the theological truth being taught can be affirmed immediately after the story is told. Further, we see this method being used in the biblical record itself. The Bible is the grand story and Jesus was a master storyteller.

The findings indicated that while there were cultural influences on the participants preferred learning styles, these cultural influences were small in this particular study compared to the literature and previous studies. Individual preferences appeared to be more dominant than cultural learning styles. This suggests that further study needs to be done that would involve larger sampling sizes of both students and theological training institutions. In addition, other stakeholders such as faculty, administrators, pastors, and families could be research participants as well as students.

The final question posed by the findings is the appropriateness of group study, since only three of the seven mentioned this as a preference, and one of these three preferred a combination of group and individual learning. This appears to be a departure from the literature consensus and is most likely due to the small sampling size in this specific study. Further research is needed in this area, using a larger sampling size and then comparing current preferences to Buconyori's earlier research to determine whether or not there is a trend away from group learning preferences. Also, further research in this area with other theological training institutions in the East African context would be highly beneficial. However, at the present time, it is this researcher's conclusion that group study should still be included. The logistical and practical concerns mentioned could easily be addressed. For example, group study should probably not be an outside of class assignment due to reliance on public transport, varying class and personal schedules, and family responsibilities.

My recommendation would be to use Global University study questions as in-class group assignments rather than entire units. If the assignment is in-class and the different groups report, then this gives the instructor an opportunity to go through each unit with the entire class, providing the necessary guidance so that material can be internalized. I also would recommend that a grade not be assigned to the group assignment, other than it being a component of the "class participation" percentage. I think if a variety of instructional methods are used, and group learning is only one component, then this meets the needs of those who prefer group learning without overlooking students whose learning style preferences may be different. As Poston has said, "Discussion groups can therefore be seen as a proper adaptation to a specific cultural style of learning."[318] The researcher, in view of these findings, will now make recommendations for further study.

For Further Study

The seeming departure from the literature on a cultural preference for group learning is an important area for further study, since this is most likely due to the small sampling size of participants in my study. A further study could include a larger number of student participants, and other stakeholders such as faculty, families, administrators, and pastors. Also, further study should be done among a significant number of theological training institutions in East African contexts and perhaps in other African contexts as well. Such studies could help to determine whether or not there is a trend away from a cultural preference for group learning.

If further study indicated a move away from literature consensus of a cultural preference for group learning in East African culture, then further studies should be done in

---

[318] Poston., 248.

both rural and urban areas to determine if there are differences between students in rural and urban areas. Further research could also be done in order to determine what the contributing factors are to this development. Possible contributing factors that should be explored are: the influence of globalization, the influence of other cultures, and the influence of the Internet. To what degree is a student preference influenced by an increasing number of Africans living in other countries and cultures, such as the United States or increased international travel? It should be noted that one participant (Mary) who did not prefer group learning had attended school in the United States. Is the departure from the preference for group learning due more to logistical challenges than the method of group study itself? These are just a few of the questions that could be explored.

Conclusion

Cross-cultural theological education is both a reward and a challenge in any culture. Individual teachers in cross-cultural settings must be cognizant of cultural differences and similarities, and they should seek to adjust teaching methodologies so that they are appropriate to the host culture. As Anderson has said, "Culturally responsive teaching presumes that culture is to be embraced and included in pedagogy. Culture matters and should be respected. Culture is the mechanics of behavior, the response button to how one learns and interacts."[319] Similarly, while acknowledging the changing aspects of culture, Iwasko states, "We need careful discernment when educating adults in a culture different from our own. It calls for being a participant-observer, watching and listening and dialoguing with the native-born population, seeking to understand from their perspective."[320]

---

[319] Anderson., 6.

[320] Iwasko., 116.

As part of embracing the culture and being a participant-observer when teaching in another culture, specifically in the East African context, teachers must be alert and sensitive to the questions Africans are asking of the biblical text, and not just impose on African culture the questions Westerners have traditionally asked of the biblical text. Those of us who have been brought to faith in Christ are all part of the family of God, and must humbly learn together from the biblical text. Instructors should contextualize not just pedagogy, but also theology, without crossing into the dangerous waters of syncretism. For these challenging tasks, we need divine enablement and empowerment.

In this particular study conducted with Global University students studying on the East Africa School of Theology campus in Nairobi, Kenya, individual learning preferences appeared to override cultural learning preferences. This is primarily due to the small number of participants in this particular study. Further study needs to be conducted in the East African context with larger sampling sizes that includes students, faculty, administrators, families, pastors, and other theological educational institutions. Attention in such a study should be given to both cultural and individual learning preferences, what cultural factors today are similar to and different from cultural factors in the past, and whether or not these cultural factors vary from urban and rural areas.

Such studies could benefit us greatly in understanding learning preferences, student learning motivation, adjusting teaching methodologies to meet the needs of students in cross-cultural environments, and being more effective in our teaching in these cross-cultural situations. Though all of these aspects would benefit us, such activities must be engaged in with divine empowerment in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.

APPENDIX

VISUAL LEARNING PREFERENCES

Participant	Observation/ Demonstration	Reading/ Notetaking	Pictures/ Media
Abraham	x	x	
Daniel	x	x	x
Elizabeth		x	
Isaiah	x		
James	x		x
Mary	x		
Rachel	x		

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adeyemo, Tokunboh, ed. *Africa Bible Commentary*. Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers, 2006.

Anderson, Deborah G. . "The Influence of Culture on Learning Styles." 2007.

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2008.

Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2000.

Bowen, Earl, and Dorothy Bowen. "What Does It Mean to Think, Learn, Teach?" In *Internationalising Missionary Training*, edited by William David Taylor, 203-216. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991.

Brookfield, Stephen D. "Discussion." In *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*, edited by Michael W. Galbraith, 187-204. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991.

Brookfield, Stephen D. . *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.

Buconyori, Elie A. . "Cognitive Styles and Development of Reasoning among Younger African Students in Christian Higher Education." Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991.

Chang, Peter. "Steak, Potato, Peas and Chopsuey: Linear and Non-Linear Thinking in Theological Education." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 5, no. 2 (1981): 279-286.

Cole, Michael. "Commentary: Cultural Differences in the Contexts of Learning." In *Individuality in Learning*, edited by Samuel Messick, 161-166. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976.

Cook, Matthew. "Contextual but Still Objective?" In *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, edited by Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian and Natee Tanchanpongs. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010.

Cranton, Patricia, *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education.* New York, NY:Palgrave McMillan, 2005.

Cranton, Patricia. *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2006.

Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research." In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005.

Douglas, Lois McKinney, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions.* Grand Rapids, Michigan:Baker, 2000.

Dunn, Rita. "Learning Style: State of the Science." *Theory into Practice* 23 (1984): 10-19.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. Second ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005.

Ferris, Robert W., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions.* Grand Rapids, Michigan:Baker 2000.

Findsen, Brian, and Lavinia Tamarua. "Maori Concepts of Learning and Knowledge." In *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, edited by Sharan B. Merriam, 75-97. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 2007.

Flemming, Dean. *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

Flemming, Dean. "Paul the Contextualizer." In *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, edited by Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian and Natee Tanchanpongs. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010.

Galbraith, Michael W. "Attributes and Skills of an Adult Educator." In *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*, edited by Michael W. Galbraith, 3-22. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991.

Gilley, Jerry W. "Demonstration and Simulation." In *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*, edited by Michael W. Galbraith, 261-281. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991.

Graveline, Fyre Jean, *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education.* New York:Macmillan, 2005.

Guthrie, Donald. "Dm 825 Educational Ministries of the Church Class Notes." St. Louis, MO: Covenant Theological Seminary, 2010.

Guy, Talmadge C. "Culture as Context for Adult Education: The Need for Culturally Relevant Adult Education." In *Providing Culturally Relevant Adult Education: A Challenge for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Talmadge C. Guy. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Guy, Talmadge C., *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education.* New York, NY:Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Hall, Budd L. , *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education.* New York, NY:Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Harrison, Patricia. "Bridging Theory and Training." In *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization,* edited by Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian and Natee Tanchanpongs. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010.

Hesselgrave, David J. . "Syncretism: Mission and Missionary Induced? ." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, edited by Gailyn Van Rheenen, 13, 71-98. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006.

Hiebert, Paul G. "Syncretism and Social Paradigms." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, edited by Gailyn Van Rheenen, 31-46. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006.

Hofstede, Geert. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

Illeris, Knud. "Transformative Learning in the Perspective of a Comprehensive Learning Theory." *Journal of Transformative Education* 2, no. 2 (2004): 79-89.

Iwasko, Ronald A. "Adult Christian Education in Cultural Context." Springfield, Missouri: Global University, 2012.

James, Waynne B., and Patricia A. Maher. "Understanding and Using Learning Styles." In *Adult Learning Methods*, edited by Michael W. Galbraith, 119-139. Malabar, Florida: Krieger 2004.

Jarvis, Peter. *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice.* Second ed. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity: Revised and Expanded Edition.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Johnstone, Patrick. *Operation World: The Day by Day Guide to Praying for the World.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1993.

Johnstone, Patrick. *Operation World: When We Pray God Works: 21st Century Edition.* Waynesboro, Georgia: Paternoster Press, 2001.

Kirkpatrick, Vance C. "Theological Education and Missions: An African Case Study." In *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, edited by John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson, 526-543. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998.

Kogan, Nathan. "Sex Differences in Creativity and Cognitive Styles." In *Individuality in Learning*, edited by Samuel Messick, 93-119. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976.

Kolb, A.Y., and D.A. Kolb. "Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education." *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 4, no. 2 (2005): 193-212.

Kolb, David A. *Learning Style Inventory: Technical Manual*. Boston, Massachusetts: McBer and Company, 1976.

Kolb, David A., and Ronald Fry. "Towards an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning." In *Theories of Group Processes*, edited by Cary L. Cooper. London: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.

Lesser, Gerald S. "Cultural Differences in Learning and Thinking Styles." In *Individuality in Learning*, edited by Samuel Messick, 137-160. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976.

Livermore, David. "American or American't?: A Critical Analysis of Western Training in the World." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (2004).

Livermore, David A. *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2006.

Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. Second ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Merriam, Sharan B. "An Introduction to Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing." In *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, edited by Sharan B. Merriam, 1-20. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2007.

Merriam, Sharan B. *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2007.

Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2009.

Merriam, Sharan B., Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner. *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*. Third ed. San Francisco, CA:: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Moreau, A. Scott, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions.* Grand Rapids, MI:Baker Books, 2000.

Moreau, A. Scott. "Evangelical Models of Contextualization." In *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, edited by Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian and Natee Tanchanpongs. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010.

Ngewa, Samuel M. "John." In *Africa Bible Commentary*, edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo, 1251-1296. Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive Publishers, 2006.

Ntseane, Gabo. "African Indigenous Knowledge: The Case of Botswana." In *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, edited by Sharan B. Merriam, 113-135. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 2007.

Oden, Thomas C. . *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press 2007.

Plueddemann, James E. "Culture, Learning and Missionary Training." In *Internationalising Missionary Training*, edited by William David Taylor, 217-230. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991.

Poston, Larry. ""You Must Not Worship in Their Way": When Contextualization Becomes Syncretism." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, edited by Gailyn Van Rheenen, 243-263. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006.

Preece, Julia, *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education.* New York, NY:Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Romanowski, Michael H., and Teri McCarthy. *Teaching in a Distant Classroom: Crossing Borders for Global Transformation.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Scott, Catherine. "The Enduring Appeal of 'Learning Styles'." *Australian Journal of Education* 54, no. 1 (2010): 5-17.

Siew, Yau-Man. "With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st Century Essays in Honor of Ted Ward." In *With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st Century*, edited by Duane Elmer and Lois McKinney, 58-68. Monrovia, CA: MARC Publishers, 1996.

Siu, Paul. "Theologizing Locally." In *Local Theology for the Global Church: Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization*, edited by Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian and Natee Tanchanpongs. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2010.

Smith, Daniel R., and David F. Ayers. "Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Online Learning: Implications for the Globalized Community College." *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 30, no. 5-6 (2006): 401-15.

Smith, Mark K. , *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education.* 2001.

Steffen, Tom, and Lois McKinney Douglas. *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008.

Strauss, Stephen. "The Role of Context in Shaping Theology." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, edited by Gailyn Van Rheenen, 13, 99-128. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006.

Strauss, Stephen J. "Contextualization and Mission." In *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*, edited by Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss and Timothy C. Tennent, 265-291. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Tennant, Mark. *Psychology and Adult Learning*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* Invitation to Theological Studies. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, 2010.

Thorndike, Edward L., Elsie Olschrin Bregman, and John Warren Tilton. *Adult Learning.* New York, NY: Macmillan, 1928.

Van Rheenen, Gailyn. "Syncretism and Contextualization: The Church on a Journey Defining Itself." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, edited by Gailyn Van Rheenen, 1-29. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006.

Walls, Andrew F. *The Missionary Movement in Christan History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.

Witkin, Herman A. "The Nature and Importance of Individual Differences in Perception." *Journal of Personality* 18, no. 2 (1949): 145-170.

Witkin, Herman A. "Cognitive Style in Academic Performance and in Teacher-Student Relations." In *Individuality in Learning*, edited by Samuel Messick, 38-72. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1976.

Wlodkowski, Raymond J., *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education.* New York, NY:Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Wright, Handel Kashope. "Not So Strange Bedfellows: Indigenous Knowledge, Literature Studies and African Development." In *Indigenous Knowledge in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World*, edited by George J. Sefa Dei, Budd L. Hall and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.