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BRIDGING THE THEORY/PRACTICE DIVIDE IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

By

Charles William Davidson

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

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Dr. Robert W. Burns, Second Faculty Reader _____
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how seminary students in Juarez, Mexico describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in transferring classroom theory about leadership to ministry practice. The study utilized a qualitative case study design using semi-structured interviews with six students who studied a class on leadership at the San Pablo Presbyterian Seminary in Juarez, Mexico. Three research questions guided this study: (1) In what ways do concurrent ministry responsibilities enable students to make meaning of the class theory on leadership? (2) In what ways do concurrent leadership experiences motivate students to utilize class theory on leadership in their concurrent ministry responsibilities? (3) What seminary course theoretical knowledge do students transfer to their concurrent ministry context?

The findings of the study revealed that these students constructed meaning of class theory, were motivated to utilize it in practice, and transferred theory to practice by utilizing their concurrent leadership responsibilities. This study concluded that pre-professional theological education should include as much experiential education as possible into the curriculum. Bridging the theory-practice divide is possible by working hard to minimize the breach between academics and practice. Both institutions and students need to take seriously their responsibility to include significant ministry responsibility into their curriculums and lives, respectively.

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Finally, I thank the six former students who live and work in Juarez, Mexico for their participation in this study. I have learned a great deal from their stories.

Chapter One

Introduction

The theory-practice divide exists in all levels of education, but is especially relevant to pre-professional education. Pre-professional education – that which precedes the practice of a particular profession – is an area where it is frequently noted that a gap or divide exists between theory and practice. Boshuizen, Bromme and Gurber, in their book, *Professional Learning: Gaps and Transitions on the Way from Novice to Expert,* make a distinction between academic knowledge and professional knowledge.[1] Academic knowledge is learned in the formal educational programs of universities or specialized schools. It is "an important basic source of professional knowledge. But academic knowledge is not identical to professional knowledge"[2] These authors note that those who are beginning their professional careers "perceive a gap between the academic knowledge acquired during formal education and the knowledge that is claimed to be "really" relevant by their more experienced colleagues."[3]

Theological education is a type of pre-professional education. It confronts the same theory-practice divide inherent in all pre-professional education. In the book *Education for the Professions of Medicine, Law, Theology, and Social Welfare*, Everett

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[1] Henny P. A. Boshuizen, Rainer Bromme, and Hans Gruber, "From Novice to Expert," in *Professional Learning: Gaps and Transitions on the Way from Novice to Expert Innovation and Change in Professional Education*, ed. Henny P. A. Boshuizen, Rainer Bromme, and Hans Gruber(Dordrecht; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 4-5.

[2] Ibid., 5-6.

[3] Ibid., 6.

Hughes notes, "In the theological seminary there is the same difficulty as in all professional schools to establish a balance between theory and practice."[4] Seminaries and bible colleges prepare their students for professional vocational ministry. The educators at these institutions want to equip their graduates to enter into the realities of ministerial practice by utilizing the biblical and theological truths they have learned. Graduates of these institutions also desire to understand how to put into practice the knowledge they have gained in the classroom. Graduating students can easily enter into ministerial practice with a limited understanding of how to utilize theory in practice. This can create big problems for the newly ordained ministers and their congregations. In spite of having excelled in the academic arena – where assessment is based on retaining and recalling declarative knowledge – they may not understand how to apply it to real ministry situations. The theory-practice divide is a real problem. The following three examples describe some of the realities that theological institutions and their graduates face as they seek to bridge the divide between theory and practice.

Timothy Witmer, professor of practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, relates the following story in the book, *Preparing for Ministry: A Practical Guide to Theological Field Education.*

> Bill recently graduated from a fine seminary with an outstanding grade point average and bright prospects for his future. However, on arriving at his first parish, one of the most respected members of the church passed away. Bill's first responsibility: to officiate at Mrs. Mitchell's funeral. The problem? Bill did not have clue as to exactly what he should do. The result

[4] Everett Cherrington Hughes and Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *Education for the Professions of Medicine, Law, Theology, and Social Welfare* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 187.

> was an unmitigated disaster. Bill began to question his call to ministry, and the congregation began to question their call to Bill![5]

Likewise, Dr. Robert Burns, writing in *All for Jesus: Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Covenant Theological Seminary,* provides the following description from a seminary graduate.

> For example, while Don, the pastor of a mid-sized church in the Midwest, deeply appreciated his formal seminary training, he said he learned everything about being an elder from mentors in his congregation. And, although he graduated with honors and received the highest award for preaching in his class, he confessed that when he began his ministry, "I did not know what I was doing. All I had was head knowledge."[6]

Dr. Luther E. Smith, a professor at the Candler School of Theology, shares a final example of this problem.

> Candler School of Theology had a Professional Assessment process that required a student to start the assessment with an act of ministry. A student, who for the purposes of confidentiality we will call "Jimmy," was a white male, second-career student serving a small country church. As his act of ministry, he began with a sermon. It was one of the most superficial and uninspiring sermons I had heard. I asked him if he had drawn upon any of the exegetical methods and insights from his Bible courses in his engagement of the sermon's text. Jimmy responded, "No sir, I didn't." I then asked, "Jimmy, is there anything in your theological studies that you are utilizing in your ministry to your congregation?" He responded, "No sir, I can't say that there is."[7]

These three examples demonstrate a divide between theory and practice. As Boshuizen et al note above, "Academic knowledge is not identical to professional

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[5] Timothy Witmer, "Field Education and Ministry Skill Competence," in *Preparing for Ministry: A Practical Guide to Theological Field Education*, ed. George M. Jr. Hillman(Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 35.

[6] Robert W. Burns, "Pastoral Learning after Seminary," in *All for Jesus: A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Covenant Theological Seminary,* ed. Robert A. Peterson and Sean Michael Lucas(Ross-Shire: Christian Focus Publications, Ltd., 2006), 273-274.

[7] Luther E Smith, Jr, ""What Does This Have to Do with Me?" Challenges of Relevance in Theological Education," *American Theological Library Association Summary of Proceedings* 63, no. (2009): 91.

knowledge."[8] The problem is not a lack of effort on the part of either the professors to teach, or the students to learn. Both Witmer and Burns describe the men mentioned in their examples as capable students who finished with good grade point averages. We are not told about "Jimmy" but would assume that he was at least an average student. But in these three cases the men were not able to completely transfer the academic knowledge learned in seminary to actual ministry situations.

Problem Statement

A learner's ability to relate academic knowledge to real life practice is a concern for all who are involved in education. Adult learners certainly want to be able to use the information that they have spent much time and effort to acquire. The people running theological institutions also desire their graduates to excel in their professional practice – both for the sake of the individual and for the name of the institution. The local church expects graduates of seminaries and bible colleges to be prepared to lead and minister. Transferring theory into practice remains a concern for all involved.

Theological education is a type of pre-professional education, and is therefore open to the same general criticisms that other pre-professional programs face. Donald Schön, writing in 1987, explains: "research on professional practice that is removed from the challenges and complexity of practice is of limited value to practitioners."[9] Dall'Alba writing in 2009 echoes Schön's concerns. She states, "a principle criticism has been that knowledge generated by traditional research has distanced us from the human practices investigated, rather than deepening our understanding of them. Such research has failed

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[8] Boshuizen, Bromme, and Gruber, 5.

[9] Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*, 1st ed., The Jossey-Bass Higher Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 142.

to take into account the understanding and experience of practice it seeks to examine."[10] What these two authors note is that academic knowledge learned in one setting does not easily transfer to new settings. There is a gap between the academic knowledge learned in the setting of formal education and the practice of that profession.

Seminary education typically includes four basic areas of instruction. Everett Hughes identifies the following four: "Bible, history, systematic theology, and professional studies or pastoral theology."[11] Hans Madueme identifies the same basic four areas as the "traditional fourfold curriculum (biblical, systematic, historical, and practical theology)."[12] These four areas are foundational to most seminary programs and will likely continue to be so based on their historical legacy. The type of knowledge contained in these four areas tends to be removed from the challenges and complexity of practice. It is not that the knowledge is unimportant, but as Dall'Alba comments this knowledge can become distanced and less relevant to the practice. It is not that it is incorrect but rather that it is has not been understood in the context of the realities a pastor will confront. The seminary student and graduate may not understand how to transfer their studies to practice.

Just as with other pre-professional programs of study, theological education has received criticism for its failure to bridge this gap. Hughes reflects, "the adequacy of the traditional seminary program has long been questioned."[13] He provides evidence of this

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[10] Gloria Dall'Alba, *Learning to Be Professionals*, Innovation and Change in Professional Education (Dordrecht; New York: Springer, 2009), 5.

[11] Hughes and Education, 184.

[12] Hans Madueme and Linda Cannell, "Problem Based Learning and the Master of Divinity Program," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 49.

by quoting two sources that expressed the same concerns going back to 1924 and 1954. Later he adds, "The general criticism which seemed to prevail in the sixties indicated that the curriculum was too heavily weighted with theoretical courses and that even the professional technical courses were presented from a theoretical perspective.[14] George Hillman, associate professor of spiritual formation and leadership in the Howard Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary notes that "a vocal coalition of church leaders has voiced its concern that the training received by ministers-to-be in Bible colleges and seminaries is not applicable to the real world."[15] Finally, Bob Burns commenting on the experience of pastors, who were involved in a qualitative study of how pastors learn after seminary states, "As the participating pastors reflected on their seminary education, they viewed it with sincere appreciation, but saw it as limited in providing an understanding of what they would truly experience in ministry."[16] These authors agree that transferring academic theological knowledge to professional practice in ministry is difficult.

The theory-practice divide has been studied over a number of years and continues to be a topic of investigation in the educational methods used in pre-professional education. Educational practices have been changed and new techniques have been implemented in an effort to facilitate transfer of learning from the classroom to practice. However, according to Cathlin Macaulay, "There is little research on transfer of learning

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[13] Hughes and Education, 179.

[14] Ibid., 185.

[15] George M. Hillman, *Ministry Greenhouse: Cultivating Environments for Practical Learning* (Herndon, Va.: Alban Institute, 2008), 4.

[16] Burns, 273.

as such – most studies form the addendum to another debate and are grounded in the predispositions of the authors toward a particular theory or model of learning or education."[17] Most of the literature reviewed in this research has cited studies in the fields of medicine, nursing, teacher education, and social work. Relatively little has been done in the field of theological education. Gordon Lynch, writing specifically about practical theology, comments that,

> Comparatively little work has been done on what students learn and value from their training in practical theology. Beyond personal experience of teachers in the field, there is little public knowledge of how useful students find methods of practical theological education or what benefits they believe they gain through participating in practical theological education.[18]

Lynch's observation is important because it highlights that there exists a lack of research in the field of theological education. Investigation of what students and graduates valued and learned from their theological educational experience can lead to a greater understanding of how to facilitate the transfer of biblical, systematic, historical, and pastoral theology to the practice of ministry. This can result in significant changes in educational methods that will serve to narrow the gap and facilitate the transfer of learning.

This study sought to investigate what seven students learned and valued from a class on leadership. Because the class was largely theoretical – conducted in a formal educational setting – the literature suggests that little if any transfer of learning took place in these student's ministries in their local churches. However, only a careful analysis of

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[17]Cathlin Macaulay, "Transfer of Learning," in *Transfer of Learning in Professional and Vocational Education*, ed. Viviene E. Cree and Cathlin Macaulay(London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.

[18] Gordon Lynch and Stephen Pattison, "Exploring Positive Learning Experiences in the Context of Practical Theological Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 8, no. 3 (2005): 144.

their stories and recollections would affirm or correct this hypothesis. As Lynch notes above, relatively little work has been done on what students learn and value and then transfer successfully. The researcher hopes that this research project, narrowed down to one cohort of students and related to one specific class, can help to expand on what is known about how learners are able to transfer theory to practice.

Purpose Statement

Seven students recently graduated from a Presbyterian seminary located in Juarez, Mexico. Six of these seven graduates are elders in their local church and many of them feel called to the vocational ministry. In the spring of 2011, these seven students were involved in a one-week class on leadership that covered the following topics: Envisioning, Planning, Organization, Control, Team Building, and Leadership. The course objectives were to acquaint them with these areas and to ask them to reflect upon the current application of those areas to their lives and ministries. The literature reviewed suggests that experience plays an important role in helping learners transfer theory to practice. Since these former students learned theory in a formal academic context it was important to understand how their concurrent ministry experience influenced their utilization of the theory. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how seminary students in Juarez, Mexico describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in transferring classroom theory to ministry practice.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be used to guide this study:

1. In what ways do concurrent ministry responsibilities enable students to make meaning of the class theory on leadership?

2. In what ways do concurrent leadership experiences motivate students to utilize class theory on leadership in their concurrent ministry responsibilities?

3. What seminary course theoretical knowledge do students transfer to their concurrent ministry context?

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for the church, for the individual called to vocational ministry, and for theological institutions. The well-being of all three are strongly tied to how well bible colleges and seminaries prepare men and women to assume leadership in different roles within the Christian community.

It is important for the local church and the church at large because the people running these institutions expect a new pastor to know how to transfer academic knowledge to practice. There exists a reasonable expectation that a new pastor is ready to engage in many different ramifications of ministry because of the pastor's education. When this expectation is not fulfilled, it can create tremendous upheavals in a local church and result in the loss of members, internal conflict, reduction in giving, and other similar types of problems that can have long lasting ramifications for all involved.

Graduates also benefit when they have an adequate understanding and ability to bridge the gap between their academic knowledge and practice. If their academic studies have remained only academic then they may struggle more than necessary gaining the professional experience they need to successfully lead a local church or organization. This can result in men and women leaving the vocational ministry out of a sense of personal failure, or because of the pain associated with being severely criticized by church members.

Finally, the bible colleges and seminaries have much to gain in graduating women and men who are able to utilize and build upon their academic studies. The prestige of the school within their denomination and broader Christian community depends on the perceived capacity of their graduates. Graduates who are poorly equipped to minister to others will reflect poorly on the institution's educational philosophy and capabilities. This will affect the institution's ability to recruit new students and garner the economic support that it needs to continue to function.

Definition of Terms

Professional Education – "The formal academic education usually offered by universities or specialized schools."[19] Successful completion of the academic program is required for the pre-professional to enter into the practice of the profession.

Transfer of learning – "The effective application of knowledge and skills gained in one context in a new and different context."[20]

Theory – Practice Divide or Gap – Refers to the divide between academic knowledge gained in the formal educational setting and the practice of a profession. Theory and practice are interrelated, but a gap exists in the learners understanding of how to utilize academic knowledge in the professional setting.

Constructing Meaning, Making Meaning, and Sense Making – are used in this dissertation as synonyms. They refer to a key element in the constructivist learning theory that understands learning to be an active process whereby learners use prior learning and experience to understand and interpret new learning.

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[19] Boshuizen, Bromme, and Gruber, 5.

[20] John William Collins and Nancy P. O'Brien, *The Greenwood Dictionary of Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2003), 360.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore how seminary students in Juarez, Mexico describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in transferring classroom theory to ministry practice. The issues related to the theory-practice divide and the transfer of learning are addressed in adult education, constructivism, and experiential education literature. However, most of the literature in these areas is drawn from professional education in the fields of medicine, education, social work, and law. There is not as much research into theological education and its relationship to professional ministerial practice. Likewise, the literature does not frequently address how learners describe the role of their experience in transferring academic knowledge to professional practice. It is vital for educators and students to understand the dynamic that exists between theory and practice. Therefore, in order to better understand some of the foundational issues of the study's purpose, the following four areas of literature were reviewed: adult education, constructivism, experiential education, and theological and biblical concerns.

Introduction

Human learning is a very complex subject, and many different theories describe how people learn. Psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, neuroscientists and educators have studied learning from many different angles and with great persistence for over one

hundred years.[21] Nevertheless, these researchers have yet to establish a unified theory that can explain all aspects of learning.[22] It is very complex, taking place on many levels in the human mind. Peter Jarvis, in his book, *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning,* expresses the following thoughts in regard to learning: "We might never know enough to be able to do this (produce a single comprehensive theory of learning), because, if we did, we would fully understand the mysteries of human functioning and even of life itself."[23] When David, the king of Israel, states in Psalm 139, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made,"[24] he may well be referring to his mind, in addition to his physical body. Jarvis describes the complexity of what it means to learn as follows: "We need a philosophy of learning and a pharmacology of learning; we need a sociology of learning and a psychology; we need a biology of learning and a neuroscientific understanding of the learning process and so on."[25] Jarvis and other authors agree that there is not single unifying theory by which one can fully understand the complexity involved in human learning. However, there are schools of thought that describe how learning occurs. Merriam organizes them into five broad orientations of learning theories: behavioristic, cognitivist, humanistic, social learning, and constructivist.[26]

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[21] Sharan B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 2nd ed., The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 263.

[22] Peter Jarvis, *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning* (London New York: Routledge, 2006), xxi.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Psalm 139:14, New King James Version

[25] Jarvis, 199.

[26] Merriam and Caffarella, 250-266.

The constructivist orientation is particularly relevant for understanding the process of learning. It has become the dominant theory of learning in the past twenty-five to thirty years and has close links with cognitive psychology. For example, the books, *Constructivist Instruction: Success or Failure?*; *How People Learn; and Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*, all appeal to findings from cognitive psychology, cognitive science, and cognitive neuroscience to explain constructivism. The last of these books, which was published in 2011, definitively links cognitive psychology to constructivism. Roger H. Bruning, Gregory J. Schraw, and Monica M. Norby, the authors of this book state: "Many key concepts of cognitive psychology, such as *schema theory,* and *levels of processing* represent constructivist thinking."[27] Constructivism is widely used as a framework for understanding learning in children and adults. It is impacting educational programs and has particular relevance to professional education. It is a key theory for understanding the broader concern of all educational programs, which is the transfer of learning to all of life.[28,29]

Learning theories produce educational practices. Each theoretical orientation influences the educational practices of those who hold to a particular theory of learning. However, it is difficult to discern what constitutes best practice. This research project focused on adult theological education, which is a type of professional education. Theological education is oriented towards adults who are pursuing a vocation into the pastoral ministry, missionary service, or other Christian ministries inside and outside of

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[27] Roger H. Bruning, Gregory J. Schraw, and Monica M. Norby, *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*, 5th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2011), 194.

[28] Robert E. Haskell, *Transfer of Learning: Cognition, Instruction, and Reasoning*, Educational Psychology Series (San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press, 2001), 3,4.

[29] Macaulay, 1.

the local church. Therefore, this literature review will examine the interrelation between adult education, constructivist-learning theory, experiential education, and biblical/theological considerations, and how they enlighten our understanding of the theory-practice divide and transfer of learning.

Adult Education

Adult education is a branch of education that has a long history of examining how adults learn. It is an important starting point for this research project because it forms a base for understanding professional, and therefore theological education. It is important to understand the unique characteristics of adult theological students, so as to better understand what helps them learn.

When it comes to defining who is an adult it is difficult to make hard and fast rules. Raymond Wlodkowski notes that the definition of who is an adult is "culturally and historically relative."[30] The age and rites associated with becoming an adult vary between cultures, but generally an adult is one who has "some kind of major life responsibility, such as full-time work or dependents."[31] Wlodkowski goes on to delineate three groups of adults that are common to western cultures: "Younger adults (18 – 24 years old), working-age adults (25 – 64 years old), and older adults (65 and older)."[32] Typically those who are enrolled in theological education will be younger adults or working-age adults. As a rule, they are men and women who have assumed major life responsibilities. The amount of life responsibility that each individual student brings to the learning

[30] Raymond J. Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching All Adults*, 3rd ed., The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, 2008), 32.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

experience will vary, but they have at least assumed responsibility for their desire to pursue professional education in theology.

Adults and children have similar learning processes, but there are important distinctions that need to be considered for adult education as it is applied to theological education. It was initially assumed that adults learned in markedly distinct ways compared to children. Malcolm Knowles, a theorist, promoter, and writer on adult education, entitled his first book, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education; Pedagogy Versus Andragogy*[33] because he believed that the practice of education for adults was very different than for children. Ten years later, he rewrote this book and changed the title, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education, From Pedagogy to Andragogy*[34] because he came to recognize that the differences between children and adult learning was not so much a matter of age as of prior knowledge and experience.

Adults have a greater amount of prior knowledge and experience compared to children, which impacts what they learn and how they learn it. Jarvis makes a distinction between, "initial learning, which is predominately non-reflective and happens in children, and post-initial learning that is more often reflective."[35] He goes on to write, "this is the only distinction I want to draw between adult and children's learning."[36] Jarvis' statement implies that adult learning tends to be more reflective because of a greater amount of prior knowledge and experience. It is no longer just initial learning, but tends toward

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[33] Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy* (New York: Association Press, 1970).

[34] Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*, Rev. and Updated. ed. (Wilton, Conn. Chicago: Association Press; Follett Pub. Co., 1980).

[35] Jarvis, 19.

[36] Ibid.

reflection. Merriam also notes that there are few differences between adults and children when one compares the process of learning.[37] The important distinction between children and adults is therefore not the process, but the role of experience and reflection.

Merriam does note that there are three key differences between children and adults learners. They are the increase in age, reduced energy levels and increased responsibilities, and a possible difference in regard to the process of learning due to prior knowledge and experience. All of these impact adult learners.

The first difference, age, refers to the speed at which new material can be assimilated. "Speed refers to the time a person has to examine and respond to a situation."[38] The ability to respond slows down as people age. A slower response time, coupled with possible time limits and adult responsibilities, may have a negative effect on speed of learning.[39] The memorization and assimilation of new information is not as rapid. An adult may have to work harder and longer at the learning task before they gain mastery of recall. This may also limit the amount of new material that an adult can effectively learn at one time.

Second, adults are less likely to engage in learning because of reduced energy levels and the demands of other responsibilities; therefore, it is imperative that learning be meaningful to them.[40] Adults will be motivated to assume the task of active learning if they see it as meaningful or important to their life. Learning, especially in a formal setting, is more intentional for adults. Stephen Brookfield notes that for adults,

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[37] Merriam and Caffarella, 397.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

"participation is learning is voluntary; adults engage in learning as a result of their own volition."[41] They add it to their schedule. It is an addition that requires an investment of time, energy, and money, and this is especially true if they are working-age adults as defined by Wlodkowski. In contrast, children are required to go to school, even if they are not motivated to learn. Adults have the option of not attending to formal education unless they are internally or externally motivated, therefore it has to be meaningful to them.

Adults may differ from children in the process of learning because of the greater amount of prior experience and knowledge that they possess. Adults start at different point, compared to children, when it comes to learning. Merriam notes, "A case can be made that cognitive functioning in adulthood may also be qualitatively different from childhood."[42] Learners continually build upon prior experience and knowledge. Wlodkowski, commenting on the micro level of learning, writes, "When adults learn, they build on or modify networks that have been created through previous learning and experience. These networks are the adult learners' prior knowledge."[43]

Children are also building and modifying the neuronal networks in their brains, but it is assumed that because adults' greater age, prior education, and experience, they have larger, more fully developed, and more deeply entrenched networks with which to begin working. These networks will be used to integrate new knowledge and to understand how it can be applied to different contexts. Prior knowledge and experience

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[41] Stephen Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices*, 1st ed., The Jossey-Bass Higher Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 9.

[42] Merriam and Caffarella, 398.

[43] Wlodkowski, 11.

may prepare adults to learn better than children. Darkenwald notes, "Adults who have accumulated more knowledge than children are in a better position to learn new things, and barring psychological impairments, learning potential increases with age."[44] For example, Jonassen, writing in *Constructivist Instruction: Success or Failure*, comments on the difference between pre-service teacher education courses and continuing teacher education courses. He notes that pre-service learners "do not have sufficient prior knowledge of teaching in the classroom. In their teacher preparation courses, it is hard for the students to see the significance of the theories and map them into their future pupils' behaviors."[45] Then he makes the comparison to in-service teachers elaborating, "In this respect, it is much easier to work with in-service teachers. They can bring to mind relevant cases and juxtapose their own classroom wisdom with the ideas presented by the professor."[46] Ageing and increased responsibilities may slow down the time needed to process new material, but adults may be better able to link new knowledge to prior knowledge and to application. Thus prior experience and knowledge are important to the adult learning process. Jarvis' observation about initial learning and post-initial learning bears on this point. Adults should tend to be more reflective learners as they compare, contrast, and understand new knowledge in the light of their experience and prior learning.[47]

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[44] Gordon G. Darkenwald, and Sharan B. Merriam, *Adult Education: Foundations of Practice* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 104.

[45] Sigmund Tobias and Thomas M. Duffy, eds., *Constructivist Instruction: Success or Failure?* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 39.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Jarvis, 19.

Malcolm Knowles, a well-known name among adult educators, wrote several books on adult education and worked to delineate the differences between children and adult learners. His ideas still serve as a base for understanding the key characteristics of adult learners. Many of these characteristics, which are still considered valid by adult educators, provide useful descriptions that should direct adult learning situations.[48] He shares:

> 1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy; therefore, these are the appropriate starting points for organizing adult learning activities.
> 2. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered; therefore, the appropriate units for organizing adult learning are life situations, not subjects.
> 3. Experience is the richest resource for adults' learning; therefore, the core methodology of adult education is the analysis of experience.
> 4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing; therefore, the role of the teacher is to engage in a process of mutual inquiry with them rather than to transmit his or her knowledge to them and then evaluate their conformity to it.
> 5. Individual differences among people increase with age; therefore, adult education must make optimal provision for differences in style, time, place, and pace of learning.[49]

The one key component to these five characteristics is the role of experience in adult learners. Adults are motivated to learn because of experience. Their desire to learn how to do something new, to understand an area related to work, home, or life-style, or to improve themselves in the work place provide key motivations to engage in learning. Because of this experience orientation, Knowles believes that adult education needs to be oriented around life situations by beginning where people are in their lives and analyzing their experiences.

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[48] Merriam and Caffarella, 267.

[49] Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, 4th ed., Building Blocks of Human Potential (Houston: Gulf Pub. Co, 1990), 31.

Adult learners are also oriented towards understanding how to apply knowledge. The thing that is learned must make sense in relationship to life (see Knowles' first three points, above). In points four and five, although the word "experience" does not occur in these statements, there is still an indication of the role of experience. In number four, Knowles is stating that adults have a need to be self-directed in their learning. Self-directedness flows from experience, which is going to define the adult's motivation to learn, and determine what they want to learn. There has to be motivation for a person to want to learn something new. Number five also hints at the role of experience, because differences that increase with age have a base in prior experience.

One of the basic tenets of adult education is that adults bring a lot of prior knowledge and experience with them to new learning experiences. The teacher or facilitator has to be able to drawn upon this prior knowledge as a means of helping the adult learner make sense of a new area of learning. This is a strong motivating factor for adult learning and development.

Professional Education

Professional education is a particular type of adult education. As the name indicates, this type of educational program prepares one to exercise a profession. A profession can be defined as, "the provision of a service that is based upon a systematic, scientific body of knowledge."[50] *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines a profession as, "A calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation."[51] These definitions highlight two main ideas. A professional

[50] Dall'Alba, 12.

[51] *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary,* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1975), 919.

requires specialized knowledge and provides a service to clients. According to Dall'Alba, professionals are "expected to exercise informed judgment, act ethically, and maintain confidentiality in providing a service to their clients[52] Professional education can be divided into two types -- Pre-professional education and continuing professional education. Pre-professional education prepares individuals to practice a profession, while continuing professional educations helps professionals stay up to date on the latest and best information and practices. Generally, criticism of professional education has focused on the pre-professional phase. At this phase, those attending professional school have limited prior knowledge and experience in the profession. Therefore, the educational program has to find ways to help the learner understand how the expertise relates to future practice.

Pre-professional education has been criticized for a number of years for its failure to adequately prepare professionals to assume their profession. These criticisms extend back for a number of years. Researches and writers such as Donald Schön, Chris Argyris, and Everett Hughes who wrote in the 1960s and 1970s, and continuing with Gloria Dall'Alba who wrote in 2009, express the general lack of linkage between pre-professional education and the practice of the profession. Two reasons are proposed for the breakdown of the process of adequately preparing people to become professionals. It is interesting to note that Argyris and Schön expressed the same two criticisms[53] in 1974, which are expressed again by Dall'Alba in 2009.

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[52] Dall'Alba, 12.

[53] Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schön, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974), 142-143.

First, writers note the rapid rate of change in the world in general and they follow by discussing the second reason, which is the amount of new information that pertains to each particular profession. Change is always occurring, but it seems to be occurring at an increasingly rapid rate. Dall'Alba notes,

> Influences of globalization on many aspects of everyday economic and social life, re-thinking of knowledge boundaries through interdisciplinary endeavors, and emergence of newly developed information and communication technologies that have made space-time compression possible are examples of the flux and fluidity impacting on the practice of professions.[54]

Argyris agrees, "Professional roles are now undergoing radical change."[55] It is difficult to keep up with the influx of new knowledge. Being prepared to deal with change in society, in the profession, and dealing with clients who increasingly question or mistrust the professional's judgments is an ongoing challenge.[56] Dall'Alba adds, "It is imperative that professional education programmes adequately prepare aspiring professionals to constructively deal with this contemporary context."[57] The rate of change and the widespread flow of information via the internet, television, and radio mean that people in general have more access to specialized information than before. Thus one of the goals of professional education is to prepare professionals to know how to keep on learning, which implies that they understand the need to keep asking questions, reflecting on their experience, and investigating new knowledge.

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[54] Dall'Alba, 5.

[55] Argyris and Schön, 143.

[56] Dall'Alba, 6.

[57] Ibid., 5.

Second, writers highlight the tendency of professional schools to emphasize the technical and scientific aspects of knowledge used by the profession in isolation from the social and human practices of the profession. The focus is on learning the technical and scientific knowledge needed to practice the profession. Donald Schön called this "technical rationality," which "is an epistemology of practice derived from positivist philosophy, built into the very foundations of the modern research university."[58] Technical rationality is defined as "scientific theory and technique."[59] Professional education tends to be dominated by this type of knowledge, and acquiring and mastering this knowledge is the goal of the pre-professional student. However, Schön argues, "Research on professional practice that is removed from the challenges and complexity of practice is of limited value to practitioners."[60] Cathlin Macaulay echoes a similar sentiment "Within professional/vocational education, contextually defined knowledge is that which is relevant to the 'community of practice' to which the learner is aspiring to become a member."[61] Dall'Alba explains, "A principle criticism has been that knowledge generated by traditional research has distanced us from the human practices investigated, rather than deepening our understanding of them. Such research has failed to take into account the understanding and experience of practice it seeks to examine."[62] As a result, it creates a theory-practice gap because the future practitioner is learning the theory about

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[58] Schön, 3.

[59] Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 21.

[60] Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*, 142.

[61] Macaulay, 6.

[62] Dall'Alba, 5.

their profession, but they are not necessarily learning how to perform their profession in its context. The type of knowledge that they need is not just the technical and scientific knowledge of how to perform their profession, but how this knowledge relates to working with people, and with ill-defined situations. As a result, they may not be able to effectively transfer the scientific knowledge to actual practice.

Theological Education

Theological education, as a type of professional education, has received its share of criticism for its failure to adequately prepare ministers, missionaries, and other Christian workers for the demands of their profession. Everett Hughes, writing in 1973, shares; "The adequacy of the traditional seminary training has long been questioned. The criticism has become more acute as the church endeavors to minister to contemporary secular American society."[63] He goes on to stress that "the general criticism which seemed to prevail in the sixties indicated that the curriculum was too heavily weighted with theoretical courses and that even the professional technical courses were presented from a theoretical perspective."[64]

Robert Burns, commenting on a qualitative study of how pastors learn after seminary, recounts "As the participating pastors reflected on their seminary education, they viewed it with sincere appreciation, but saw it as limited in providing an understanding of what they would truly experience in ministry."[65] Linda Cannell, who now serves as Lois W. Bennett Distinguished Professor of Educational Ministries at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, also notes that one criticism of theological

[63] Hughes and Education, 179.

[64] Ibid., 185.

[65] Burns, 273.

institutions is, “that seminaries are missing the mark in terms of instruction: method and content are unrelated to real issues. Communication skills, reflection on life experiences, and interpersonal competency are lacking in curricular outcomes.”[66] In a guest editorial in the *Christian Education Journal,* Harley Atkinson also notes, “Formal Christian education is more than writing papers, taking exams, and listening to lectures. While these learning components are critical to the educational process, equipping for ministry is far more than the cognitive experience.”[67]

Theological education, as with all professional education, consists of a body of expert knowledge that is imparted to the learners. According to Hughes and the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, this knowledge is typically divided into four major areas of study:

> (1) Bible—biblical languages, biblical texts and their interpretation, biblical archaeology. (2) History—the study of the Judeo-Christian religion in all of its major historical phases (3) Systematic theology—the study of theology in its principles, doctrines, and derivations, comprising both doctrinal theology and ethics (moral theology). (4) Professional studies—or pastoral theology, in which the candidate is trained to transmit and perpetuate the sacred tradition through the acquisition of certain technical skills required to fulfill this ministry, e.g., homiletics, which is the study of preaching (how to prepare and deliver an effective sermon); liturgies (the study of ritual celebrations); and pastoral counseling techniques for guiding the faithful according to the tenets of the faith).[68]

The problem is that this knowledge can become technical and scientific, separated from the professional practice itself. It can be technical rationality subject to the same criticisms related to professional education in general. Linda Cannell also notes that the

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[66] Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Newburgh IN: EDCOT Press, 2006), 50.

[67] Harley Atkinson, "Guest Editorial Introduction to the Mini-Theme: Field Education in Christian Education," *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 1 (2009): 7.

[68] Hughes and Education, 184-185.

rise of academic theology (rational or scientific theology) has affected theological education. She notes, "By the late nineteenth century, theology had become an encyclopedia of several disciplines with tenuous linkages to certain practical fields."[69] Theological education is important, but it struggles, as does all pre-professional education to "establish a balance between theory and practice."[70] Burns supplies this insight from the participants involved in his research, "The pastors involved in this study did not criticize their pre-professional training through traditional theological education… At the same time, a constant refrain among the participants was that, upon entering the ministry, they were naïve about what they might face."[71] Later, Burns quotes a participant who stated, "I did not know what I was doing. All I had was head knowledge."[72] Most seminaries do seek to bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical application in their educational programs, but as Hans Madueme and Linda Cannell note in their article in the journal *Theological Education*,

> The traditional order of the curriculum also leads to the common student experience that practical theology is lowest in rank (theology or biblical studies occupy the top position). The situation is ironic. The MDiv curriculum is designed to prepare men and women for pastoral ministry, and yet, practical theology is functionally trivialized in students' experience.[73]

The theory-practice gap is real to pre-professional theology students. Although pastoral practice is thoroughly dependent on theoretical material,[74] students may not

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[69] Cannell, 60.

[70] Hughes and Education, 187.

[71] Burns, 273.

[72] Ibid., 274.

[73] Madueme and Cannell: 49.

[74] Ibid., 50.

really understand how to integrate it into practice because practical theology has been trivialized or because they have not had enough opportunity to participate in internships, practicums, or other ministry opportunities that have allowed them to make the necessary connections.

Constructivism

For the purposes of this study, the learning theory known as constructivism will be used as a theoretical base for understanding the learning process. Constructivism is more of a philosophy of learning than a scientific explanation of how learning occurs. As referenced earlier, constructivism has become a dominant theory in the field of learning/education, and it has strong links to cognitive psychology, cognitive science, and cognitive neurology,[75] which seem to support the theoretical suppositions of constructivism. Merriam states, "Cognitivists are interested in how the mind makes sense out of stimuli in the environment – how information is processed, stored, and retrieved."[76] Bruning et al also note that "most cognitive psychologist see learning as a product of the interaction among what learners already know, the information they encounter, and what they do as they learn. Learning is not so much knowledge and skill acquisition as it is the construction of meaning by the learner."[77]

Constructivists believe that learning is an active process. Learners construct meaning by building upon prior knowledge and experience. Merriam provides this brief definition of constructivism: "Learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how

[75] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 29-30.

[76] Merriam and Caffarella, 265.

[77] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 5-6.

people make sense of their experience."[78] Debra Espinor, assistant professor of educational psychology and educational foundations in the School of Education at Seattle Pacific University offers the following definition of constructivism: "The premise of constructivism is that learners construct knowledge based upon their own experiences and prior beliefs."[79] Learning is not a passive activity. It involves making sense of the subject being studied. Constructivists believe that "learners arrive at meaning by selecting information and constructing what they know either individually or in collaboration with other learners."[80]

Constructivism focuses on the learner. The learner constructs their own meaning rather than merely receiving information.[81] According to Bruning et al, "Constructivism is a broad term with philosophical, learning, and teaching dimensions, but it generally emphasizes the learner's contribution to meaning and learning."[82] According to Schwartz, Lindgren, and Lewis, "Constructivism is a theory of knowledge growth and life-long development."[83] The distinction between constructivism and what has generally been understood as learning is highlighted by Wim Gijselaers, in an article in *New Directions for Teaching and Learning.* He states:

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[78] Merriam and Caffarella, 261.

[79] Debra Espinor, "Overview of Learning Theories," in *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue between Constructivism and Faith-Based Education*, ed. HeeKap Lee(Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 14.

[80] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 194.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., 193.

[83] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 34.

> Until 25 or thirty years ago, education was dominated by the view that learning involves filling students' heads with information. Human minds were regarded to as empty buckets that could be filled through repetition and rehearsal. Accordingly, teaching led directly to students' storing knowledge in memory, like books are stored in libraries.[84]

Constructivists on the other hand, understand learning to be a constructive, rather than a receptive, process.[85] The reason for this is that the human memory has an associative structure. Gijselaers argues, "Knowledge is structured in networks of related concepts, referred to as semantic networks. As learning occurs, new information is coupled to existing networks."[86] These networks of related concepts facilitate memorization of new information, but they also influence how that information is interpreted; how the learner constructs meaning.[87] How does a person understand what they hear, see, read, study, feel, experience, or witness? Constructivists postulate that learning involves more than memorization of random facts. Rather the learner processes knowledge to reach a new level of understanding. Espinor offers this descriptive explanation of constructivism: "Constructivism asserts that knowledge cannot be just handled from one person to another, to be put on like an article of clothing. Knowledge must be constructed (or 'sewed,' using the clothing metaphor) and tried on and 'fitted' to the new learner."[88]

Constructivism highlights the importance of prior knowledge and experience in the learning process. Prior knowledge and experience are seen as important to the learning process because they influence how the learner constructs meaning.

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[84] Wim H. Gijselares, "Bringing Problem-Based Learning to Highter Education: Theory and Practice," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 68, no. Winter (1996): 14.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 15.

[88] Espinor, 14.

Constructivists frequently highlight the need to facilitate learning by linking new knowledge to prior knowledge. Espinor explains, "Teachers facilitate the construction of knowledge by including opportunities for meaningful and authentic exploration, by designing engaging activities, and by utilizing interactive group work."[89] The learner has to use their prior knowledge and experience to understand new knowledge. Prior knowledge is the filter through which new information is processed. Jonathan Bransford offers this very concise definition: "In the most general sense, the contemporary view of learning is that people construct new knowledge and understanding based on what they already know and believe."[90] Gijselaers adds, "Consequently in education, explicit attention should be paid to students' existing knowledge and the activation of this knowledge to provide a framework for learning."[91] Prior knowledge is important and cannot be ignored. Raymond Wlodkowski explains why in this description of how prior knowledge operates on the biological and physical level of the human brain.

> From a neuroscientific viewpoint, at the micro level, learning is long-lasting change in existing neuronal networks. When adults learn, they build on or modify networks that have been created through previous learning and experience. These networks are the adult learners' prior knowledge.[92]

This highlights the important role that prior knowledge plays in learning. Learners cannot forget the prior knowledge they have because it is a physical entity, however, prior knowledge can be modified and changed. The prior knowledge will be used either

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[89] Ibid., 13.

[90] John Bransford and others, *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1999), 10.

[91] Gijselares: 15.

[92] Wlodkowski, 11.

consciously or unconsciously to make sense of new information. It may help or hinder the learner's ability to correctly understand and assimilate new knowledge. Therefore, it is important for learners and teachers to be aware of how prior knowledge is impacting the learner's understanding and assimilation of new information.

Current experience – authentic learning tasks – is also believed to promote learners' abilities to construct meaning. Anderson, Krathwohl, and Bloom provide a longer and more detailed explanation of constructivism that includes the aspect of current experience. They explain,

> In instructional settings, learners are assumed to construct their own meaning based on their prior knowledge, their current cognitive and metacognitive activity, and the opportunities and constraints they are afforded in the setting, including the information that is available to them. Learners come into any instructional setting with a broad array of knowledge, their own goals, and prior experiences in that setting, and they use all of these to "make sense" of the information they encounter. This constructivist process of "making sense" involves the activation of prior knowledge as well as various cognitive processes that operate on that knowledge.[93]

This definition expands upon the role of prior knowledge to include current experience as an important factor in the process of making sense. Current experience includes the social and physical setting where learning is taking place, and how knowledge is being presented to the learners. The emotions experienced by the learner, as well as the learner's ability to reflect upon and think about the learning experience, impact the process of sense-making. The learner's whole being processes the content. The ability to make sense of experience is multifaceted and never mono-faceted. It is highly complex and not easily explained. For this reason, according to Bruning, Schraw, and Norby,

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[93] Lorin W. Anderson, David R. Krathwohl, and Benjamin Samuel Bloom, *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Complete ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 38.

constructivists seek to use "authentic learning tasks in the classroom that reflect how knowledge and skills will be used outside the classroom."[94]

Adult learning theories have great congruence with constructivism.[95] Experience is important to adult learners. The motivation to learn is linked to prior experience and knowledge as well as to the desire to gain new knowledge. Adult learners are more inclined to want to apply knowledge to real life. They are less interested in theoretical knowledge that does not connect to life. This is especially true in the realm of professional education. The pre-professional pursues a vocational calling that will become their career. They are not interested in learning information that has little or no relationship to their vocation. They also are interested in learning how to connect the theoretical knowledge pertinent to their profession to the practice of their profession.

Constructivism has deep philosophical roots in the postmodern worldview. Jack Fennema, professor of education emeritus at Covenant College and a contributing author to *Faith Based Education that Constructs*, notes that constructivism is the "subjective" way of viewing things and that the postmodern era stresses the subjective.[96] He continues, "The worldview that provides the theoretical foundation for constructivism is postmodernism."[97] Constructivism, therefore, tends to deny the reality of objective truth. Fennema explains, "A true constructivist would deny the existence of such transcendent standards (in reference to a biblical worldview that provides a metanarrative by which all

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[94] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 194.

[95] Merriam and Caffarella, 262.

[96] Jack Fennema, "Constructivism: A Critique from a Biblical Worldview," in *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue between Constructivism and Faith-Based Education*, ed. HeeKap Lee(Euguene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 23.

[97] Ibid., 25.

other narratives are judged)."[98] Calvin Roso, associate professor at the Oral Roberts University Graduate School of Education and a contributing author in the same book, writes,

> Constructivist learning theory is believed by many to be based on a postmodern educational philosophy that states that learning happens when students are given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge and meaning. At an extreme, this philosophy denies absolute truth and asserts that students can, and should, construct their own knowledge and truth.[99]

The philosophical underpinning that constructivism receives from postmodern thought needs to be noted in relationship to theological education. Fennema identifies three characteristics of postmodernism that can be true of constructivism as a learning theory. First, postmodernism denies the existence of a metanarrative, and in particular the metanarrative of the Bible. Second, postmodernism denies the existence of absolutes, supporting instead the perspective that truth is subjective and relative. Third, postmodernists claim that all knowledge is constructed.[100] In contrast to these three denials, the biblical worldview, and by extension, theological education operates on the basis of revealed truth. According to Fennema, "All knowledge and wisdom are revealed – by God, through God's word."[101] This provides a distinctive basis for understanding constructivism and how it is applied to theological education. On the positive side, constructivism highlights the active nature of learning and the need to build upon prior knowledge and experience, as well as concurrent experience. However, the position of

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Calvin G. Roso, "Constructivism in the Classroom: Is It Biblical?," in *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue between Contructivism and Faith-Based Education*, ed. HeeKap Lee(Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 37.

[100] Fennema, 27.

[101] Ibid.

postmodernism that denies absolute truth brings constructivism into conflict with theological education. Truth is not just what the individual constructs, but what God has revealed that can be known and understood by human beings.

Constructivist methodology does not contradict principles of education found in the scriptures. According to Roso, "…scripture supports the use of constructivist methodology without supporting the philosophical premise upon which constructivism is based."[102] These are the methodologies that emphasize that learners built upon prior knowledge and experience to understand and assimilate new knowledge, as well as the role of reflection and the active involvement of the learner. These define constructivist methodology and all find support in the ways that Jesus taught.

Knowledge Types

Cognitive psychology contributes to the understanding of constructivist learning theory by providing a model for understanding learning which describes types of knowledge that are stored in long-term memory. All knowledge is not of the same type. According to Bruning et al, the distinction among types of knowledge is useful and is built upon both common sense and a neurophysiological base.[103] David Jonassen adds,

> Long-term memory is not a monolithic structure, where information, like in a computer, is assigned a specific memory location containing zeros and ones. Rather long-term memory is replete with schemas, schemata, stories (experiences), procedures, behavioral sequences, patterns, and many other structures.[104]

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[102] Roso, 43.

[103] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 38.

[104] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 18.

The schemas, schemata, stories (experiences), procedures, behavioral sequences, patterns, and many other structures provide us with a cognitive architecture[105] (a term used by Jonassen). This architecture is complex. Gijselaers also refers to this architecture stating, "Knowledge is structured in networks of related concepts, referred to as *semantic networks*. As learning occurs, new information is coupled to existing networks."[106] Learning is a complex process and the method by which learners construct meaning is related to these knowledge types, which are stored in a variety of ways. Understanding that there are different types of knowledge helps to explain why the technical rationality described by Schön is not sufficient by itself in equipping the pre-professional to effectively exercise their profession. As Jonassen insists, "I claim that a human cognitive architecture must be multifaceted and multidimensional, able to accommodate multiple knowledge types that are differentially constructed based on different types of interactions with the environment."[107] If the human cognitive architecture is multifaceted and multidimensional, then learning has to be multifaceted and multidimensional. If the learner constructs meaning, then that knowledge will be differentially constructed. According to Gijselaers, "learning is constructive and not a receptive process,"[108] therefore learners will learn different types of knowledge in different ways. A human cognitive architecture provides an explanation for a theory-practice gap and how to facilitate transfer of learning.

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Gijselares: 14.

[107] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 18.

[108] Gijselares: 14.

There are four basic types of knowledge listed by most of the books cited in this research project. They are declarative, procedural, conditional, and meta-cognitive. There are differences among the authors who use these terms, with variations on the definitions, as well as those who would add to the number of knowledge types. However, for the purposes of this study, these seem to be the four most important and agreed-upon knowledge types.

Declarative knowledge is factual knowledge, the "knowing what" type of knowledge.[109] Jonassen defines it as "static knowledge about facts, concepts, and principles, and is expressed as declarative sentences or propositions,"[110] and Haskell claims that it is "knowledge of or about something."[111] Declarative knowledge is related to the technical and scientific knowledge that was mentioned in the section on professional education. Macaulay provides another viewpoint of declarative knowledge that includes what is learned while undertaking a task. She calls it conceptual knowledge, but defines it as "knowing that."[112] It consists of concepts, facts, propositions, and theories.[113] Generally, people think of formal education as learning declarative knowledge, or as what Gijselaers terms, "filling the students' heads with information."[114]

[109] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 38.

[110] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 19.

[111] Haskell, 101.

[112] Macaulay, 9.

[113] Ibid., 9-10.

[114] Gijselares: 14.

Procedural knowledge is "knowing how" to perform certain tasks.[115] The authors already cited agree with this basic definition, and Jonassen supplies a rich description of procedural knowledge that illuminates its importance. He writes:

> Procedural knowledge is the knowledge required to perform a task; knowledge that can be applied directly and is represented most often as production rules (Anderson, 1996). That is, knowing how to perform a surgical procedure is different from knowing the parts of the body being surgically altered or the steps in the procedure declaratively. Because it is a different kind of knowledge, it may not be as easily articulated as declarative knowledge but is just as important to a human cognitive architecture. There are so many things that we know how to do without being able to describe what or why we are doing it.[116]

Procedural knowledge is learned in a different way than declarative knowledge. It is learned during the process of doing. However, according to Jonassen, procedural knowledge is related to declarative knowledge in that it "results from action and application of declarative knowledge."[117] Procedural knowledge is vital for the practice of a profession. Medical students have to learn about diseases and their causes, but they also have to learn how to diagnose a disease in a real person. Seminary students have to learn how to connect theoretical knowledge with practice. Sermon preparation involves understanding the declarative truths related to exegesis, the original languages, systematic theology, biblical theology, church history, and other areas, and then using those tools to construct a sermon. Much of this type of learning is in the doing.

Conditional knowledge is "knowing when and why to use declarative and procedural knowledge."[118] Jonassen and Macaulay refer to conditional knowledge as

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[115] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 38.

[116] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 21.

[117] Ibid., 20.

[118] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 38.

strategic knowledge. "It is the understanding of when and where to access facts and to apply procedural knowledge."[119] Haskell adds that it is knowledge of "when to apply our knowledge in context-appropriate ways: we don't behave in the same way in all situations."[120] It can be difficult for people to articulate how they know conditional knowledge, but it is vital "to help students make effective use of their declarative and procedural knowledge."[121] For professionals conditional knowledge seems to relate to how they treat people. It has to do with relationships and interactions. New ministers may have a good grasp of declarative knowledge and even procedural knowledge, yet many lack a well-developed knowledge of when and where to use what they know. There are many ill-defined situations in ministry. These situations are complex because they involve people and there may not be a clear-cut procedure to use. Like procedural knowledge, conditional knowledge is learned through experience.

Metacognition is the fourth type of knowledge mentioned in the literature and it seems to be vital to the transfer of learning. It is generally defined as "knowledge of our processes, such as how we learn and remember; it's the self-monitoring of our progress in the act of learning."[122] It has two related parts: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition.[123] Jonassen refers to it as strategic knowledge, but his definition of strategic

[119] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 21.

[120] Haskell, 101.

[121] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 39.

[122] Haskell, 101.

[123] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 79.

knowledge is very similar to the other researcher's definitions for metacognition.[124] Bruning et al offer this more detailed description of metacognition and its importance to learning:

> Since the concept was first introduced some 40 years ago, metacognition has been viewed as an essential component of skilled learning because it allows students to control a host of other cognitive skills. In a way, metacognition is like the "mission control" of the cognitive system. It enables students to coordinate the use of extensive knowledge and many separate strategies to accomplish learning goals, just as a real mission control coordinates the many operations necessary for a successful space flight. This does not imply a single place in our minds where metacognition takes place; rather, we simply want to suggest that metacognition is a part of our cognition that controls other cognitive functions, such as perception and attention.[125]

It is believed that metacognition develops later in a person's life – for example comparing elementary school children to adolescents and college students provides some clear evidence that younger children lack certain aspects of meta-cognition.[126] Evidence also reveals that meta-cognition can be developed.[127] Its importance to pre-professional education cannot be over emphasized. Without developing and utilizing metacognition pre-professional learners may have a very difficult time connecting the types of knowledge.

Metacognition has a relationship to reflection. It requires the learner to become consciously aware of how they learn – knowledge of cognition, and how to regulate their learning – regulation of cognition. Bruning et al note that other researchers such as Ann Brown contend that the regulation of cognition is often not conscious in many learning

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[124] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 21.

[125] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 79.

[126] Ibid., 80-81.

[127] Gijselares: 15.

situations for two reasons. First, many of these processes are highly automated, at least in adults, and second, some of these processes have developed without any conscious reflection.[128] Metacognition can be developed through instruction and reflection on how the learning is taking place. It requires thinking about what is happening to oneself when one is learning and becoming aware of how to regulate one's learning.

The interrelation among these three knowledge types is the essence of learning. Bruning et al provide a rich description of this interrelation that speaks to the objective of all learning – which is transfer to life.

> The declarative-procedural-conditional knowledge distinction is valuable for helping educators think about our goals for student learning. Novice students in a teacher education program, for instance, may memorize and recite a principle of cooperative classroom learning (e.g., "Establish an atmosphere of shared decision making and trust") as declarative knowledge but have little or no notion of how, why, and when actually to use this principle in the classroom (i.e., they lack procedural knowledge and conditional knowledge). As important as declarative knowledge is, we almost always will benefit from thinking beyond it to include both procedural and conditional knowledge goals.
>
> For example, one of the most important aims of education is to help students develop relatively large, stable, and interrelated sets of declarative knowledge… Yet we also need to place a considerable premium on knowing "how," "when," and "why." The reason is that almost all learning combines declarative, procedural, and conditional elements. No matter what the content domain, declarative knowledge—although a basic building block of all expertise—is most valuable when linked appropriately to actions. In settings ranging from elementary students reading and writing to students in the professional schools of journalism, architecture, teaching, business, and medicine, procedural and conditional knowledge are critical outcomes of the educational process.[129]

Cognitive psychology provides constructivism with an understanding of how meaning is constructed. The general understanding that there are knowledge types

[128] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 80.

[129] Ibid., 39.

enhances one's understanding that different types of knowledge will be constructed through different means. Attainment of declarative knowledge does not mean that a learner will know how to use it procedurally or conditionally. Bruning et al state above that almost all learning combines declarative, procedural, and conditional elements. This highlights the role of meta-cognition especially in pre-professional theological education. Declarative knowledge is very important, and it cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to developing ministers, missionaries, and other vocational Christian workers. But, as they state, procedural and conditional knowledge cannot be overlooked. They are critical outcomes that have to be taken into account.

Transfer of Learning

Transfer of learning is the primary compelling issue in education at all levels. From elementary to professional education, "the aim of all education…is to apply what we learn in different contexts, and to recognize and extend that learning to completely new situations."[130] Macaulay notes "transfer of learning has been of interest to academics working in a number of different fields – psychology, philosophy, schooling, adult education and vocational/professional education."[131] Haskell also adds that it is one area that "most researchers and educational practitioners, whether 'liberal' or 'conservative' agree…that meaningful transfer of learning is among the most – if not the most – fundamental issue in all of education."[132] Theological education – like all professional education – is likewise concerned with how learners are able to transfer learning to actual ministry experience.

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[130] Haskell, 3.

[131] Macaulay, 1.

[132] Haskell, 3-4.

Haskell defines transfer of learning by explaining, "Transfer of learning is our use of past learning when learning something new and the application of that learning to both similar and new situations."[133] Transfer of learning is an ongoing, daily activity in which all humans participate. Haskell points out that researchers and educators can speak of transfer of learning as techniques, but it really is a "way of thinking, perceiving, and processing information."[134] On this level, transfer of learning is general and diffuse. Haskell describes this paradox as, "that transfer takes place every day in most situations."[135] However, Haskell continues, "the history of research findings on transfer suggests it seldom occurs in instructional settings."[136]

Measuring transfer of learning in academic settings has proven to be very difficult, even to the extent that some have questioned the existence of transfer of learning as an identifiable phenomenon.[137] Generally, transfer of learning is divided between "near" transfer and "general" or "far" transfer. Near transfer has been demonstrated through empirical evidence, but in regards to general transfer, there is little empirical evidence.[138] Even though it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove empirically that general transfer of learning is occurring, Haskell notes that the paradox does occur and is vitally important to learning. Because it does exist, even if it is poorly understood

[133] Ibid., xiii.

[134] Ibid., 23.

[135] Ibid., 10.

[136] Ibid., 9.

[137] Macaulay, 2.

[138] Ibid., 4.

and difficult to measure, it is vitally important to the learning task. Indeed, all learning involves transfer of learning. Without it, learning cannot occur.

Theological Education and Transfer of Learning

Theological education involves the same problems with transfer of learning as other types of professional degree programs. Macaulay describes this problem as follows, "Students have to be able to deal with situations in their practice that they will not encounter during the course of their formal education. In order to do so they have to be able to transfer what they have learned in earlier situations to new situations."[139] The issues of a theory-practice gap and transfer of learning are troubling to all concerned. Of additional concern is defining the purpose of theological education. Hillman, speaking of this issue, states that there has been an ongoing debate involving theologians, pastors, and congregations regarding the purpose of theological education.[140] The debate is between two purposes. One group believes that the purpose of theological education is equipping students to think biblically and critically rather than simply helping them to develop pastoral skills. For this type of seminary or Bible school, the issues of theory-practice divide are effectively reduced to a minimal concern. The second group understands the purpose of theological education as preparing students with the ministry "how-to's", but not necessarily helping them to think biblically and critically. For these schools, the theory-practice divide is of utmost importance. However, as Hillman believes, both functions are legitimate concerns of a seminary or Bible college. But, as with all pre-professional education, the classroom alone is not sufficient. Atkinson comments, "The

[139] Ibid.

[140] Hillman, 3.

academics of a sound theological education provide the groundwork for a biblical worldview and offer the basics of ministry leadership."[141] The learning of declarative knowledge that takes place in the classroom provides the groundwork, which in turn provides the basics for future ministry. However, declarative knowledge cannot provide the experience.

Proponents of constructivism believe that learning involves connecting declarative knowledge with procedural and conditional knowledge.[142] This is achieved through experience. New learning – transfer of learning – occurs when learners are able to construct meaning of declarative knowledge through experience. Macaulay explains, "These aspects of knowledge are seen as highly interactive by contemporary learning theorists…they need to be developed simultaneously so that rich linkages are made between them."[143] Experience becomes the means of converting declarative knowledge into procedural and conditional knowledge. Boud et al are convinced that drawing upon learners' prior knowledge and providing opportunities for them to engage actively in what they are learning is very important.[144] Boyatzis et al, also write: "The human species is distinguished by its capacity to learn, to make meaning from experience. This unique ability to learn is what makes us human."[145] If this is true, than abstract or static

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[141] Atkinson: 6.

[142] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 39.

[143] Macaulay, 10.

[144] David Boud, Rosemary Keogh, and David Walker, *Reflection, Turning Experience into Learning* (London, New York: Kogan Page ; Nichols Pub., 1985), 7.

[145] Richard E. Boyatzis, Scott S. Cowen, and David A. Kolb, *Innovation in Professional Education: Steps on a Journey from Teaching to Learning: The Story of Change and Invention at the Weatherhead School of Management*, 1st ed., A Joint Publication in the Jossey-Bass Management Series and the Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), 230-231.

declarative knowledge is not sufficient to adequately prepare the learner to become a competent professional.

Experiential Learning

In theological education, experiential learning is understood to be a very important part of constructing knowledge.[146] Atkinson elaborates:

> Formal Christian education is more than writing papers, taking exams, and listening to lectures. While these learning components are critical to the educational process, equipping for ministry is far more than the cognitive experience. Germane to ministry-related education is experience. Field experience in the form of practica, student ministry, and internships, provides the much-needed balance to classroom studies.[147]

Field experience "serves as a link between theory and practice."[148] Norma Hedin, writing about experiential learning in the *Christian Education Journal,* identifies the purpose of experiential learning when she writes, "Ranging from classroom assignments to formal internships and practicums, Christian educators are seeking ways to intentionally help students apply learning to real life as well as to learn from their classroom and field-based experiences."[149] The goal of field experience is to take the learner out into the world. There they can learn from observing and doing in real time.

Hedin identifies two types of experiential learning situations in the context of formal education. First are the non-formal experiential learning experiences. "These are planned by instructors and include goals, but are less structured and occur outside of the formal educational setting. Activities such as internships, service-learning projects, and

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[146] Norma Hedin, "Experiential Learning: Theory and Challenge," *Christian Education Journal* Vol. 7, no. 1 (2010): 109.

[147] Atkinson: 7-8.

[148] Hillman, 4.

[149] Hedin: 107.

outdoor/adventure programs are examples…"[150] The second is "formal experiential learning, which is connected to classrooms in schools and universities…using experiments, projects, and other hands-on activities."[151] Both non-formal and formal experiential learning are important tools that engage the learning process on all levels. Hedin identifies two important components in experiential learning, "(a) engaging the learners directly in the phenomena related to their studies, and then (b) requiring them to reflect on the experience, analyzing it and learning from it."[152]

In order to engage the learner and serve as a link between theory and practice, field-work, or experiential learning, has to engage the learner in the phenomena that are related to their studies. Wlodkowski notes in relationship to preservice teacher education that, "our visit to a high school once a week with assigned responsibilities to assist teachers raised the level of relevance for our course and substantially increased motivation to learn."[153] Wlodkowski is speaking of a direct connection between the experience of going to school once a week and the classroom work. Declarative knowledge that the students have been learning can now be seen and experienced in action. As he goes on to state, for the preservice students, "once we started going to school, we were *for real*."[154]

Experiential learning, to be effective, uses reflection. The learners have to reflect upon what they are learning. Reflection is vital to the process of learning from

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[150] Ibid., 108.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid., 109.

[153] Wlodkowski, 302.

[154] Ibid.

experience. Connecting declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge is not a passive activity. As Hedin explains, "Experiential education differs from other learning approaches in that it provides an intentional process of experience and reflection about the experience in order to develop new knowledge or skills."[155] Boyatzis et al frame it this way, "How one learns from experience can be divided into two basic questions: 'How does what is outside get in?' and 'How does what is inside get out?'"[156] To get what is outside in and inside out requires reflection. Learning is an active process. Experiential education requires that learners reflect upon their experiences, because experience alone is not sufficient for learning.

Experience alone, without reflection and connection to prior learning, is not sufficient for the learner to make the connection between academics and practice. Boud et al, Hedin, Haskell, and Wlodkowski all agree that experience alone can mislead learners. For example, Atkinson warns, "…not everything is best learned through experience. Experience alone does not transmit truth, nor is experience always a reliable indicator as to whether something is right or wrong."[157] Learners can form theories of practice that are incorrect if they use only experience as their guide. So while experiential learning is important for connecting knowledge types, by itself it is not better than isolating knowledge acquisition to the classroom.

Field education is one aspect of experiential learning that can be particularly effective in the learning process for seminarians. It includes internships, practicums, and other types of experiences out in the real world. Wlodkowski notes, "sometimes there is

[155] Hedin: 109.

[156] Boyatzis, Cowen, and Kolb, 231.

[157] Atkinson: 13.

only the real thing to make learning meaningful and to involve all of the senses and modes of engagement."[158] Atkinson adds, "Regardless of how much classroom preparation, reading, philosophy, and theory a student may have, there is no substitute for experience to learn one's professional field of work."[159] Theological institutions usually require their students to fulfill some type of ministry assignment, because they recognize that field education integrates and influences the formal education that is occurring in the classroom. Atkinson notes, "field education becomes increasingly critical for a well-rounded education in professional ministry degrees in graduate and undergraduate schools,"[160] provided that experience is reflected upon and thus integrated with the other types of knowledge.

However, seminaries and Bible colleges have a tendency to rely on learning declarative knowledge while minimizing the experiential aspect of learning that helps learners develop procedural and conditional knowledge. According to Dr. Richard Pratt, in the typical seminary program for a Masters of Divinity degree, the curriculum has the following breakdown. About eighty percent of the curriculum is factual information, about ten to fifteen percent is practical theology, and five to ten percent is related to character formation.[161] When curriculum is so heavily weighted toward declarative knowledge, it is easy to see why there is a gap in the learner's ability to transfer theory to practice. Without experience, they may not understand how the knowledge they have

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[158] Wlodkowski, 302.

[159] Atkinson: 11.

[160] Ibid., 6.

[161] Richard Pratt, in *Mission to the World Global Missions Conference* (Chattanooga, TN: 2010), Oral communication during seminar on Third Millenium ministry.

acquired relates to practice. A person may understand a body of knowledge or a particular truth as declarative knowledge, yet still not understand how to use it. It may or may not guide their practice. The following description of pre-service teacher education courses illustrates the theory-practice gap:

> A challenge in pre-service teacher education courses is that the students do not have sufficient prior knowledge of teaching in the classroom. In their teacher preparation courses, it is hard for the students to see the significance of the theories and map them into their future pupils' behaviors. Moreover, they lack a repository of personal instances that round out the specific examples used during instruction. Teacher educators have to work very hard to include multiple ideal examples, cases, and videos to help the pre-service teachers understand the significance of theories and lessons presented in the class readings and lectures. In this respect, it is much easier to work with in-service teachers. They can bring to mind relevant cases and juxtapose their own classroom wisdom with the ideas presented by the professor.[162]

This gap exists because the students have been exposed to declarative knowledge about teaching, but have not been exposed to actual practice. Declarative knowledge, learned as theory, is understood in the academic context, but not in the arena of practice. Experience provides a means for connecting declarative knowledge with procedural and conditional knowledge.

Biblical and Theological Concerns

The scriptures and the theological understanding that flows out of the scriptures provide a base of truth for understanding theological education. Larry McKinney, writing in the *Evangelical Review of Theology*, urges that "theological beliefs provide the very foundation of Christian education or pedagogy."[163] He believes that it is impossible to

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[162] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 39.

[163] Larry J. McKinney, "A Theology of Theological Education: Pedagogical Implications," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 3 (2005): 219.

separate one's theology from the practice of education. He elaborates, "Pedagogy and theology are both key components in defining theological education…Theological education should be shaped by both one's theology and pedagogy."[164] McKinney identifies five biblical and theological implications that impact the pedagogy of theological education. The researcher will use three of these as a base for how the scriptures address theological education. These include the centrality of written revelation, the knowledge of God, and the role of the Holy Spirit.

Theological education begins with "the centrality of written revelation."[165] As McKinney observes, "Theological education should begin, proceed, and end with the concept of divine revelation. Divine revelation is central to theological education."[166] Biblical revelation – specifically the written word – is God's word. 2 Peter 1:21-22 states, "Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."[167] The scriptures are God's word. They are the base upon which learning is measured. This truth is not gleaned from scientific investigation or empirical research, rather, it has been revealed by God. Therefore it cannot change. This means that theological education is not a matter of each learner deciding for themselves what is truth. To allow individuals to do so would be to regulate formal theological study to a "humanistic, anthropocentric religious

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[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 222.

[166] Ibid.

[167] 2 Peter 1:21-22 "The Holy Bible, English Standard Version," (Crossway, 2001).

education."[168] Christian theological education has a foundation that defines what is to be learned.

As noted in the section on constructivism, there is a key point of disagreement between constructivism as broadly conceived philosophically and Christian theological education. Constructivism has a philosophical base in postmodernism that denies absolute truth. Christian theological education, on the other hand, acknowledges and uses the absolute truth as revealed in the Christian scriptures. Epistemologically, the postmodern constructivist would understand the phrase "the learner constructs knowledge" to mean that each individual constructs personal meaning based on their experiences and prior knowledge and beliefs. In other words, each person constructs their own truth. In contrast, from a theological and biblical worldview, the same phrase means that the learner is in the process of discovering God's truth, which is understandable, absolute, and provides the metanarrative humans need to make sense of the world. HeeKap Lee, writing in *Faith Based Education that Constructs,* writes:

> The Bible clearly teaches us that truth is discovered and that revelation is the only way of knowing in Christian education… We know that God is the author of our knowledge and that God created all of reality and made all things perfect. Even though human beings are too imperfect to fathom all God's truth, we reach the truth with the help of the Holy Spirit.[169]

Lee's words emphasis the active role of God in revealing truth to mankind. Learners discover this truth, but they do not create it.

God's word is his self-revelation. God has revealed himself truly, but not exhaustively, to humans. The way that God has revealed himself to humankind provides

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[168] McKinney: 222.

[169] HeeKap Lee, "Three Faces of Constructivism," in *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue between Contructivism and Faith-Based Education,* ed. HeeKap Lee(Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 50.

a clue to how theological education should be structured. God's revelation is progressively revealed in the scriptures. As Sidney Greidanus writes in his book, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature,* "It takes place in history and through history."[170] Dr. Edmund Clowney, former professor and president of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, states, "The Bible tells us about God: God's redeeming acts, and God's words that interpret his deeds. The history of redemption is always accompanied by the history of revelation."[171] This implies that God's revelation is not just declarative truth. God did not write out a list of truths and then ask humankind to memorize it. Rather, over a period of time he revealed himself through his actions and his words. He did so working in and through history. Theological truth is never understood in isolation from the actions of God. It is understood in a sociocultural context of God and mankind in interaction. Pedagogically, it provides a model for teaching and learning, where declarative truth is never separated from life.

The knowledge of God is the primary goal of theological education. Mankind was created in the image of God, male and female. Therefore humans have a unique capacity to know God. McKinney expresses the position that "we must have an educational process that promotes a personal knowledge of God. Theological education must emphasize the importance of knowing God deeply and personally."[172] This knowledge transcends mere understanding of the declarative knowledge that God exists and that

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[170] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text : Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 71.

[171] Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2003), 35.

[172] McKinney: 221.

these are his attributes. Theological knowledge without this end lacks the purpose that God intended. This implies two related aspects: knowing God in relationship, and knowing God in obedience.

The knowledge of God is relationship to him through his son, Jesus Christ. God enters into a relationship with all who trust in Jesus Christ. They are adopted into God's family and made heirs with Jesus Christ. He gives his Holy Spirit who dwells with them and enables them to call on the Father.[173] This relationship in nurtured through communication and experience. Theological education is therefore concerned with deepening a person's relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of God requires obedience to him. Knowing God involves trusting his promises and warnings, and acting in accordance with them. God's word calls believers to obedience, and obedience leads to greater knowledge of God. Obedience also demonstrates the Christian's love for God. To obey God is to love him and to love him is to obey him. Jesus said in John 14, verses 15 and 21, "If you love me, keep my commandments," and "he who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."[174] Therefore, theological education should lead learners to greater obedience and love for God.

The role of the Holy Spirit is vital to theological education. In John 14:16-17, Jesus promised his followers that he would send them another helper, who would abide with them forever. This helper will dwell with them and be in them. The helper is the

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[173] Romans 8:9-17 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

[174] John 14:15, 21 *The Holy Bible, New King James Version,* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982).

Holy Spirit. According to Jesus in John 16:13, the Holy Spirit will lead and guide the disciples into all truth. He will teach them and bring to mind the things that Christ taught his disciples. The Apostle Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as the one who teaches and leads all believers into the truth.[175] Therefore, theological education has to take into account the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who teach and those who are learning. The Spirit is at work to illuminate their minds to understand theological truth and to apply it to their lives. This means that theological education is not merely a human endeavor.

Finally, the gospels record the words and actions of Jesus Christ who is regarded as the greatest teacher that ever lived.[176] Although one cannot know all of the ways that Jesus taught his disciples, simply because the gospels were not written towards that end, readers can glean several characteristics that provide guidance for theological education. Jesus was with his disciples. He called them to follow him.[177] They followed him and observed all that he did and taught. Mark 3:14 records that he called twelve disciples "that they might be with him."[178] Jesus teaching was not confined to a building or a classroom. The men and women who followed Jesus learned from him out in the field. They learned his words in the context of his actions. Declarative knowledge was immediately linked to procedural and conditional knowledge.

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[175] 2 Corinthians 2:10-13 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

[176] Atkinson: 14.

[177] Matthew 4:18-21 and 9:9 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

[178] Mark 3:14-15*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*.

Jesus sent his disciples into the world. Mark 3:14-15 states, "that He might send them out to preach, and have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons."[179] Jesus was not content that his disciples should only be with him, listen to him, and observe him. He also sent them out to exercise their gifts and abilities – which he gave to them. They were forced into ministry. Mark 6:7-12 also records that Jesus sent out the twelve. They preached, cast out demons, and healed many.[180] Then they returned and told Jesus what had happened. They reflected with him on their experiences, and then he took them aside to rest.[181] Jesus understood that they had to experience the truth of what they were learning. In order to make it real, they needed to be apart from him.

There is much more that can be learned from an analysis of how Jesus taught his disciples including his use of discourse, questions, parables, and other means of communicating truth. He worked with them to integrate declarative knowledge with obedience and he corrected them and others when their theological understanding was erroneous, beginning where they were in the present understanding, correcting false beliefs, and calling them to obedience

Conclusions

This review has covered three primary areas of literature related to theological education. First, it has drawn from issues relevant to adult education and the importance of experience in adult education. Pre-professional education and more specifically theological education are types of adult education. The literature explores the gap that exists between professional practice and professional education. Researches are interested

[179] Mark 3:14-15 ibid.

[180] Mark 6:7-12 ibid.

[181] Mark 6:30-31 ibid.

in understanding more about how learners transfer academic knowledge to practice. Second, this chapter has focused on a learning theory known as constructivism. Constructivism emphasizes the role of the learner in constructing meaning by building upon prior learning and experience as well as concurrent experience. Third, this chapter has examined the role of experiential education to provide a means of bridging the gap between classroom theory and practice. In all of these related areas, it is not just experience by itself that results in the transfer of declarative knowledge, but reflection upon experience.

A number of insights have come from this review. First, educators, students and organizations are vitally interested in promoting transfer of learning. They recognize that a gap exists between theory and practice in all areas of pre-professional education, which includes theological education. Second, most educators, who hold to the constructivist learning theory, believe that experience or experiential learning are keys to achieving transfer of learning. Constructivists contend that sense-making requires experiential learning because the passive transfer of information is impossible. Third, professional education has for many years questioned the effectiveness of the standard program of providing theory separated from practice. There is a sense that something needs to be done differently in order to improve professional education. This is true across the board, from medical schools to seminaries and Bible colleges. In particular the Christian community has a great interest in preparing men and women for ministry. There is a general understanding that more is needed beyond the classroom for educational institutions to become more effective in promoting transfer of learning.

Although much research has been conducted in adult and professional education, there are few qualitative studies looking for transfer of this knowledge to the work place. Those studies that were conducted in the realm of theological education dealt more with the dynamics of the classroom and how these classroom dynamics enhanced or decreased students' depth of learning. However, few qualitative studies have been done looking at the issue of transfer. There is a pressing need to understand how learners transfer learning to professional practice. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate a specific case to learn how learners describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in transferring classroom theory to ministry practice.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore how seminary students in Juarez, Mexico describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in linking theory to practice. The assumption of this study was that concurrent experience is necessary for students to transfer theoretical knowledge into practice. In order to address this purpose, the researcher identified three main areas of focus that are central to transferring theory to practice. These include adult education, constructivism as a theory of learning, and experiential learning. To examine these areas more closely, the following questions served as the intended focus of the qualitative research:

1. In what ways do concurrent ministry responsibilities enable students to make meaning of the class theory on leadership?
2. In what ways do concurrent leadership experiences motivate students to utilize class theory on leadership in their concurrent ministry responsibilities?
3. What seminary course theoretical knowledge do students transfer to their concurrent ministry context?

Design of the Study

The research design of this study followed a qualitative case study approach. Sharan B. Merriam in her book, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education,* defines a qualitative case study as an "intensive, holistic, description and

analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit."[182] She then offers this explanation of what defines a case: "The case then, could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group such as a class, a school, a community; a specific policy; and so on."[183] Another way of describing a case is to understand that it has boundaries or a fence. As Merriam explains, "I can fence it in."[184] It is further defined as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system."[185] This research design qualified as a case study because it had the necessary boundaries. It was limited to one cohort of students and their experiences in one class on leadership.

Five characteristics of qualitative research made it useful for this study. First, it is "interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."[186] Merriam explains that the "key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants perspective, not the researcher's."[187] This study explored from the learner's perspective how concurrent leadership experience impacted the learners' understanding and transfer to practice of a formal class on leadership.

Second and third the "qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis," [188] and "qualitative research involves field work,"[189]

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[182] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 27.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 40.

[186] Ibid., 13.

[187] Ibid., 14.

respectively. Understanding is the goal of this type of research and the human instrument is key to one's ability to respond and adapt during the process of gathering the data.[190] Interviewing the students in their socio-cultural setting provides an opportunity to hear their words, and to observe the silent communication that is taking place. Both the participant's words and non-verbal communication allow for flexibility in the interview process that aids the researchers' understanding by allowing them to clarify poorly understood or surprising responses and then to adapt the interview questions to explore areas that may not have occurred to the researcher prior to beginning their research.

Fourth, "qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy."[191] The goal of qualitative research is not to test an existing theory, but to inductively build toward a theory. "Bits and pieces of information from interviews, observations, or documents are combined and ordered into larger themes as the researcher works from the particular to the general."[192] This inductive process provides a framework for understanding how the participants in this study were able to connect their study of leadership to the practice of leadership.

Fifth, "qualitative research is richly descriptive."[193] Researchers are able to paint a descriptive picture from the words and the observations they have made. This opens a window for a richer understanding of the phenomenon. Transfer of learning, for example,

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[188] Ibid., 15.

[189] Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education,* 7.

[190] Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation,* 15.

[191] Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education,* 7.

[192] Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation,* 15-16.

[193] Ibid., 16.

can be examined and measured through the lens of a test. A grade can be assigned based on how well a learner was able to take information A and use it to solve problem B. However, this may reveal very little about the process the student used to transfer this learning. In contrast, the qualitative case study proposed for this research project allowed the participants to describe what the experience was like for them. It painted a picture of what they were feeling, thinking, and doing which, provided deeper insight into the phenomenon.

Merriam also identifies three special features of qualitative case study; it is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic.[194] First, qualitative case studies are particularistic. They focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. This focus on the particular is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and is a good design for practical problems.[195] How learners use theory in practice is a practical problem. Limiting this research to one cohort and one class permitted this researcher to deeply investigate the phenomenon in a specific case that can lead to understanding in other cases.

Second, qualitative case studies are descriptive. Merriam elaborates, "This means that the end product of a case study is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study."[196] This characteristic was described previously as a one of the characteristics of qualitative research.

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[194] Ibid., 43-44.

[195] Ibid., 43.

[196] Ibid.

Third, qualitative case studies are heuristic. Merriam explains that, "Case studies illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study."[197] This means that the reader is able to discover new insights, confirm what is known, or extend their experience.[198] Limiting this research to this particular cohort and their experiences provided a detailed picture of what they experienced in the class and later in practice. This may provide readers with the opportunity to build upon this case study.

Robert Stake, in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* notes that in qualitative case study research, there are "three types of case studies, differentiated by the researcher's interest – intrinsic, instrumental, and collective."[199] This case study was instrumental in nature, as defined by Stake. An instrumental case study is "examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else."[200] This researcher's purpose in this case study was instrumental because he desired to understand the phenomenon of transfer of learning from the learner's perspective. Another cohort or class could have been chosen for the purposes of this research, however this particular case was chosen because of the nature of the class and its applicability to real life. This case study provided insights and surprises for this researcher and it should do the same for those who read it. It is a vehicle for

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[197] Ibid., 44.

[198] Ibid.

[199] R.E. Stake. Qualitative Case Studies. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 445-447.

[200] Ibid., 445.

understanding the phenomenon of how theory gets linked to practice and how practice influences understanding theory.

Participant Sample Selection

This study required participants who were able to communicate deeply about their concurrent leadership experiences in relation to a class on leadership they took on leadership at the San Pablo Presbyterian Seminary in Juarez, Mexico. Therefore, a purposeful study sample consisted of a cohort of students who had leadership responsibilities in their local churches. Merriam explains that purposeful sampling "is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned."[201]

Participants were chosen for a unique type of sample in order to provide great depth of understanding in the data collected.[202] Participants were purposefully chosen because they provided a unique cohort who studied together for four years. The number of students in this cohort included an adequate number of participants to ensure good depth of understanding. All of the participants were active in their local churches and had significant leadership responsibilities, both at the time they were in the class and at the time of their interviews for this study. As a case, this cohort provided a "single unit, a bounded unit"[203] for understanding how students were able to convert theory into practice.

In the spring of 2011, seven students participated in a class, Leadership II, in which the researcher worked as a co-leader. Six of the seven students were able to

[201] Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 61.

[202] Ibid., 62.

[203] Ibid., 65.

participate in this case study. Their ages ranged from nineteen to fifty years of age. Four of them are elders in their local church, and three of these are members of the same church. The youngest participant was leading the youth ministry at the same church. The fifth and oldest student in the cohort served on the leadership board at this church at the time of the class. There was a gap of approximately twenty-one months between the time this cohort studied the class theory and the interviews. All of the participants were males.

The six participants were contact prior to the interviews by telephone, email, and personal interaction. They were asked to participate, and the researcher explained the broad purpose of his research to them. At the beginning of each interview, the participant was presented with the consent form provided by Covenant Theological Seminary. For their convenience and understanding, this was translated into Spanish by the researcher. The form was explained, and each participant signed two copies, one for their records and the second for the researcher.

Data Collection

Two sources of data were used in this study. First, semi-structured interviews were the primary data-gathering tool. Second, the class textbook served as the source of the theoretical concepts that were studied in the class and was used to gauge when transfer of learning took place. This was accomplished by comparing the interview data with the theoretical concepts presented in the class textbook.

This case study utilized semi-structured interviews for primary data gathering. The open-ended nature of the interview questions allowed the researcher to explore each participant’s responses by asking for more detail or exploring a comment made during the interview. The initial interview questions were derived from the research questions,

but evolved according to the participant's responses. The semi-structured nature of these interviews allowed for the researcher to change the order of questions from time to time.[204]

Each interviewed lasted for approximately forty-five minutes. The interviews took place over a six-week period. The first interview occurred in mid-December and the other five interviews were conducted over a two-week period in mid-January. Because of time constraints it was necessary to conduct the five January interviews in quick succession. This did not allow time for the researcher to transcribe and analyze each interview before conducting the next. Five of the six interviews were conducted in Spanish since those five participants are monolingual Spanish speakers. The sixth interview was conducted in English since this participant is bilingual and desired to do his interview in English. The researcher audiotaped the interviews with a digital recorder. Notes were also taken of each interview regarding specific gestures.

Data Analysis

Approximately one month after the interviews were recorded, the researcher began to transcribe them utilizing the software provided by the manufacturer of the digital audio recorder. The transcription process lasted approximately eight weeks. The software allowed the researcher to vary the play back speed and loop segments of each audio file. This allowed him to listen carefully and repeatedly to segments of each interview and to slow down the rate of play back so as to transcribe words, phrases, and sentences carefully. Each interview transcript was printed on letter size paper for analysis and coding allowing a three-inch margin on the right hand side of each sheet. Three

[204] Ibid., 74.

copies of each interview were printed out and collated into three groups corresponding to the three research questions.

Five of the transcripts were typed out in Spanish and the last one in English. The researcher has extensively used Spanish as a second language for the past twenty years. He utilized his own knowledge of Spanish, Spanish – English dictionaries, and the Google translation online translation program to translate the interviews into English. The Spanish transcripts were analyzed in Spanish and only the quotations cited in this dissertation were translated into English.

When the interviews were fully transcribed and printed, they were analyzed and coded using the constant comparative method.[205] The analysis focused on discovering and identifying common themes and patterns across the variation of participants, as well as discrepancies among them. In addition, the textbook served as a guide to compare the interview data to the course's theoretical concepts. This allowed the researcher to compare and code the participant's responses in relationship to the third research question. The process of coding for analysis included looking for specific concepts from the book that were expressed in the participants statements, and for the type of transfer from theory to practice.

Each set of transcripts was used with a different research question that facilitated the researcher's development of categories during analysis. The following research questions guided the analysis:

1. In what ways do concurrent ministry responsibilities enable students to make meaning of the class theory on leadership?

[205] Ibid., 159.

2. In what ways do concurrent leadership experiences motivate students to utilize class theory on leadership in their concurrent ministry responsibilities?
3. What seminary course theoretical knowledge do students transfer to their concurrent ministry context?

This allowed the researcher to use the constant comparative method of analysis to look for similarities and differences among the participants. Written notes in the margins as well as the use of different colored highlighter pens were used to organize responses according to each research question.

The interview protocol contained the following questions.

1. What were your ministry leadership responsibilities during the leadership course? Please describe what you were doing in these areas. How did you carry out these responsibilities? (not just I did this, but this is how I did this.)

2. To what extent did you have to work with other leaders? What was your role on the team?

3. These were the six areas that we looked at in class: Vision, planning, organization, controlling, team building, and leading. During the course, what is one area of study you remember connecting with on a deep level. Why? Was there something in what you were doing in your leadership responsibilities that made it particularly useful? How did you feel when we talked about this area in class?

4. Are there other topics from the class that really struck you as important during the course? What were they? Why were they more important or relevant to you?

5. What were some of the topics in the class that seemed less relevant or less important or made less sense to you? Why do you think that was the case at the time?

6. In what ways did the class change or inform how you viewed leadership? How? Did this impact how you were working in ministry during that time? How?

7. Do you remember having any discussions about course topics with those you worked in ministry during the course? What do you remember about that?

8. In the paper you wrote for the class you mentioned ……., please describe to me what you were thinking about this in relationship to your ministry work?

After the first interview the final question was eliminated because it was difficult for the participant to recall after a twenty-month gap what he had written and why. Instead the remaining interviewees were asked to reflect upon the experience of writing the paper. The following question was used.

9. How did writing the reflective paper impact you? Do you believe it was useful or just another assignment?

The document utilized in this case study was a book written by Robert A. Orr, entitled, *The Essentials for Effective Christian Leadership and Development.*[206] The students read and discussed in class chapters eleven to sixteen of this volume. Those chapters are titled as follows: Chapter Eleven Envisioning, Chapter Twelve Planning, Chapter Thirteen Organizing, Chapter Fourteen Controlling, Chapter Fifteen Team Building, and Chapter Sixteen Leading. The class used a Spanish translation of this book, but for the purposes of this dissertation, the English version is quoted.

Researcher Position

Qualitative case study research utilizes the researcher as the primary interpreter of the data. This can lead to misrepresentations of the data in the analysis. Therefore it is important to clarify the researcher's assumptions, worldview, and theoretical

[206] Robert A. Orr, *The Essentials for Effective Christian Leadership Development*, 3rd ed. (Linden, Canada: Leadership Essentials Press 2001).

orientation.[207] The researcher in this study is an evangelical Christian who has served as an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. He holds to a theistic constructivist worldview. It is theistic because he believes that humans live in a universe created by an infinite, personal, and supernatural God who has revealed himself through what he has made, through the Bible, and through the incarnation of his son, Jesus Christ. God is active in the universe and the researcher believes that it is an open system. This influences his view of constructivism. Because God has revealed himself in a meaningful way, the researcher believes that it is natural to assume that human beings should construct meaning because the world is a meaningful place. He understands constructivism as making sense of what God has created and revealed. It is discovering God's truth and is therefore not simply an individualistic or socio-cultural phenomenon that has its own autonomy.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by several factors. First, the time constraints on the researcher limited the opportunity to transcribe and engage in a preliminary analysis of each interview before conducting the next interview. This limited the use of the constant-comparative analysis during the interview process, thereby also limiting the modification of the interview questions, except where noted in the section on data collection. Had there been the opportunity to space the interviews father apart it may have allowed for the discovery of new insights from the participants.

Second, working from Spanish to English limits the reader from having first-hand knowledge of what the participants said. All translation involves a certain amount of

[207] Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 205.

interpretation. A literal word-to-word translation would render a very awkward English translation that might be unreadable. Ideas that were expressed in Spanish, especially idiomatic expressions, can communicate differently in English. Therefore some of the descriptive richness may have been lost or communicated with less depth of emotion and complexity. This researcher sought to maintain integrity in the translation process, however the reality of the limitations inherent in this translation process needs to be taken into account.

Third, it is not possible to empirically verify how well or to what extent the participants transferred theoretical knowledge to practice. The incidences where they reported transferring theoretical knowledge to practice are based on the testimony of the participants and lack any external verification.

Fourth, the researcher was a co-teacher of the class and this could have created a situation where the participants might have expressed what they thought the researcher wanted to hear, rather than expressing what they really felt and experienced. However, the interviews were conducted twenty months after the class ended, and almost a year after these students had graduated. Therefore, the researcher was no longer an authority figure in their lives. While it is acknowledged that the participants could have skewed their responses to please the researcher, at the same time this possibility was mitigated by the twenty-month gap between the class and the interview, as well as by the fact that the researcher was no longer an authority figure.

Some of the study's findings may be generalized to other educational settings in a Latin American context. Readers who desire to generalize some of the particular aspects

of these conclusions on transfer of learning should test those aspects in their particular context. The generalizability of this study is limited in the statistical sense.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how seminary students in Juarez, Mexico describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in linking theory to practice. To that end, this chapter utilizes the findings of the six student interviews and reports on common themes and relevant insights pertaining to the research questions for this study. Five of the six interviews in this study were conducted in Spanish. These five participants are monolingual Spanish speakers. Therefore, the direct quotations found in the analysis of these interviews are translations made by the researcher based on his knowledge of the language, English-Spanish dictionaries, and Google translation.

Introduction to Participants

Seven alumni of the San Pablo Seminary in Juarez, Mexico were selected to participate in this study, but only six were able to collaborate with this research project. These alumni were in the same cohort and concurrently participated in a class on leadership. Each one had significant leadership responsibilities in their local church at the time of the class. They were all male. In the following section, each participant will be briefly introduced. All names and identifiable information of participants have been changed to protect their identity.

This brief introduction will allow comparisons to be made between those serving in similar and dissimilar contexts. The six participants were all members of Presbyterian

churches in Juarez, Mexico. These churches (there are three different churches) are affiliated with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico. Four of the participants – Juan, Pedro, Rafael, and Pancho – were members of the same church. Julio was a member of a second church, and Adán of the third church. Julio, Pedro, Rafael, and Pancho were elders in their respective churches. Juan had perhaps the least amount of leadership responsibility, and Adán, while not an elder, had leadership responsibilities that paralleled some of the functions of eldership.[208] Their ages ranged from eighteen to fifty-five years at the time of the class.

Juan was eighteen years old and the youngest member of the class. He is single. Shortly before the class began, he assumed leadership of his church's junior and senior high youth. His leadership responsibility was exercised under the authority of a fellow cohort member, Rafael, who was an elder in his church.

Pedro is in his late twenties. He is married. He became an elder about two years prior to the class. His leadership responsibilities included serving on the church's board of elders and leading the worship team.

Rafael is in his early thirties and is married. He was ordained as an elder in his local church about three years prior to the class. His leadership responsibilities included serving on the church's board of elders, and overseeing the youth, and evangelistic ministries.

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[208] According to the constitution and bylaws of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, the congregation that Adán attended was still considered a mission church because it had not reached the minimum number of members to become a particular church. As such he was part of the leadership board that provided congregational oversight, but does not have the classification of eldership.

Pancho is in his late thirties and is married. He was ordained as an elder four years prior to the class. His leadership responsibilities included serving on the church's board of elders and in the church's evangelistic outreach program.

Julio is in his early thirties and is married. He was ordained as an elder five years prior to the class. His leadership responsibilities included serving on the church's board of elders, teaching in the adult educational program on Sunday mornings, and collaborating with the committee overseeing future construction to the church's property.

Adán is in his mid-fifties and is married. He is not an elder, but served as a lay leader in his church on the church's board of directors. He was the secretary of this board prior to the class. As a board member, he worked with the other board members to organize church activities, occasionally lead the worship services, and preach.

In summary, these participants participated in the same cohort and studied the same curriculum, which included the class on leadership. They had ministry responsibilities at the time they participated in the class. With the exceptions of Juan and Adán, they share a degree of homogeneity in their ages and experiences. Juan and Adán represent the two extremes in regards to age and life experience, which includes ministry responsibilities.

Concurrent Ministry Responsibilities and Meaning Making

The first research question sought to determine "In what ways do concurrent ministry responsibilities enable students to make meaning of the class theory on leadership?" Making or constructing meaning is the terminology used by the constructivist learning theory to describe the learning process. According to constructivists, learners utilize prior learning and experience as well as their present

circumstances to construct or make meaning of new information. Learning is an interpretive and active process. It is according to Merriam "how people make sense of their experience."[209] The phrase, "make meaning of the class theory," in the first research question has reference to this process.

When asked to reflect upon their ministry responsibilities and the class theory, the six participants indicated that they constructed meaning in relationship to their ministry responsibilities. From the interviews, seven general categories emerged: life situation, personal life application, experience, reflection, observation, talking with others, and deficiency awareness.

Life situation

Life situation describes the way that a particular life event was impacting the participants at the time of the class. In the case of Adán, his personal financial situation weighed heavily into his responses during the interview. His life situation intermingled with his ministry experience. It was not possible to separate the two spheres. Adán made repeated references to his life situation, even when asked about his ministry experience. When asked to comment on how he interacted with the other board members of his church, he responded with a lengthy story that moved from his leadership role to his personal finances. In his response, Adán began to answer the question when he mentioned the leadership team vote. He had voice and vote as a member of the leadership team. He then began to describe a specific decision that they had to make concerning the donation of a piece of land. He began to talk about the economic situation of the church

[209] Merriam and Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 261.

with these words, “Not all of the members were responsible enough to pay their dues, and I was one of the members who couldn’t pay their dues, and I wanted to…”

From this point he began to speak about his economic situation; he once had money to give generously, but at the time of the interview, he had only two hundred pesos and it hurt to give ten percent. He ended his comments by recognizing that he had gone off on a tangent, stating, “I learned something there, but this doesn’t have anything to do with the class so I’ll tell you later.” This type of response occurred several times in his interview. Adán was unemployed for about eighteen months at the time he took the class, and that circumstance greatly impacted how he understood the class theory. As a result, he made most of his connections to the material in relationship to this crisis rather than to his ministry responsibilities, but not to the exclusion of his ministry responsibilities. Other participants also included personal references to other life situations, but Adán’s responses show this characteristic consistently.

Personal Life Application

Personal life application indicates that the participant understood one or more of the class concepts in relationship to their life. It was mentioned by four of the participants as a part of their meaning making process. These participants understood the theoretical material from the class as it applied to a specific area of daily living.

Rafael mentioned that he was deeply influenced by the concept of envisioning. He saw this as a personal issue, on which he needed to work, before he saw it in relationship to his ministry responsibilities at the church. He repeated this idea three times, making comments such as, “One of the things that helped me a lot in the leadership class was to see myself, who am I and where am I going.” Later, when asked about what he

remembered from the class, he said, “One of the areas that impacted me was about vision. Where am I, and where am I going? This continues to impact my life until today.” Then again, as he reflected upon the responsibilities that God has given him, he restated: “Therefore, I said to myself – What am I doing with the leadership that God has given me? In what ways am I developing it?” He processed the idea of envisioning first in the light of his self-identity. He began to ask himself the following questions:

> Who am I and where am I going?
> Where am I and where am I going?
> What am I doing with the leadership that God has given me? In what ways am I developing it?

Rafael’s understanding of envisioning focused first on his life, before he began to transfer this new concept to his ministry context. He interpreted the function of envisioning by asking these questions. This was a very personal and deep influence in his life, as revealed in his interview, because he repeated it numerous times.

Adán likewise mentioned several times that his personal life response to the class content was an important part of constructing meaning. One example is that when asked what area of the class had the most profound impact on him, he responded, “Of the six areas, I found out that planning was the most important, because if you set your objectives properly, then you know where you are going.” Later in his interview, he returned to this concept in response to the question, “Was it hard to get the other board members to buy into the need to plan?” He explained:

> Yes it was, at that time. Basically, at that time I felt for some of the other members who had a lack of commitment….That was the only thing that really discouraged me, but eventually as a Christian and reading the word of the Lord, you mature, and life also matures you…being without a job…and then…basically letting myself in the hands of God. I mean it was for me a leap of faith…

The researcher than asked him to explain what he meant by the phrase “leap of faith.” He responded:

> Throwing myself into the hands of God. I know I don’t have a job, I know I can’t do, and I know…So I put myself there, and it was hard the first week I’ll say, but then all of the sudden, no pressure, He took over, and all of my money problems, one way or another, they got solved. So, its like okay, so why am I dying for it? That’s the only time I felt that if you put yourself in the hands of the Lord, it all happens. Of course, if you have a plan, it’s easier to follow.

Adán began talking about the other board members and indicated that it was difficult to get them to buy into the planning, but then he switched to his economic situation. At this point, he mentioned the concept of planning. He was then asked whether the above comments referred to his personal life, and he added the following:

> Yes, it included my personal life, because I had plans on it, and they couldn’t occur because of economic involvement…but that became part of the planning too. I started planning more…I started planning more for my own life and my family, and I feel like that too impacted the church because, not too much, but I am pretty sure that it did because people saw that…it happened.

In this explanation, Adán makes a very clear personal life application of planning. His words indicate that because of the financial restraints they were experiencing, he had to plan more carefully. The impact of his family’s economic situation focused his attention on understanding planning as a personal life application. However, this was not to the exclusion of his church responsibilities

Julio also indicated that the course content in the area of team building became meaningful as a personal life application. In response to the question, “What did you begin to do differently in your leadership based on the class in the area of team building?” he responded, “First, I had to learn to control myself. Maybe I couldn’t control [myself]. I had certain areas that I have had to be controlling little by little. My

emotions…" When asked whether this might have to do with demanding his own way, he further explained, "Perhaps to impose, right…like sometimes people think that one abuses authority, right? But this area of controlling myself also had left me. The counsel of other people, and the vision of other people, has helped me to control [myself][210]

These statements indicate that Julio saw personal life challenges related to team building. He needed to learn to control his emotions and desires. When asked if self-control had to do with team building, he responded, "Yes, I believe so, very much so, for me, yes." When asked why, he explained, "Because in a team, in forming a team, it is the way that one has to control himself as a means of directing himself to other people." These statements indicate that he interpreted team building in relationship to self-control. He understood a very clear personal life application of team building.

Finally, Pedro reflected upon what he learned about planning in a personal life application. In response to the question about what he began to do differently in his leadership at church as a result of the class, he responded, "Yes I began to experiment what it is. What I had always...was to do things at the last minute. Therefore I would study one day before the class, but I understand that we have a number of days to prepare for the class and not wait until the last minute. This helped me." His words reveal that he responded to the course in his personal situation: his study habits began to change as a result of his understanding of the concept of planning.

Personal application of the course content seems to play a significant role in these men's lives. It is one way they understood the classroom theory. It became meaningful to

[210] Latin Americans many times will speak in the third person when referring to themselves. This is evident in this quote. Obliquely he indicates that he is the one whom people thought was abusing his authority because he returns to the first person singular.

them, as they saw applications to their personal situations and were able to make changes. These four participants saw unique personal life applications as a means of constructing meaning from the class theory.

Experience

Ministry experience was the third mechanism that was used to construct meaning of the six leadership functions. The participants' ministry responsibilities provided a means for them to process the class theory and served as a laboratory where they could make sense of specific concepts. The participants processed class theory based on their concurrent experiences and vice versa. The theory challenged them to redefine their current understanding of a leadership function, just as their experience enabled them to construct meaning of the theory. It was often difficult to distinguish when experience flowed into theory and vice versa. However, three categories emerged from the data: "back and forth flow," "I did not know," and "I was able."

Back and Forth Flow

Rafael provided a clear example of the interaction between theory and experience, and how the two interact to enable learners to comprehend theory. His example does not flow out of his ministry responsibilities, but rather from his marketplace work experience. However, it does demonstrate how experience is used to construct meaning of theoretical concepts. When asked whether he thought any of the six concepts touched upon in the class were of lesser importance, he responded, "Of the other areas, I believe that they are important to our lives. The other areas of planning and organization." He then explained that his concurrent job requirements helped him to see the importance of the class theory

on organization. Before the class, he had wondered why his employer wanted the employees to separate the trash by type. He said:

> One of the things that I have seen in my secular work is that there was an area that spoke of organization. And inside of that they said, speaking of the trash, they said, "You must separate the trash, you must organize it, you must accommodate and all of this." The class helped me understand this part of organization within my job.

Rafael's comment is illuminating because it demonstrates how he linked the abstract course concept to a concurrent experience. He used his poorly understood work requirement to comprehend an abstract course concept and vice versa. Therefore, he gained an insight into his concrete work situation from class theory. But he also understood the class theory in relationship to his work requirement. His experience flowed into the theoretical concept and served as a laboratory to interpret it.

I Did Not Know

Pedro, Julio, and Juan commented on how their concurrent ministry responsibilities provided feedback into their understanding of class theory. They used phrases like, "I did not know," and "I didn't have an idea" to express how they used their experience to see how their current understanding of leadership was inferior and weak in comparison to the class theory.

Pedro stated that the idea of team building was important to him "…because [he] was just beginning to engage as an elder." Later he added, "In relationship to the panorama that I had about leadership, it was weak, and it did not match the class theory." His words indicated that he began to construct meaning of the basic leadership function of team building by using his concurrent experience. Julio also related that his experience as an elder was useful in understanding team building. He noted, "At the beginning, I

struggled a lot because I didn't have a idea of how to manage a group of leaders." He added that the leadership function of team building touched him deeply, sharing, "Two years ago, the plan of team building was a wonderful help to me." Again, his concurrent ministry experience helped him to understand the process of team building. A final example comes from Juan. He related that it was about the time that he was entering as leader of the youth that he took the class. He stated, "It was very necessary for me to have this material, because it was the first time that I was a leader. I didn't know anything about being a leader." Juan was very clear about his lack of leadership knowledge.

Class theory was useful to these interviewees because it interacted with their experience. Perhaps they did not perceive their leadership weakness before the class, but the class theory certainly awakened in their consciousness an awareness of the deficit that existed, and they used that to construct meaning of the theory. The flow between experience and theory was a two-way street. Each area interacted simultaneously so that it was difficult to determine which came first.

I Was Able

"I was able" expresses how two participants understood theory in experience. By using the theory in their experience, they constructed meaning. Again, it was not clearly delineated when theory flowed into experience and vice versa, although these participants spoke of implementing specific areas of leadership concepts.

Julio spoke on how the class theory about planning was useful to him. When asked what changed in this area he explained:

> Well, a part of this area, two years ago I was also working as part of the construction project (for the church). Therefore, we began to plan for things in the future so that they wouldn't be just last minute, but would

> remain in place, no? Where does each thing go, and certain details like the tubing for gas lines, the water lines, and electric cables.

Planning for future construction was a clear example of putting theory into practice. Julio indicated in this quote that he saw the need to plan ahead, and he finished his comments on this area by stating, “This helped me to be able to plan the things, and to plan them really well.” He found planning to be a very transferrable concept. Pancho likewise indicated that the concept of using evaluation in planning was incorporated into his leadership of the evangelistic outreach teams from his church. He related the following concerning evaluation of plans: “You are checking, is it functioning or not? Is it measurable? Is it working or not?” He then described this in relationship to the evangelism ministry, recalling, “In evangelism there were times when things went out of control. We analyzed, where is the failure? You know you fail, but why did you fail… you analyze and go back and modify, or take away, or put more effort…” The evangelism ministry provided an opportunity to implement the theory in practice. He constructed meaning by using evaluation of plans to analyze their results. He understood that they had to ask questions and change tactics.

Both Julio and Pancho shared about ways they were putting into practice the class theory on planning. Their experiences provided concrete situations where they could implement the theory they learned in the class. Again, it is difficult to determine whether the flow was distinctively from theory into practice, because their prior experience certainly played a role in causing them to see the need to plan and evaluate.

Reflection

Reflection was the fourth way that these students made sense of the class material. Phrases such as, “I realized,” and “I became conscious of,” were sometimes used. In

other instances, the participant expressed awareness that they did not know how to do something or that they were failing in a particular manner. Others indicated that they became aware of a new perspective on their leadership role. The reflection in which they engaged went beyond the final class assignment. That assignment required them to write a reflective paper with three components – a description of their current leadership experience, an explanation of which of the six leadership functions discussed in the class was most challenging, and a reflection and commentary on where they most needed to improve. The insights that they shared in their interviews, however, reveal that reflection continued to play a role in making sense of the material. This reflection resulted in a new understanding that at times was quite life-changing. All six participants indicated that reflection was a means that they used to gain both a new understanding of their particular faults, as well as a new perspective on their leadership role.

Pedro reflected, "I realized that my leadership was lousy" in relationship to planning and team building. As a result, he said, "This began to help me change in my giving of myself to the church, to myself, and to my family."

Pancho reflected that before the class, in relationship to planning and controlling, he would say, "We are going to do this thing, or that, and we would pray about it, but it wasn't in our thoughts that it should work." His interview indicated that he began to understand planning and controlling in relationship to his area of responsibility – evangelism. Specifically he related, " What I most remember was evangelism. We were working in a routine way, let us say. We went out and if there weren't any results, well okay, there is no problem. But looking at it from another way, we began to ask, 'Why weren't there any results?'" Pancho's words in these statements indicate that he reflected

upon his prior way of administering the evangelism program. He recognized that he lacked the skills of planning and controlling. He became aware of a failure in his leadership. Reflection on his fault of not expecting results led to a greater understanding of the need to plan and control as he began to evaluate the results.

Adán recounted that the class opened his eyes to the need to lead in his church. He stated, "When I took the class, it really kind of opened my eyes more…and so we can do it, we cannot not just help [the pastor] out, but we have to take over for him eventually, and that is one thing I didn't have." He also shared that reading and discussing the leadership principles in the book caused him to become aware of his failure to apply these same concepts when he studied them in business administration. He stated, "Wow, this is the same thing. It did hit me in a sense, because I knew about it and I wasn't using it to my life. So at that moment, I realized, 'I know what has to be done, and I'm not doing it.'"

Juan shared that before the class, he was a loner who worked by himself. He said, "Always when they gave me a task, I would do it alone," and " I was closed to working with others." But as a result of understanding team building, he began to open himself to others and seek to work with them. Julio related a similar issue in team building. He stated, "I didn't know how to relate to others and build a team that can work together. Two years ago, the idea of team building was a wonderful idea to me." In both cases these students reflected upon themselves. Their self-reflection was instrumental in recognizing a weakness in either their attitude or their ability in the area of teamwork.

Rafael also added, "One of the things that helped me a lot in the leadership class, is to see myself. Who am I and where am I going? My vision expanded. It grew bigger. It

took another way of seeing my leadership and eldership." Rafael's words reveal a deep change that occurred in his self-perception. He reflected upon his role as an elder and a leader and commented that it was the result of the leadership class. It caused his vision to expand and provided a new way of seeing himself.

Each of the participants expressed ways that the class led them to reflect upon their current understanding of leadership and how to apply new concepts. Through reflection, they began to see themselves in a new context. They were made aware of failures, but also of the possibilities before them. Their reflections are evidence of understanding class theoretical concepts.

Observation

Observation of others was another means by which two students made meaning of the class material. The experience of these two students reveals two different mechanisms. First, Adán had the opportunity to observe the co-teacher, who was also pastoring his church. He explained:

> Obviously it helped me when we were doing the planning with Pastor X, to take those issues there and think, "Oh, okay, this is…and he is quite organized." So I really felt, at that point, "This is what I saw in the class and this is how you apply it." I was impacted in the sense that I knew how it had to be applied.

Adán's observation was illuminating because in this portion of the interview, he described what his leadership responsibilities were in his church, and yet he interjected this comment without prompting. He was deeply impressed by what he saw because he could make a connection between what the teacher communicated in the classroom and what he observed in ministry practice. This statement illuminates the power that

observation plays in meaning making. The theory became practical to him as he observed his teacher putting it into practice.

Second, Julio mentioned that the dynamic of the class helped him to understand what it means to build a team. When asked why the idea of team building touched him, he responded, “I believe it is because, it was an area that I did not have. And when they showed me, I believe that was very impacting for me. In the class, how we participated, how it was developed…how I saw the structure…this stayed with me.” When asked whether it was reading the book or the class discussions that were of greater importance to him in this area he went on to say, “It was in both. It was the material in the book, but also in how the class developed. The dynamic of the class.” When asked to describe exactly what in the class structure impacted him, he responded, “At times we need someone to show us the potential that we can give if we form a team. Pastor X moved us all. In the way that one can share their opinion, the experience of another – this helped me.” Julio’s explanation of the power of observation in meaning-making is important to note. His perceptions about team building grew as he observed how the co-teacher developed and managed the class discussion. More than the written material, it was what he observed that helped him understand teamwork.

Conversation

Conversation was the sixth category that emerged from the interviews. The interview data reveals that students do not always understand concepts fully based solely on their reading of the book. The process of meaning-making occurred as they discussed the concepts with their fellow classmates and with others in their church. These

conversations occurred on three levels: class discussions, conversations with classmates outside of the class, and conversations with others in their churches.

Class Discussion

First, course concepts read prior to the class were not clear in the student's minds until there was class discussion. The class time was structured to emphasize discussion and interaction between the students and the teachers, and the students were expected to read the assigned chapters beforehand. The students were encouraged to ask questions, and the professors also asked questions. Based on these questions, the class discussed and interacted in a free flowing manner.

Juan and Adán both mentioned specifically that the class discussions were very helpful to them in understanding the material they had read. Juan, in response to the question about whether it was reading the material or the discussions in class that most helped him understand team building, stated, "I believe that it was the discussion in the class that… helped me." Later in the interview, when asked whether it was the reading, the class discussions, or the reflective paper that was most useful to him, he expounded upon the usefulness of the class discussions. "I always believed that the discussion is the most useful in the seminary. It is the discussions that we have in class. For example, I read the material, but the class affirms what I have read. I like being in the class to learn because I believe I learn more." Juan was very direct about this, and his statement indicated that he found this true in all his classes. Adán also indicated that the class discussions had the most impact on him. He stated it succinctly, "I would say the discussions. It is interesting to find out that some people had different ideas, but they weren't wrong at all. So it was, I'll say the class itself, the discussions." When asked

whether the discussion in class helped him to fix some of the ideas in his mind or to understand them better, he affirmed, “Yes they fixed it more and put more into perspective.”

Conversation With Classmates

Talking with classmates outside of the class discussion was another means that helped the participants to make meaning of the class concepts. Four of the students shared that they were able to clarify and deepen their understanding by talking with their classmates.

When asked whether he talked with any of his classmates outside of the class time, Adán mentioned that he remembered talking with two of his classmates out side of class, and that it helped him to remember that he had studied these same principles in business management. He shared, “I told them, yeah, that’s what I studied. I studied business management, and those are the principles that are based…But I knew ahead of time. I knew the principles, but I didn’t have the application.” His understanding of the class concepts was strengthened and clarified as he talked with these two classmates.

Julio spoke of the blessing of talking with his classmates concerning the class. He said, “With Pedro we exchanged some ideas and with Rafael also. We exchanged ideas or thoughts about what a blessing it is to have or if everyone had the same vision about growing” Julio did not specify which ideas and thoughts they exchanged, but it was apparently about the class concepts, since he was asked specifically whether he talked with any of his class mates about the class material.

Juan noted that he was able to talk with Rafael outside of the class time. When asked what was most beneficial, he explained, “I liked it, because when I was in the class,

I was going to ask about what I didn't understand well. Therefore I talked with Rafael and I understood it because he has a beautiful way of explaining things." Juan was a more reserved student in class, probably because of the age difference between him and the other students. However, his quote makes clear that he found it useful to talk with Rafael outside of class.

Finally, Rafael remembered conversations that he had with the others in the class, the topic of which turned to self-examination of their deficiencies in their leadership. This was a type of group self-reflection. He recalled,

> One of the things that we saw as alumni is that we all have many deficiencies in our leadership. And for good or bad, we were aware that the deficiency was not just in our being, but that it was in all of our fellow leaders. Therefore we saw a great need, all the students. How do we begin to work?

Rafael indicated that he and all of his cohort members talked about their leadership characteristics and were made aware of the deficiencies they had, as well as those of other leaders. This led them to consider ways to work to overcome their weaknesses. The collective discussion was useful to him and others in transferring the material to their lives.

Conversations With Others

Several of the interviewees also mentioned that they had meaningful conversations with other leaders in their churches. Talking with others outside of the class was a means of reinforcing what they were learning. As they understood particular aspects of leadership, they were interested in sharing their insights with others. Rafael explained that once he began to understand how developing a vision applied to him he shared it with others in his church. He explained,

> As a result of the class, once I began to understand this, I couldn't keep it to myself, but I began to share it…as a counselor to the youth, with the families with which I had contact and with each class that I had in the church. I tried to make this known, that every person would analyze, "Where am I and where am I going?"

Rafael's excitement about his own understanding of envisioning led him to share the concept with other members of his church. The carry-over to others demonstrates an awareness of his understanding of this concept.

Julio also mentioned that he shared with other elders and leaders in his church what he was studying in the class about teamwork. He affirmed, "Yes, I shared with some and with those that were closest to me. I shared the vision of working as a team, and they are doing it, they are also working on this area." In this case, Julio was able to see positive results from his conversations with others about teamwork. When asked whether he thought that talking with others helped him deepen his understanding of teamwork, he responded, "I believe so. It is an area that at times we don't like, but it is a strong area that we must have as leaders and elders…Therefore it is an area that we have to have." Talking with others outside of the class deepened his understanding of the significance of teamwork.

Class discussions, talking with their classmates outside of class, and sharing with others helped these participants make meaning of class theory. First, it served as means of reinforcing the material in their minds. Second, it allowed for clarification, and third, it served as a means of promoting reflection.

Deficiency awareness

Deficiency awareness is the seventh area that describes how these participants made meaning of class theory. Rafael mentioned this clearly in his interview, as he spoke

for all of his cohort members and other leaders. He said, “We were aware that the deficiency was not just in our being, but that it was in all of our fellow leaders. Therefore, we saw a great need, all the students. How do we begin to work?” The other participants made these types of remarks as they became aware of their deficiencies in their leadership skills while, they made meaning of the class concepts. These comments are scattered throughout the other themes, but occur more frequently under the theme of reflection, as the students became aware of their shortcomings and failures. This theme is also tied into the motivation theme discussed below, especially under the two categories labeled: feelings of inadequacy, and awareness of prior failure.

The participants in this study indicated that they utilized their ministry responsibilities to construct meaning of the class theory on leadership. Many times, their personal life experience intermingled with the ministry experience so that it was impossible to separate the two spheres. Constructing meaning was a very personal issue, and each participant expressed unique ways that they made meaning. Life and ministry experiences were vital to the process of constructing meaning. The participants drew upon these experiences as they studied the class theory to make sense of what they read and discussed.

Motivation to Utilize Class Theory in Concurrent Ministry Responsibilities

The second research question focused on ways in which concurrent leadership experiences motivate students to utilize class theory on leadership in their concurrent ministry responsibilities. An analysis of the interviews reveals that the six participants in this study were motivated by their concurrent leadership responsibilities to utilize class theory on leadership in a variety of ways. Their responses can be divided into the

following seven categories: feelings of inadequacy, awareness of prior failure, feeling special to God, positive results, “Oh, I can do this,” the emotional weight of ministry responsibilities, and God’s intervention.

Feelings of Inadequacy

The participants indicated that feeling inadequate to perform their leadership roles was a motivation for utilizing the class theory. These feelings of inadequacy took two forms. First, they expressed general feelings of inadequacy, which they described as being incapable or overwhelmed because they felt new to a leadership position. Second, they expressed specific areas of inadequacy, where they stated that they did not know how to perform a leadership function. In both cases, the participants expressed that the class concepts were helpful to them. They were motivated by their feelings of inadequacy to utilize the class theory in practice.

General Inadequacy

The six interviewees all expressed that they felt generally inadequate. Rafael provided a good description of general sense of inadequacy that these students experienced in the following statement:

> One of the things that we saw, as students, is that all of us have many deficiencies in this area of leadership. And for good, or for bad, we were aware that not only was this in our being, but that it was in our own fellow leaders. Therefore, we saw a great need – all of the students. How do we begin to work? Therefore, it was one of the things that impacted us.

Rafael’s statements indicate that the students recognized their short-comings or inadequacies. As a result, they asked the question: “How do we begin to work?” Apparently, this question expresses a motivation to want to find answers, and it motivated them to utilize the concepts they were studying in class. This general feeling of

inadequacy can be categorized in two different groups: first, feeling inadequate because of being new to a leadership position, and second, a general feeling of being incapable.

Rafael, Pedro, and Juan expressed that they felt inadequate because they were new in their role as a leader. Rafael used the word “overshadowed” to describe his experience. Pedro stated that he felt tense, and new or very new. Likewise, Juan expressed, “I didn't have an idea about being a leader.” Rafael expounded on his reason for feeling overshadowed when he explained, “During this time I did not have much experience, and there were other elders who had eight or ten years already as elders.” Pedro also expressed seven times in his interview that he felt new to the position of elder. For example, these three statements highlight how strongly he felt his newness. He shared, “I was beginning my leadership, just beginning.” He continued, “As an elder I was just beginning in the way.” He added, “As an elder, I had just begun.” As a result, he explained, “I was still listening to the other elders in the meetings…while I was silent. I didn’t give an opinion for fear. I didn’t say almost anything. I felt very new.” Pedro’s experience reveals how powerful the feeling of inadequacy was to him at that time. Finally, Juan also spoke of being new to his leadership position and stated, “It was the first time that I was a leader.” It is significant that these three men spoke of the powerful feelings that hindered their leadership.

This feeling of newness to their leadership roles powerfully motivated these participants to utilize the class material. Rafael went on to reveal that the class concepts helped him to see himself differently. He shared, “One of the things that helped me a lot in the leadership class was to see myself, ‘Who am I, and where am I going?’” This helped him see the importance of his leadership role and motivated him to utilize the

class theory. Juan similarly expressed that the class material was useful to him. He explained, “It was necessary for me to have this material…I didn’t have an idea about being a leader.” The theoretical concepts presented in class evidently helped Juan to understand leadership better, as he emphasized the idea that it was necessary for him to have the class. He clearly stated that it was the first time he had been given a leadership position, and his leadership responsibilities were evidently causing him to feel ill-equipped, which motivated him to use the class theory.

In these three instances, the feelings of inadequacy were related to being new to a leadership position. The experience was new, and it created, as in Pedro’s example, strong feelings of inadequacy that in turn motivated these students to utilize the material.

A second type of inadequacy articulated by the participants was related to general feelings of inadequacy. Julio and Adán voiced this type of inadequacy in broad and general terms, which described that they felt incapable of exercising good leadership. Julio responded to the question about how the reflective paper helped him, noting, “I felt unable in many areas.” Later when asked whether he remembered an emotionally impactful moment in the class he described once again that he felt inadequate. He explained, “One of the things that it did [was] to make me see that as a leader I was nothing – that I lacked many tools in order to see myself as a leader. I felt incapable of being in the group.” This was a general inadequacy, because he does not express any specific area where he felt incapable, only that as a leader he was nothing and that he lacked many tools.

Adán explained that he too felt inadequate. When I asked him to be more specific about how his ideas about leadership changed, he responded:

> Well, yes…I became more conscious that it's not just the pastor who has to be the leader. But we who are a part of the church are role models for the younger generation and our own peers next door to us…and feeling like the weakest link, or knowing how weak you are in some areas. You really have to work hard on…it

In this response, Adán expressed feelings of general inadequacy. He recognized that he had leadership weaknesses, but he did not mention any specific inadequacies. However he clearly expressed that he was motivated to utilize the material by his feelings of inadequacy as he was confronted with the course content.

These two men expressed that the general sense of inadequacy served as a means of thinking anew about their leadership roles. Their feelings of inadequacy motivated them to utilize the class concepts, either as a result of feeling new in their roles or because of their perceived weaknesses as leaders. This general inadequacy, although expressed in broad terms and not specifically applied to any one area, was at the same time a very powerful motivation to utilize the material.

Specific Inadequacy

Three of the participants – Julio, Pancho, and Juan – also expressed specific areas of inadequacy. They are specific because they each shared areas where they did not know how to perform a specific leadership function. They recognized the importance of the class concepts, which helped them to overcome those areas of difficulty.

Julio named two areas where he felt inadequate. The first was in the area of team building. When asked what class concept had the great impact on him, he responded, "The area that I did not have was team building… I didn't have it. How to relate to other people and build a team in order to work." The second was in the area of planning. The researcher asked him what other area impacted him, and he explained, "One, the way of

how to make a plan. This also impacted me, because I also didn't have, not even have an idea of how to make a plan." In both instances, he distinctly mentioned that he was deficient in both of these areas. He used almost the same words, "I did not have" to describe his inadequacy. In both cases he related that the class material was useful to him. He continued, "Two years ago, this plan of team building was a very beneficial help to me," adding, "Yes, it impacted me a lot in the class, in the project that I can do it, and with others, how to plan something, this impacted me." His perceived inadequacy – not knowing how to preform a specific function of leadership – motivated him to utilize the class concepts on team building and planning.

Pancho also related an instance in his evangelism ministry when he recognized his inadequacy. When the researcher asked him whether before the class he had been doing things without a great deal of planning and vision, he responded, "Yes, that's correct." The researcher then questioned, "And when you did things like that, they generally turned out badly?" He responded with the following explanation:

> Yes, a failure. Once, for example, we went out…everything was negative...They ran us off from some visits that we made. From different neighborhoods they ran us off…This made me think. First, for those who were with me, I didn't have a method…there was no strategy to confront the situation. I returned, I wept alone, and afterwards I talked with the pastor.

He shared this in reference to running an evangelism program without a great deal of planning. His words expressed that he felt inadequate because he did not have a strategy for dealing with rejection. This inadequacy – specific to their evangelism program – was a motivation to utilize the class material on planning.

Juan also related that he did not know to build a team. When asked which leadership concept impacted him the most, he responded, "The idea of team building

impacted me a lot. Why, I don't know, always when they gave me a responsibility, I did it alone. I didn't know how to deal with other brothers." He acknowledged that he did not know how to deal with others. A few questions later, when the researcher asked him what emotion he felt when the class discussed team building, he replied, "It caused me to be happy, because then, I was closed to working with others. When I was entering into teamwork, it was difficult, but it was something I needed. To work in a team." This second statement clarified that he recognized his need to learn how to work with others. He was motivated to utilize the class theory on team building because he felt inadequate in this area.

These three students' examples provide a very clear insight into how a feeling of inadequacy in a specific area motivated them to utilize the material. Their desire to want to know how to do something because they realized their inadequacy was a powerful catalyst for learning the material.

Awareness of Prior Failure

The awareness of prior failure in a ministry situation was another motivation for utilizing class theory. There were instances where students recognized that they had been wrong, either in their actions or in their attitudes. This awareness was the result of the intersection of the class theory and their concurrent ministry responsibilities, as these two worked in tandem. The interviewees used words like, "I thought," "I realized," and "I was confronted." Rafael summarized it very well when he expressed, "It is a great step forward when you become aware that you are doing things the wrong way."

Rafael, Juan, Pancho, and Adán recognized a failure in their actions that motivated them to utilize the class theory. Rafael shared this statement concerning his

style of leadership, “I realized that I was a leader, but in the sense of saying, ‘Do this or do that.’ It impacted me to see that I was doing things badly. It changed the way of doing things.” Juan shared a similar moment when he too realized that he had viewed leadership wrongly. He stated, “I thought that the leader didn’t do anything but give orders, ‘Do this or do that,’…But it is the opposite, the leader has to be more, to direct the group so that they follow the vision.” Pancho, when asked to describe how his ideas or perceptions about leadership had changed, explained, “Before I said, ‘We are going to do this or that.’ Yes, we prayed as for any project, but it was not in your mind that it had to work.” His words reflected a change in his actions concerning planning. Adán simply recognized “I know what has to be done, and I’m not doing it,” in regards to using the leadership concepts of planning and controlling. These four respondents expressed clearly that they became aware of failures in their leadership as they compared class theory with their practice.

Pedro shared a very personal insight that expressed a failure in his attitude towards leadership. He was confronted with his pride and the belief that he was an elder because he deserved to be an elder. This was in response to a question about what changed in his leadership as a result of the class. He shared, “…my own pride. Therefore when they mentioned me as a leader in the church…” (at this point he made the motion of putting on a coat and tie.) The researcher asked him to explain these motions and he continued:

> But in the class, when I confronted this, I realized that this was false, as if being an elder was a position I deserved. Therefore, to make these motions (putting on a coat and tie), signifies that I deserve it, a position that not just anyone can carry, but I can do it. But when I confronted the class, I realized that I was completely wrong. That it’s not me. It is not my pride.

> That it is not for those who can. We know from whom all things come, from God. This debilitated me.

Pedro's description indicated that he felt that he had to defend his leadership prior to the class. He thought he deserved to be an elder. His action of putting on a tie and coat expressed an attitude of pride. But he states above that the class theory caused him to confront this attitude. The class caused him to realize that his attitude was wrong and this awareness was a motivation to utilize the class material.

Feeling Special to God

Feeling special to God is a category that describes a moment when a change occurred in the way the participant saw his leadership role. It involved a change from a participant feeling inadequate and perhaps failing as a leader to understanding that he was special to God, who had entrusted to him a leadership position in his church. Only one participant indicated this as a motivation, and his description is a powerful picture of what it can do in a person's life. Rafael shared the following in relationship to how he worked with his fellow elders. He was feeling overshadowed by their years of experience, but the class helped him.

> One of the things that help me a lot in the leadership class was to see myself: "Who am I, and where am I going?" Once I established this, who am I, not to deny that I needed to grow, but to feel in one sense special to God, who had established me in a church to take care of it. This gave me value and humility. "Good, okay, I am put here by God to take care of God's people…My participation has value"…My vision expanded. It got bigger. There was another way to see my leadership and eldership.

He was positively impacted as he saw the importance of his leadership role. He saw that his participation had value because he had been placed in leadership by God to take care of God's people. Feeling special was a powerful positive emotion that motivated him to

utilize the class material because he could see how beneficial it was to himself and to the church.

Positive Results

A positive result was yet another motivation for the students to utilize the material in their ministry responsibilities. These results are categorized as internal and external. Internal results relate to what the participants perceived or felt about the concept's usefulness to them personally, either in their lives or in their leadership roles. External results are where the participants observed positive ministry developments and reactions from others. Seeing it work motivated them to utilize the class theory.

Internal

Internal positive results reflect a change in how useful the students found the concepts for themselves. This resulted in positive changes to their self-perception and capabilities, and it became a motivation to use the class concepts in their ministries. This internal perception that the material was useful had a tremendous impact on several of the students. Four of the participants noted the motivation they experienced because of the internal positive results.

Adán reflected upon what it meant to write the reflective paper for the class, recalling, "The experience of [writing the paper]… I mean…feeling the information useful for your life and for the church is different. It's a world apart, I'll say." He started by expressing an idea related to writing the paper itself, but did not finish that thought completely before he added the last part. He expressed that the motivation to utilize the material because it is useful sets it apart from other learning experiences. His comments were set in contrast to other sections of his interview, where he mentioned that he studied

these concepts before in the Juarez Technical Institute but failed to apply them, perhaps because he did not at that time see their importance to his life and to the church.

Others expressed in emotional terminology that they found the material useful. Juan, when asked to whether he felt any emotion when team building was discussed in the class, responded, “It made me happy, because I was closed to working with others. When I was beginning to work on a team, it was difficult for me, but it was something that I needed, to work in a team.” Pedro said, “I felt content, because I saw a way to help my church without looking at myself.” Julio said, “This encouraged me,” in reference to planning, because, “I did not have, not even have how to do it.” These positive emotions indicate a change in perception concerning the importance of the material. They are these participants’ internal responses served as motivations to utilize the concepts.

The internal perception that the material was useful was also expressed regarding perceived changes in their interactions with others. Pedro noted several times that he was changed by the class theory, affirming, “Yes, my leadership changed. I learned to make decisions not for myself, but for the group, to mature. It helped me mature.” He related, “I could deal with the session, as a teacher, as a helper with the group. I could talk with more confidence with them, I could tell them this or that, without the pretense of having to say, ‘I am a leader, I am a leader,’ much more relaxed…I could speak with more confidence with the elders and in every area.”

Juan mentioned very briefly that one way his leadership changed was that “I could involve myself with the group…” He moved from being aloof to being able to draw near to others. When asked about the results of the change in his being, he added, “It is better now, I can better reach people without hassle.” Julio also expressed how

learning about planning was internally motivating. He shared, “This helped me, to be able to plan things, and plan them really well…This encouraged me and helped me enormously also. I could share my opinion and help also.” As these three participants expressed, they felt motivated to know that the class concepts were helping them to relate better with others.

External

The external positive results are those results that the interviewees perceived as positive changes in the development of a ministry. Their reflections can be categorized into two areas. First, some participants described a positive result as the development and advancement of a particular ministry. Second, a positive result was seen as a positive change in the attitudes and participation of others. These external positive responses motivated the participants to utilize the class concepts in their concurrent ministry responsibilities.

Rafael illustrated how observing a ministry develop and advance impacted him. He shared that he was frustrated with a ministry of trying to get families in the church to have family devotions and to establish small groups. He described it this way:

> I was in charge of cell groups. We were establishing cell groups in the church and in the same families. My function was to visit and encourage the brothers and sisters so that each home would be an evangelistic center. I battled a lot because I realized that one of the things that many families lacked at that time, was the lack of prayer, and the lack of reading [the scriptures]. This at a certain point of their lives was a weight and a frustration, because it was something that they were not doing, and then someone comes and wants to establish it. It was frustrating for these families.

Rafael’s words indicated that he and others were frustrated by his visits and attempts to establish cell groups and encourage people to read the Bible and pray.

He then explained how he utilized the class material on team building and he mentioned the positive results he saw.

> When I saw this situation, what I did was to form a group. I looked for people, brothers and sisters, who wanted, who were committed to God, to prayer and reading [the scriptures], and I formed a group. And from this group, we began to form cell groups. It was much easier for this servant, it was much easier for this servant, because I no longer felt alone…It was a blessing to other families because this expanded. The cell groups grew.

The positive results that he experienced motivated him to utilize the class theory on team building. He was no longer alone, but had the support of like-minded team members, and they saw the blessing it brought to others as well as the growth in the ministry. All of these positive external results were a motivation to utilize the class concept on team building.

Juan also described the joy of seeing a change in his ministry with the youth at his church. In the area of organization and planning, he stated that before, "We did things but very disorganized. Yes we did them, but it was not established what we were going to do." Later, he described this change in the organization of their activities, recalling, "It changed. All of the activities were well organized, and everyone had something to do. If we were ten, everyone had something to do. And there wasn't just one doing everything, but everyone was doing a part. And everything came out better. The activities came out better." Juan's description of the change he observed in how the youth organized and planned activities showed how that experience motivated him to utilize the material. This positive result reinforced the utilization of the concepts.

Julio, when asked whether he had talked with others in his church about the leadership principles, stated that he had. He explained, "I believe that I talked with some others that had, and with those that were closer to me I shared about envisioning and of

working as a team…and they are doing it. They are also working on this area." He was encouraged that they had not just talked about these concepts, but that they were utilizing them. These positive results were a motivation to utilize the class theory.

Juan also shared about positive results in attitudes and participation among the youth at his church. He mentioned in his interview that he saw a positive change in attitudes and participation among the youth in his church as a result of team building. When asked which leadership concept impacted him the most, he mentioned team building. He said, "This helped me doing this and forming a team." He continued, "It impacted me, because it was no longer only my idea, but it was the idea of many others, and well, with many ideas we can join them together, and it was greater, and it was more specific." He was then asked how the atmosphere of the meetings changed. He elaborated, "I was seeing their happy faces, because we were doing what everyone wanted to do and not just what I wanted to do. Everyone began to participate." As Juan began to utilize the concepts of team building, especially seeking to include others in the planning and execution of activities, he noticed that the group dynamics changed for the better – happy faces and group participation. These positive results were an ongoing motivation for Juan to continue to utilize these concepts in his ministry.

Oh, I Can Do This

The realization that they could put the theoretical concepts into practice was a motivation mentioned by three of the participants. This motivation had two components. First, the participants realized that the concepts were implementable. It was not just theory without connection to reality. Second, they realized that they could personally put into practice particular leadership functions. It is not always clear which of these two

components is foremost in their comments, and probably the realization that the concepts were useful led them to understand that they could personally use them. This realization expressed in the interviews, as they reflected upon their inadequacies and failures in comparison to the class concepts, resulting in an eye-opening moments when they realized, “Oh, I can do this.” Pedro and Adán seemed to highlight the first component mentioned above, while Julio focused his comments on the second component. In either case, the concepts became more tangible to them as a result of this realization, which was a motivation to utilize them.

Pedro commented that he came to understand that team building was an important concept and that “the function of the leader is not to do or just to say, ‘Do this and this,’ but rather to say, ‘We are going to do this and this.’” He was then asked if the class helped him understand or put into practice this concept related to team building, and he responded, “I believe it was both. The overview and the understanding and we can do this. Particularly, ‘We can carry this out to execution.’” His response indicated that the idea that class theory was implementable motivated him to utilize it. The concept of team building was not beyond his ability.

Adán also mentioned similar responses during his interview. Prior to the class, for example, he stated that he viewed leadership in the church as the responsibility and prerogative of the pastor, but this changed. He shared,

> Yes, that was my understanding at the time. But when I took the class it really kind of opened my eyes more… and so, we can do it, we cannot just help him out, but we have to take over for him eventually, and this is one thing I didn’t have… not even in mind, it wasn’t even there. And then I became aware of it.

Adán's words reveal that he experienced a change in his ideas about leadership. Although he did not specify which class theoretical concepts he was referencing, it was evident that he became aware that the class concepts were more than just theory. In particular, he described the emotional impact of the class on him when he realized that he had studied these same concepts at Juarez Technical College. He exclaimed, "Wow, this is the same thing. It did hit me in a sense, because I knew about it, and I wasn't applying it to my life. So at that moment, I realized, 'I know what has to be done, and I'm not doing it.'" When asked whether this was discouraging to him at the time, he replied: "I would say, no. I would say that it was eye-opening to me in finding out that's why I'm miserable, because I'm not using what I have. So I said, 'Yeah, lets go and put it into practice.'" Adán's realization that the class theory was usable revealed the power of this motivation.

Julio expressed that he was motivated because he understood that he could implement the class theory. This was mentioned in two areas: team building and planning. In responding to the question about whether he remembered feeling any emotion during the class discussion concerning team building, he responded, "I felt good. I felt motivated. I felt happy, because, I don't know if it was because of my companions [fellow students]…This is mine, no? We can share this, we can do this together." Later in the interview, he was asked if any other concept impacted him, and he responded, "Yes, one, the way that one can make a plan. This impacted me because I didn't have it, not even how to make a plan. Yes, it impacted me a lot in the class. The project that I can plan, or with others, how we can plan something. This impacted me."

In both these instances he mentioned the idea of being able to implement the class theory. Later, in reference to what he felt when the class discussed this topic, he mentioned, “It made me feel sad in part because I did not have this tool. But at the same time, I felt happy for what I had and that I could do something. Like a game of emotions, no?” The idea that “we can do this,” and “I can plan,” and “how we can plan,” motivated him to utilize the class concepts.

These three students expressed clearly that the idea that they could put class theory into practice motivated them to utilize it. This realization had two components. In these three instances the participants expressed both the idea that the concepts were implementable as well as the “Oh, I can do this” sentiment. Understanding that they could utilize the class theory in their practice of leadership motivated them to do so.

The emotional weight of ministry responsibility

Five of the students expressed the idea that the emotional weight of their concurrent ministry responsibility was a motivation to utilize the material. Julio expressed this most clearly. When asked whether some of his ministry responsibilities motivated him to study the material in the book, he responded, “I believe that as a leader, or one who is out in front always has to make the way better. One has to show a better way. I think the only way of making things better…one, as a leader must be prepared. This motivated me to study the book.” His statement demonstrates that he was motivated to utilize class theory because he felt the responsibility of leadership. He directly connected his motivation to study the book with his sense of responsibility that a leader must make the way better by being prepared.

Pancho shared in his interview that he felt the emotional weight of leadership responsibility. In reference to the question regarding ways in which his concurrent leadership responsibilities motivated him to learn the material, he responded with the following explanation:

> Yes, for example as a leader, I have to draw near to the brothers, to the church. For example, to make visits to talk and pray. I felt the responsibility as a leader, the duty with the church. For example, with the bench warmers, the ones that come to sit… "Hey brother, why don't you help me there?"

Pancho's comment highlighted how his ministry responsibilities motivated him. The emotional weight of ministry responsibility was a real issue to Pancho. Later, he commented on how he was impacted by writing the reflective paper and noted, "For example, as an elder in the church, you have to confront problems…there are difficulties…what will happen? What to do? For me, leadership was very large, a lot of responsibility." Finally, he reminded the researcher that twice in his reflective paper he asked the teachers to pray for him, "because I was preoccupied with the weight (of leadership)…" and "I asked that you all pray for me because I felt that the weight (of leadership) was very great for me." Pancho expressed several times that the weight of ministry responsibility was a reality for him. It motivated him to consider how to utilize the class theory.

Juan, when asked whether he thought the class concepts had a greater impact because of his leadership responsibilities, stated, "Of course, it was more impacting to have a leadership role and studying this…it impacted me, because I took it, so to speak with more desire than if I had not had the responsibility." Juan indicated that his ministry responsibilities gave him a greater desire to utilize the class theory. He further explained,

"Yes, it encouraged me, because since it was the first time, as I told you, it encouraged me to know more…[about] what I was about to enter to do." He felt that the emotional weight of his newly assigned ministry responsibility with the youth, and his lack of experience and "know how" were motivations to use the material.

Adán described a problem that their church had with planning and how this encouraged him to put the class concept of planning into action. He recalled,

> …because as part of the board, we were planning, but how would I say, because of time constraints we didn't do enough, or that's what I felt. We didn't go even as far as three months. We tried to do it three months at a time, but we needed more time, and by the time we were able to meet again, it was time, time was a constraint against us at that moment, and we wanted to do something that had to be done in fifteen days. And I mean, yes we did it, but it didn't come out as good as it is coming out now that we are working with Pastor X.

Adán described a situation where the board was having trouble planning far enough in advance because they were not able to meet as frequently as they had hoped. When asked how often they met to do this planning, he responded, "It was supposed to be every fifteen days, but it got to the point where it got to a month or month and half. So it was hurting us and it didn't do good at that point." He was then asked whether he felt encouraged when the class talked about planning, and he responded, "Yes I remember I got encouraged into getting that into my church, get the planning stage." In Adan's case, the reality of their failure to plan with enough anticipation was a ministry responsibility that weighed on him and motivated him to bring this to his church.

Finally, Rafael shared another perspective on how ministry responsibilities impacted his desire to utilize the class concepts. He noted that his family responsibilities motivated him to utilize the concepts in the class, not just his leadership responsibilities in the church. When asked whether there was another reason why the concept of

envisioning touched him so deeply, he responded, “Yes, family, in my home. Yes, because as a couple I don’t believe that we had set a goal. Where are we, and where are we going? This helped me to see this area in a broader way. In our marriage, as a couple. Where are we as a couple?” Later he elaborated that being married is an important leadership role, noting, “Yes, I believe that is true, because the moment that God gave me a wife I became a leader in my home. And I believe that the class not only impacted in the area of being in an organization, like the church, but in my personal life.” He did not deny that ministry responsibilities were a factor in motivating him to utilize the material, but he saw a broader application to his marriage and personal life. This is an important point, since it reveals that students were motivated by family responsibilities as well as by ministry responsibilities.

Overall, it seems clear that the emotional weight of ministry responsibility was a motivation to these students to utilize the class theory in their concurrent ministry and home responsibilities. As they felt their responsibilities, they were motivated to utilize the class theory. They understood and articulated that it was important for them to have these responsibilities because it created opportunities for them to see how useful and important the class theory was to their situation.

God’s Approval

The final motivation mentioned by four of the interviewees contains references to God’s approval. This seemed to be an important motivation that was not directly solicited in the interview, but was expressed by them. The role they attributed to God ranged from direct statements expressing the idea that “God was teaching me” to oblique statements that acknowledged the work of God in their lives.

Adán, Pedro, and Rafael attribute a direct role to God as a motivation for using class theory. Adán stated, "That's why I tell you it helped out my personal life… because that was my experience. I was getting there. I felt like God was teaching me." Pedro, in describing changes he experienced in his leadership as an elder mentioned that he felt that "God was working in me." Rafael mentioned that God helped him see his leadership potential in the class. He explained, "Therefore, thanks to God, I see in my life that I am a natural leader. I have seen it in every one of my areas. Maybe I didn't want to accept it, but God has shown me that, and by means of the class, he showed me more." These statements directly attributed to God a role in these interviewees' motivation to utilize the class concepts. Their statements, "God was teaching me," and "God was working in me," and "God has shown me that and by means of the class he showed me more," indicate that they attributed to God an active presence in their learning process. This made a difference in how they utilized the class theory.

Two students also mentioned in a more oblique manner that they felt that God was an active part of their learning process. Rafael described what happened to him as he wrote his reflective paper,

> In one sense sad because I saw myself and saw that my leadership is…but in another sense, I felt happy, because in this form the gospel came to my life in order to open up an area of my life to be sensitive and recognizing that I am bad. And ask God to forgive and ask that he transform me by the Holy Spirit to make things better. This encouraged me a lot.

In this quote, Rafael did not directly attribute to God the idea of teaching him, but he did allude to the role of God in the process. He alluded to this through his reference to the gospel, which opened up his life to be sensitive and to recognize this faults, as well as to asking God to forgive him and transform his life. He was enabled to reflect honestly

about his faults and failures because of his faith in God. He was sad as he recognized his disabilities, but he was also happy because he understood God's forgiveness and the transforming power.

Juan also alluded to the role of God in his motivation. He responded to the question about whether his ministry responsibilities helped him to utilize the class material with this statement: "I believe that it was God who acted, because then, nearly, about [this time], I entered as a leader of the youth. I entered with this material." Juan's words revealed that he believed that it was not just the newness to leadership that motivated him to utilize the material, but that it was also God, who acted at the right time by bringing together this class with his responsibilities. He explained his need with these words: "Yes, it was very necessary for me to have this material, because it was the first time that I was a leader. I did not know anything about being a leader." Juan also made another oblique reference to the role that God played in his learning. When asked how he felt about writing the reflective paper, he explained, "It was the Holy Spirit that was running in my heart. Because, yes, I felt bad, because in another way I was being egotistical, being a leader, I was not humble like I should be." He recognized that it was God [the Holy Spirit] who was working in his life as he recognized faults in his leadership skills.

The motivation that these students felt when they recognized either that God was directly teaching them or that he was active in their learning process highlights the role God played in their motivation to utilize the material. Although this was not mentioned with as much breadth and depth as some of the other categories, it did seem to be a significant factor for them.

Concurrent leadership experience motivated the participants to utilize class theory. Their leadership experience provided them with a way to compare theory with practice. They experienced negative emotions as they realized that prior actions were inferior, and they experienced positive emotions as they saw the usefulness of potential and actual applications. Concurrent leadership responsibilities provided a laboratory that motived them to utilize the class theory.

Transfer of Learning

The third research question focused on the following: "What seminary course theoretical knowledge do students transfer to their concurrent leadership context?" Every interviewee in this case study reported that they did transfer course theoretical knowledge to their concurrent ministry context. Their statements indicated that this transfer occurred in three broad areas: attitude, social behavior, and action. Attitude refers to a change in their perception about the importance of one of the six leadership concepts. Social behavior refers to a change in how they related to other people as they transferred one or more of the leadership concepts. Action refers to a change in their practice of leadership.

Transfer of learning is defined by Haskell as, "the use of past learning when learning something new and the application of that learning to both similar and new situations."[211] Transfer of learning can be categorized as either "near" or "far." Near transfer is empirically measurable and generally occurs between similar types of problems. Far transfer is characterized as a more general transfer.[212] Far transfer characterized the first two areas of attitude and behavior. Near transfer characterized the

[211] Haskell, xiii.

[212] Macaulay, 4.

last area of action. Determining when near transfer occurred is subjective in this case study for two reasons. First, the researcher only has the testimony of the participants on which to rely; there is no external means of empirically verifying that transfer occurred. Second, the amount of transfer is not measureable. Measuring how well the interviewees applied theoretical knowledge to concrete action is beyond the scope of this research project.

The course theoretical knowledge covered six functions of managerial leadership. These six functions include envisioning, planning, organizing, controlling, team building, and leading.[213] Each of these six functions was defined, and specific skills needed to effectively implement each function were presented to the students. These skills addressed the attitude, social behavior, and actions needed to utilize each function. It should be noted that although the researcher co-taught this class, neither he nor the co-teacher intentionally or inadvertently named these three categories in the class. The researcher became aware that the textbook touched on these three areas of transfer during the process of analyzing the data and comparing the participants' responses to the theoretical material in the book. He also labeled the three areas of transfer before the connection was made with the textbook.

Attitude

Attitude refers to how a participant's personal view of leadership changed as a result of the class. Four participants shared that they had a new attitude about the importance of one or more of the six functions presented in class. This change occurred as they became aware that their current understanding of a leadership function did not

[213] Orr, v.

coincide with the class theoretical knowledge. There were two types of attitudinal changes noted in the data – a change in perspective about leadership's importance and a change in how the participants understood that leaders exercised leadership. These changes in attitude suggest that transfer of learning took place.

Leadership's Importance

Adán and Rafael shared how their attitude changed regarding how they viewed their importance as leaders. Adán noted succinctly, "I became conscious of the need to lead." He related this in the context of expounding upon how the class helped him to understand that all the men in the church need to lead. He explained,

> Yes, yes, because I was thinking of the leader was…that the leader always had to be the pastor. And in a sense he is. But at the same time, each of us has to take the role model of Christ…and take it upon ourselves to become leaders for the church. Because we are the men of the church, we are the head of the family… we are leading our family first and then take part in the church. We have to lead the rest of the people and got to be an example…Well, yes, I became more conscious that it's not just the pastor who has to be a leader. But we who are a part of the church are role models for the younger generation and our own peers next door to us.

Adán's words about leading in the church show that he experienced a change of attitude. His words described a "before" and "after" experience. The "before" context was revealed by his statements regarding the pastor's leadership in the church. His prior conception was that his leadership role was not very important. He thought that the pastor was the leader. He also became conscious that others could lead along with the pastor. It is evident that a change took place in his thinking. The "after" context highlights his new attitude. He began to see the importance of his leadership as a role model of Christ. The men of the church should be leading, as role models to the younger generation and their peers. This change in attitude demonstrated a transfer of theoretical class knowledge.

Rafael also expressed that the class changed his way of understanding his leadership. In describing how he worked with the other elders of the church, he used these words:

> Well, okay, I am placed here by God to take care of the people of God. Where am I going? My participation has value. That is where I said, Where am I going? Here I am and I am going there. My vision expanded. It grew bigger. It took another way of seeing my leadership and eldership. This impacted me a lot, because it changed my way of thinking and of seeing things.

In this quote, he expressed that his vision expanded as he began to understand that God had placed him in the church as an elder and leader. His words indicated that a radical change occurred in his attitude about the importance of his leadership. Later in the interview, when asked him how his leadership responsibilities encouraged him to study the class theory, he commented,

> It was strength in my life to know about leadership…Therefore, thanks to God, I see in my life that I am a natural leader. I have seen it in every area of my life. Maybe I didn't want to accept it, but God has shown me that and by means of the class he showed me more. Therefore I said to myself: "What are you doing with the leadership that God has given me? In what ways am I developing it?"

In these statements, he indicated that because of the class, his understanding about his leadership changed. He came to believe that he was a natural leader, but that he was having difficulty accepting it. Again, his words indicated that a change took place in his attitude. In the light of this new attitude, he began to question what he was doing with the leadership God had given him.

Adán and Rafael spoke of how their views of their leadership had changed. Because of the class theory, they understood that it was important to lead and to develop

their leadership skills. This indicates that transfer of learning took place as their attitude's changed.

How Leaders Lead

Juan and Pedro spoke of a similar change that occurred in their thinking about how leaders exercise leadership. They both mentioned that before the class, they understood leadership to mean that the leader gave the orders. Juan stated, "Before, I thought that the leader didn't do anything but was ordering, 'You do that, and you do the other.'" Pedro echoed this sentiment in these words, "I can comment broadly that the leader's function is not just to do or just to say, 'Do that or the other.'" Both men understood leadership to be authoritative and dictatorial – the leader gives orders. However, both men indicated that the class theory changed their attitude. Juan continued, "…but it is to the contrary. The leader has to do more, to direct the group so that they follow the vision." He spoke these words after he realized that he had been sitting back and watching. He explained, "It impacted me when I saw that I did nothing, so to speak, and everyone one else was doing, and I was watching." Juan's words painted a different understanding of the leader's role that moved from giving orders to leading from the front. Pedro also spoke of the change in his attitude, as his awareness of leadership changed. He shared, "Rather, it is to say, 'We are going to do this and that.'" Pedro indicated that the leader does not just give orders, but comes alongside others and expresses unity with the word "we." Both men expressed that their thinking changed as they became aware of this basic leadership principle. They had a new attitude concerning the way leadership should operate, which indicates that transfer of learning took place.

Social Behavior

Social behavior refers to a change in how the participants related to other people. Their new abilities to relate to other people demonstrate transfer of learning of particular concepts from the class. Three of the participants indicated this type of social behavioral change. They mentioned specific changes in their ability to relate to others.

Juan described several times in his interview that he had been a loner who did not know how to work with others. He used these words to describe his social behavior, "Always when they gave me a responsibility, I would do it alone. I didn't know how to cope with other brothers,.." His social behavior was to do everything by himself. He repeated this thought once again in his interview when the researcher asked him to discuss how the youth reacted to the change in his leadership. He reiterated, "Always, the activities, I organized them, maybe with the help of the advisor, but always it was I, I, I, always." His use of repetition emphasized his status as a loner. He further indicated that he found it difficult to work with others. When the researcher asked him how it made him feel to work on a team, he elucidated, "It made me joyful, because then, I was closed to working with others. When I was trying to work in a team, it was difficult for me, but it was something I needed, to work in a team." Juan's social behavior was to do things alone because he found it difficult to work with a team. However, he hinted that his behavior changed and he specifically stated at another point in the interview that he changed "to involve myself with the group and specify each one…" He further expounded on this when he described, "It impacted me because it was not just my idea, rather it was the idea of many brothers, and then, with more ideas we could join the ideas

and it was something bigger and something more specific." This comment revealed that he began to work with others in the group to plan their activities.

In response to a question about how the atmosphere in the meetings changed, he further illustrated the change in his social behavior, by sharing, "I was seeing their happy faces, because we were doing what everyone wanted to do and not only what I wanted. Everyone began to participate." Juan indicated that the "happy faces" he observed were due to his change of social behavior. He began to include them in the planning, and they began to respond. He also provided another example of his change in social behavior when he revealed,

> It changed then, all of the activities were well organized and everyone had something to do. If we were ten, everyone had something to do. Not just one person was given something to do, but everyone was given something to do, and everything came out better, all things. The activities came out better.

From this statement, one can observe the change in Juan's social behavior. He spoke of including everyone in the organization and implementation of the activities. Earlier in the interview, he talked of doing everything alone. He would plan and execute things by himself. After the class he started talking about including everyone in the planning, organization, and implementation. Juan's words expressed a clear change in his social behavior. He learned how to work with others and this implies that he transferred theory to practice.

Pedro shared about a significant change in his ability to relate to people as a result of the class. He stated, "Yes, my leadership changed. I learned to make decisions not for myself, but for the group." This statement was general, but it did indicate that he was beginning to think about the group's needs above his own. He later described that his

leadership changed, because he began to "…relax with the other elders, as a teacher, in helping the group." He added, "I could talk with more confidence with them and can tell them this and that without having the burden of saying, 'I'm a leader,' 'I'm a leader,' [I was] lighter." He expanded, "But even more in relationship to the music. Practically, the young adults were my age, therefore I could talk with more confidence. I took off the mask." His social behavior changed. His explanation revealed that he was better able to relate to his peers, both the elders and the music team that were his age. His words revealed that the level of change he experienced was due to his increased confidence, without the need to be defensive about his leadership. This change in behavior is evidence of transfer of learning.

In a similar way, Julio shared that he too changed his behavior in relationship to teamwork. He commented, "The area that I didn't have was forming a team. I didn't have…how to relate to other people and to make a team. Two years ago, this idea of forming a team was a really good help to me." His statements indicated that prior to the class he did not understand how to form a team because he found it difficult to relate to others. Further along in the interview, when the researcher asked him what he did differently, he replied, "One, I learned to control myself. Maybe I couldn't control. I have had some areas that I have had to be controlling little by little. My emotions…" His implementation of the team-building concept was evidently related to learning to control himself. When asked if controlling himself meant that he demanded his own way with others, he explained, "Perhaps to impose, right?" He then admitted, "But this area of self-control also had gone from me." When asked to describe why the idea of team-building was important to him, he further stated, "Because in the team, in forming a team, it is the

way that one has to control themselves so you can direct yourself to other people." Julio's responses indicated that he was impacted by the idea of team building because it enabled him to understand the importance of controlling his own impulses and desires. He explained further, "…depending on who you have in the team. If it is an adult, I believe that you have to give them the right to begin, and if their opinions are good, to recognize them…Everyone has a right [to be heard]. To listen, I believe is one way of controlling and forming a team."

Taken all together, the idea of controlling one's self and giving others the right to be heard indicated that Julio understood and applied two key concepts of team building as they related to the team leader. He described the team leader as one who, "…is considerate of the opinions and feelings of others…is a careful listener," and does not become defensive, closed-minded, or unduly argumentative when discussing opinions."[214]

Julio transferred these aspects of the teambuilding concept to his social interactions with others. He became less defensive about his opinions and began to listen to others, which he saw as keys to team building.

These three men shared ways in which their social behavior changed. They described changes in how they related to others in their leadership responsibilities as a result of the class. This is evidence of transfer of learning.

Action

Action refers to the participants' descriptions of how they began to utilize class theory in practice, apart from their changes in social behavior. All of the participants in

[214]Ibid., 244.

this case study indicated that they transferred class theory into their ministry practice, and that this was near transfer. Three of the six leadership concepts were consistently mentioned in the interviews as being transferred into concrete ministry practices: planning, envisioning, and teambuilding. The following analysis will therefore be grouped under the three functions of planning, teambuilding, and envisioning.

Planning

The majority of the participants indicated that they transferred the concept of planning to their ministry situations. There were two key similarities in their descriptions that evidence the near transfer of the class theory. First, they spoke in ways that indicated that they understood that their prior habits and actions in relationship to planning were incorrect. Transfer of learning took place, as they grew aware that their prior actions needed correction. Second, they revealed that they began to practice the actions associated with planning. Again, this is evidence of near transfer because they applied the theoretical knowledge gained in the class to their specific concrete ministry situations.

Blindfolded

"Blindfolded" summarizes how five of the participants described their inferior manner of planning prior to taking the course. Adán did not specify any particular failure in this area, but his words demonstrated his recognition that planning is important. He shared, "I found out that planning was the most important, because if you set your objectives properly, then you know where you are going. If you don't plan for the future, you're blindfolded, basically." When Pedro spoke about what he began to do differently in his leadership role, he responded, "I began to experiment what it is, what I have always had, which was to do things at the last minute."

Juan described in a similar fashion his habit of leading the youth ministry, recounting, "We would do things, but very disorganized. Yes, we did them, but it was not established what we were going to do." Julio also indicated that he struggled with this type of attitude when he shared the importance of, "…starting to plan some things ahead that they not be momentary…" Finally, Pancho expressed a similar sentiment when he spoke about what he began to do differently in the evangelism ministry. He said, "What I remember the most was evangelism…we were working in a routine way, so to speak. We went out, and if it didn't work, well no problem." Phrases and words like "last minute," "disorganized," "momentary," and "routine", speak of operating blindfolded. The interviewees recognized that this way of acting was insufficient to meet the demands of their responsibilities. They evaluated past actions in light of the theoretical knowledge they studied in class, which revealed the near transfer of learning.

Planning the Route

These participants also spoke of how they began to implement the course concept of planning to their leadership responsibilities. Evidence of transfer was observed in two ways: immediate planning and looking ahead. Both of these aspects of planning revealed that the participants understood and transferred the following concept about planning presented in the textbook. Planning is "devising a course of action to be used to accomplish an objective or goal."[215]

Adán's story clearly illustrated how he and others utilized immediate planning. He shared a personal story about a trip he had planned to attend a training seminary in Mexico City. He stated, "In a sense, I had everything planned to go, and in a sense I knew

[215] Ibid., 141.

I couldn't go [because of the lack of money], but it happened, because I had everything ready. My clothes were clean, everything was ready." His comments revealed the immediate aspect of planning. He was ready to go. He had prepared for the possibility of going, even though he knew it was a remote possibility. His story brought the reality of planning down to the immediate need to plan.

"Looking ahead" describes the more common way that the interviewees spoke about their planning activities. It indicates taking a longer-term view. Adán most clearly expressed this in his interview. He described the failure of the church board to plan ahead when he recalled,

> Because as part of the board, we were planning, but how would I say, because of time constraints we didn't do enough, or that's what I felt. We didn't go even as far as three months. We tried to do it three months at a time, but we needed more time, and by the time we were able to meet again, it was time. Time was a constraint against us at that moment.

These words expressed the frustration that Adán experienced at that time. The class enabled him to understand the importance of planning, and he was able to evaluate his and the leadership board's practice. Earlier in this interview, he expressed that he had learned that "planning was the most important thing… If you don't plan for the future, you're blindfolded basically." His description illustrated the reality of this statement. He recognized that they needed to plan farther ahead. He stated that this practice did change, and that at a later time, "They had the whole year planned."

Pedro, Juan, Julio, and Pancho also indicated that long term planning was a way they transferred the class theory to practice. Pedro, once he recognized his prior failure to study ahead, explained, "But I understood that we have a process of days, preparing for the class…" He changed his study habits by looking ahead and planning for the next

class. He further indicated that this carried over to his ministry responsibilities, and he stated that planning ahead by preparing beforehand was a change he made ‘in the church, in my personal life, and in my family.” Juan explained that the youth meetings were better organized because he began to look ahead. He described, “All of the activities were well organized, and everyone had something to do. If we were ten, everyone had something to do, and it wasn’t just one person in charge of it all. Rather, everyone had a part.” He planned ahead so that everyone was involved.

Julio indicated that he also understood and implemented looking ahead. In relationship to his responsibility for future expansion of the church’s property, he shared, “Two years ago, I was also working as part of the construction project. Therefore, starting to plan some things ahead so that they not be momentary...but remain for all of life.” His statement indicated that he saw the need to plan ahead. Finally, Pancho indicated that he transferred planning to his ministry, although he did not specify how. He stated, “When we decide to do a project, it is one hundred percent failure without planning. I learned that you have to know what your goal is. Then you can keep working.” Since he was leading the evangelism program in his church at that time, it may well be that he had this in mind, especially since his future references were to this ministry.

Both immediate planning and looking ahead describe ways that the students transferred the class concept of “planning the route.” They were able to make near transfer of this concept to their ministry situations.

Evaluation

Pancho spoke of another application of planning. He alone among the six participants mentioned the aspect of planning that had to do with evaluation of plans. The class textbook describes it this way: "Often there is initial planning and then no evaluation or further planning. Planning must take place continuously."[216] When the researcher asked Pancho what he began to do differently in his leadership, he explained, "First in the area that corresponded to me [evangelism]. First, I would analyze and finish [saying], 'We are going to measure, was it good or bad? Where did I fail?'" He was then asked to be more specific and added, "But looking at it from a different perspective, we began to ask, 'Why weren't there any results?'" These sentences expressed the idea of evaluation. By asking these questions, Pancho expressed that he transferred the concept of evaluation to his ministry situation.

The near transfer of learning that these participants shared is related to aspects of the leadership function of planning. They did transfer learning, first by recognizing how they did things in an inferior manner prior to the class, and second, by transferring declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge as they sought to implement class theory.

Envisioning

Envisioning is defined by Orr as the process of seeing a future desired result.[217] According to Orr, it is the key to leadership because it provides direction for the leader and the organization.[218] The near transfer of envisioning by Rafael was evident from his repeated references to it during his interview. He made it clear that he applied it deeply to

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[216] Ibid., 147.

[217] Ibid., 132.

[218] Ibid., 131.

his life. Rafael spoke of the impact that the concept of envisioning had on his life – as a person and as a leader – and his comments reveal that there was near transfer of learning from the class theory into practice.

Early in his interview, Rafael spoke of the application of envisioning to his life. He shared the following in response to the question about how he worked with the other elders of the church:

> One of the things that helped me a lot in the leadership class is to see myself: "Who am I, and where am I going?" Once this was established, Who am I?, not to deny that I need to grow, but to feel special to God, that he established me in the church to take care [of it], that gave me value and humility. "Well, okay, I am placed by God to take care of the people of God. Where do I go?" My participation has value. That is where I say: "Where do I go? I am here and I go there." My vision expanded. It got bigger. It took on another way of seeing my leadership and eldership. That impacted me a lot, because it changed my way of thinking and of seeing things.

These comments showed that Rafael began to envision a future for himself that he had not seen before. There was a change in how he understood his role as an elder in the church. He shared this in the context of explaining how he had been working with the other leaders in his church. He felt overshadowed by the other elders, who had more experience, but he began to see an expanded role for himself as an elder placed by God in the church. His comments resonated with the following definition of envisioning, taken from the class theory, "Vision involves seeing an image of the future, an ideal or standard of excellence, and a quality of uniqueness or distinctiveness – an acute sense of the possible."[219]

Later, when asked which of the six concepts had the greatest impact on his life, Rafael responded with the following words:

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[219] Ibid., 132.

> Yes, one of the areas that impacted me was that about envisioning. Where am I and where am I going? This continues to impact my life until today. Today by the grace of God, he has called me to be a worker. I am beginning to work. It is a new phase in my life. It is part of my vision: Where am I and where am I going?
>
> In the beginning, I did not capture well what it meant to envision. But, when we went, just getting into the class, because it was a personal analysis. I believe that, yes, it impacted me a lot because when I entered the seminary, I believe that I didn't have any vision in the sense of what do I want? Rather, I was invited and by God's grace, I entered, and there God impacted me with this. I am here, where am I going? That impacted me a lot in my life.

This revealed that Rafael transferred the concept of envisioning to his life and ministry. To be called to be a worker in his ecclesiastical context was the first step towards ordination. He stated that when he entered the seminary, he really did not have a vision about the future, but this changed in the leadership class. He repeatedly stated in his interview the question that appears above in reference to envisioning: "Where am I and where am I going?"

Rafael also applied the envisioning function to his ministry responsibilities when he began to share the concept with others in the church. He described it this way,

> As a result of the class, once I was understanding this, it was…I did not keep it to myself, but I made it known …as a counselor of the youth, to the families with whom I contacted, and with every class that I had in the church, I tried to make this known…That every person would analyze to see, "Where am I, and where am I going?"

He further described his efforts to influence others in this area with the following statement,

> "I didn't want it to be something that for one week and no more was, making known about envisioning. Rather, [I hoped] that it would be something in our lives, a life style, that we would always be analyzing…I was always influencing them in this sense. Until today, I hear brothers that are putting it into practice, "Where are we and where are we going?"

These two statements demonstrated Rafael's efforts to encourage those who were directly under his leadership to develop a vision.

Rafael's comments indicated that he was transferring some aspects of the function of envisioning to his ministry responsibilities. His words, "Where am I, and where am I going?" appear to be an application of another definition of envisioning from the textbook, which states, "Vision takes us from the now and all of its "status quo" to the future, to the front line of action."[220]

Team Building

The concept of team building was not clearly defined in the textbook used by the participants in the course. Rather, the textbook's author provided an explanation of the concept's importance, a description of personality types, the role of a team, the advantages of working together, choosing a team leader, the role of team members, and other material related to team building. In this broad range of topics, there does emerge a basic understanding that team building is necessary for effective leadership and organizational advancement.

The transfer of the concept of team building was most clearly communicated by Rafael. He provided a specific example of team building in his interview. The context of his remarks was a description of a ministry where he tried to encourage church families to have devotional times and to form cell groups. He described his frustration by sharing,

> I battled a lot, because I became aware that one of the things that many families lacked at that time was the lack of prayer, the lack of reading [the Bible]. At a certain point in their lives, this was a burden, an annoyance, because it was something they were not practicing, and all of the sudden someone came and wanted to establish it. It was frustrating for these families.

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[220] Ibid.

He spoke of battling a lot and of the burden and annoyance that they felt when he encouraged them to begin. His response was to use team building. He explained:

> When I saw this situation, what I did was to form a team. To look for people, brothers that wanted, that were dedicated to God, to prayer and to reading [the scriptures], and I formed a team, and with this team we began to establish cell groups. It was much easier for this servant, because it was much easier for this servant, I no longer felt alone. Both they and the servant were growing in this sense. It was a blessing to the families because it expanded. The cell groups grew.

His experience with forming a team to help him promote cell groups in the church was a good example of using team-building concepts. He looked for people who shared his concern, and together they were able to accomplish what he alone could not do. There is evidence of near transfer of the concept of team building – working together to accomplish a goal.

The transfer of learning illustrated in the areas of attitude, social behavior, and action revealed that the participants did bridge the gap between theory and practice. They transferred learning to their attitudes as their perspectives about leadership changed. They transferred learning to their social behaviors as they began to interact with people differently, and they transferred learning to action as they implemented specific concepts in their ministries. Transfer of learning is not easily measured, but these participants provided evidence that it does occur.

The participants in this study indicated that they transferred class theory into concrete practice via three mechanisms. First, they indicated that transfer occurred as they experienced a change in attitude concerning their leadership. Second, they transferred class theory to practice as they changed their social behavior. Third, they demonstrated near transfer as they shared how they implemented class theory into action.

These three mechanisms represent three key learning areas that often interact and are interdependent. Although they have been teased apart in this analysis, they are in reality intimately interrelated, and each is equally important to the transfer of learning.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how seminary students in Juarez, Mexico describe the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in transferring classroom theory to ministry practice. Little research has been done to explore how learners describe their learning experiences. Gordon Lynch and Stephen Patterson note, "Comparatively little work has been done on what students learn and value from their training in practical theology."[221] Cathlin Macaulay agrees, "There is little research on transfer of learning as such."[222] Based on this lack of research, this study sought to provide insight into how learners describe the importance of their concurrent experience in the process of transferring declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge.

Theological education is important to students, seminaries, Bible colleges, and to the church. Each group has particular interests in desiring the best outcome from the learning experience. Students want to be prepared to enter their ministry with the confidence that they will know how to effectively utilize theory in practice. Theological institutions need to have a consistent "track record" of producing competent leaders for different ministry settings. The church longs for Christian leaders who will be able to lead the institution into the future. It is important to gain deeper insight into how the

[221] Lynch and Pattison: 144.

[222] Macaulay, 1.

learning process can be more effective to help learners bridge the gap between classroom theory and practice.

Towards that end, the following research questions guided this study.

1. In what ways do concurrent ministry responsibilities enable students to make meaning of the class theory on leadership?

2. In what ways do concurrent leadership experiences motivate students to utilize class theory on leadership in their concurrent ministry responsibilities?

3. What seminary course theoretical knowledge do students transfer to their concurrent ministry context?

The review of literature in chapter two and the interview analysis in chapter four provided insight into the ways students transfer theory into practice. This case study focused on one cohort of students at the San Pablo Theological Seminary in Juarez, Mexico. The six participants in this study, through their recollections, provided valuable observations about the importance of their concurrent leadership experiences in helping them to connect theory and practice.

Summary of the Study

This study provided insight into the important role that concurrent leadership responsibility played in the learning process of the six students at the San Pablo Theological Seminary in Juarez, Mexico. Both the literature review and the interview data revealed the importance of prior and concurrent experience in the process of transferring learning from the classroom context to practice. The difficulties that learners face when transferring theory to practice are often related to their lack of prior and concurrent experience. Sigmund Tobias and Thomas M. Duffy, editors of *Constructivist*

Instruction: Success or Failure, note the following distinction between pre-service and in-service teacher education.

> A challenge in pre-service teacher education courses is that the students do not have sufficient prior knowledge of teaching in the classroom. In their teacher preparation courses, it is hard for the students to see the significance of the theories and map them into their future pupils' behaviors…It is much easier to work with in-service teachers. They can bring to mind relevant cases and juxtapose their own classroom wisdom with the ideas presented by the professor.[223]

These words stress the important role that experience plays in the transfer of learning. Experience is tangible and enables learners to make connections between theory and practice. Learners utilize prior and concurrent experience to construct meaning of theory. Pre-service students have difficulty making connections between theory and practice because they lack experience. In contrast, the in-service teachers have many experiences that they use to make sense of the ideas presented to them. They are able to more easily make connections between theory and practice.

The same difficulties are true of theological education. Burns illustrates this with these comments, "As the participating pastors reflected on their seminary education, they viewed it with sincere appreciation, but saw it as limited in providing an understanding of what they would truly experience in ministry."[224] Pre-professional theological students experience the same limitations that arise in pre-service teacher education. Learners find it difficult to understand theory when they have no corresponding prior and concurrent experience to utilize as they construct meaning. Burns explains that while the pastors that he interviewed appreciated their seminary education, they understood that it did not

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[223] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 39.

[224] Burns, 273.

provide them with a realistic understanding of what they would encounter in the pastoral ministry.

The literature review highlighted the role of experience in the learning process. One of the key components of adult learning theory is that adults bring significant experience to their formal learning situations. This experience needs to be utilized in order to enrich their learning. Likewise, the other literature areas – pre-professional education, constructivism, experiential education, and theological and biblical concerns – all highlighted the important role of experience in helping learners to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The interview data also underscored the role that experience played in the learning process of the six participants in this study. The participants' recollections recount the numerous ways that their concurrent leadership experiences enabled them to construct meaning of class theory, motivated them to utilize it in practice, and allowed them to transfer it into practice. Their memories provided tangible evidence that prior and concurrent leadership experience was used to transfer theory into practice. Their stories flesh out the literature review and present it with a human face. The complexities of human learning are illustrated in their words, allowing the researcher and others interested in this subject to gain insight into ways and means to promote the transfer of learning.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the literature and research will interact in order to identify practical findings that those involved in theological education should keep in mind when preparing curriculums to integrate class theory and experience. Curriculum design– the overall

curriculum of an institution as well as the individual curriculum for each class – needs to take into consideration ways to integrate class theory with experience. The literature review and data analysis identify the importance of experience in the learning process. It enables learners to link theory to practice, and then to link practice back to theory. This enriches the depth of learning, and it diminishes the theory/practice gap by promoting the transfer of learning. According to Robert E. Haskell, "The aim of all education…is to apply what we learn in different contexts, and to recognize and extend that learning to completely new situations."[225] Therefore, it befits institutions, educators, and learners to understand the importance of integrating theory and experience.

The discussion of findings in this section will be arranged according to the three research questions previously listed. However, in reality it is difficult to separate the three concepts, because they are interrelated and impact one another. Constructing meaning is closely aligned with the transfer of learning because the learner has to interpret declarative knowledge in order to use it as procedural and conditional knowledge. When learners transfer theoretical knowledge to practice, they are constructing meaning and receiving motivational feedback from their experience. Finally, the motivation to utilize class theory flows out of their meaning-making and transfer efforts. These three areas are presented separately, but they are strongly interwoven into the whole complex nature of human learning.

Constructing Meaning of Class Theory

The first research question explored the role of experience in enabling the participants in this study to make or construct meaning of class theory. Constructivism is

[225] Haskell, 3.

one of the literature areas used to understand the learning process. Constructivism as a philosophy of learning has deep roots in postmodernism. For this reason, the philosophical underpinning of constructivism conflicts with a biblical worldview, because it denies the existence of absolute truth, and emphases that each individual constructs their own truth. Constructivism in the postmodern worldview denies the existence of absolute transcendent truth. Therefore, if the philosophical roots of constructivism lie in the postmodern worldview that denies absolute and transcendent truth -- How can it be applied to theological education? And, Is it possible to be a theistic constructivist? While it is not the purpose of the dissertation to investigate these two questions, I do believe that there are aspects of constructivism that are compatible with a biblical worldview with the following limitations and qualifications.

First, constructivism can be understood as a set of instructional methods. Constructivism promotes a view of learning that highlights the learner's active involvement in making sense of God's world. Learning is active because transferring declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge is an active process. It cannot occur without engaging the learner in the process of making sense of the content. HeeKap Lee states, "Constructivism-based instructional models are compatible with faith-based education by encouraging students to be self-reflective thinkers through being actively involved in the learning process."[226] Constructivism-based methodology recognizes the need to start with what the learner's prior knowledge and experience, concurrent experience, and the use of reflection to help the learner make the transfer. Roso explains, "For the Christian educator, Scripture supports the use of constructivist

[226] Lee, 58.

methodology without supporting the philosophical premise upon which constructivism is based."[227]

Second, a theistic constructivist understands "constructing meaning" to signify that the learner is discovering God's truth. The word "theistic" redefines sense-making as understanding God's truth that is unchangeable and not constructing one's personal truth. God's truth, revealed in the physical universe, as well as in the scriptures is the metanarrative that governs and informs what sense-making means. In this view learning is making sense of what God has revealed. Because human beings are finite, fallible, and marred by sin the process of sense making is neither perfect nor complete. There is room for new discovery and new insights. But this does not deny the existence of absolute truth or imply that truth is relative because individuals construct their own understanding of God's absolute truth.

The literature and data analysis revealed the importance of prior and concurrent experience in the process of constructing meaning of class theory. The four literature areas cited in this study – adult learning, constructivism, experiential education, and theological/biblical concerns – all highlighted the role that experience plays in constructing meaning. The learning theory of constructivism postulates that learning is an active process because it involves sense-making. The learner constructs meaning of new information based on prior knowledge and experience, as well as on concurrent experience. Cognitive psychology highlights the importance of experience in the process of constructing meaning of declarative knowledge as it is transferred to procedural and conditional knowledge. According to Bruning et al, "…almost all learning combines

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[227] Roso, 43.

declarative, procedural, and conditional elements. No matter what the content domain, declarative knowledge – although a basic building block of all expertise – is most valuable when linked appropriately to actions."[228] Experiential learning also points out that field experience "serves as a link between theory and practice."[229] Atkinson notes, "…equipping for ministry is far more than the cognitive experience. Germane to ministry-related education is experience."[230]

Likewise, Jesus taught by utilizing experience. His followers did not just hear his words, they also observed his actions and had opportunities to imitate his actions and proclaim his word when he was present with them, as well as when he was not present. Jesus incorporated experience into the learning process. He did not isolate his teaching to a formal classroom setting. These four areas of the literature focus on the role of experience in enabling learners to make meaning of theory. Declarative knowledge is interpreted as it is evaluated in light of experience. Learners make sense of theory through the lens of their experiences.

The research data confirmed what the literature strongly emphasized, but it also expanded upon it by providing three key mechanisms that the participants in this study used to construct meaning of the class theory. These mechanisms are important to educators and learners, because they describe some of the ways that experience enables learners to make meaning of declarative knowledge. In chapter four, seven categories were identified as being significant ways of constructing meaning. These included the following: life situation, personal life application, ministry responsibilities, reflection,

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[228] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 39.

[229] Hillman, 4.

[230] Atkinson: 7-8.

observation, talking with others, and deficiency awareness. From these seven categories three mechanisms are identified as describing significant ways learners make meaning of theory or declarative knowledge. These three mechanisms are life experience, ministry awareness, and learning context.

Life Experience

Life experience combines the first two categories listed above, which are "life situation," and "personal life application." These two categories are united under this mechanism because it was impossible to separate life experience from ministry experience. The two intermingle. The participants constructed meaning of class theory as they first understood it in relationship to themselves. For some of them, their life situation created a particular atmosphere that they used to construct meaning. For others, it was a personal life application of the class theory that impacted their meaning-making.

Adán repeatedly referred to his personal life situation during his interview. He constructed meaning of the class theory, not primarily in relationship to his ministry experience, but in relationship to his life situation. His pressing need at the time of the class was his economic situation – he had lost his well-paying job and was living on a very limited income. As a result, many of his responses to the interview questions began by referring to his ministry responsibilities, but ended with reference to his personal situation. For example, when he was asked how he interacted with the other board members at this his church, he began to discuss how he had voice and vote as a member, and then he described a specific situation concerning the donation of a piece of land. In this discussion, he started to talk about the economic situation of the church but then referred by to his own situation. He shared, "Not all of the members were responsible

enough to pay their dues, and I was one of the members who couldn't pay their dues, and I wanted to…" It was at this point that he began to talk about his economic situation, rather than that of the church, and he ended by saying, "I learned something there, but this doesn't have anything to do with the class, so I'll tell you later." Adán repeated this pattern several times during his interview, and it provides a significant clue to educators on how important personal life situations are to learners as they construct meaning of class theory.

Other participants understood the theoretical material as they employed it in a specific area of daily living. They saw a personal life application, because the class theory exposed a personal need. Rafael stated, "One of the things that helped me in the leadership class was to see myself, 'Who am I, and where am I going?'" He explained, "Therefore, I said to myself – 'What am I doing with the leadership that God has given me?'" He processed the concept of envisioning to himself before he began to transfer it to his ministry responsibilities. Adán described how he began to practice the concept of planning as it related to his personal life. He said, "I started planning more for my own life and my family." Julio provided another example of a personal life application. He stated he made meaning of the class theory on team-building by recognizing that it meant that he had to learn to control himself. He explained, "Yes, I believe so, very much so, for me, yes. Because in a team, in forming a team, it is the way that one has to control himself as a means of directing himself to other people." These three examples illustrate the important role that personal life application plays in the process of constructing meaning.

Life situations and personal life applications are closely related. The life situations and experiences that adults bring with them to new learning situations influence what they learn. The literature on adult learning states this very clearly, and it is one of the guiding principles of adult education. Knowles noted, "Adults' orientation to learning in life-centered; therefore the appropriate units of organizing adult learning are life situations, not subjects."[231] Knowles' observation is confirmed by the research data, and it directs educators and learners to see the need to utilize life experience as a means to construct meaning. The participants in this study made connections to their personal lives, which influenced how they understood the class theory. Educators and learners must be aware of how this influences meaning-making so that they can utilize it for maximum effectiveness in the learning process. Learners will primarily understand declarative knowledge in relationship to what they are experiencing in life before they will understand it in relationship to other experiences, which may be of lesser importance. The learners' life experiences will deeply impact what they understand and what they internalize.

Ministry Awareness

Ministry awareness combines the following three categories – experience, reflection, and deficiency awareness. These three are combined here because they each touch upon the importance of ministry responsibility as a tool for constructing meaning. Even though they were discussed separately in the first section of chapter four, they share the commonality of concurrent experience and its role in enabling learners to construct meaning.

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[231] Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species,* 31.

Experience

"Experience" describes the interaction that exists between theory and experience. One intrudes upon the other, and it is not always clear which came first. In this study, theory impacted the participants' understanding of particular leadership concept in three ways described as, "back and forth flow," "I did not know," and "I can do this."

"Back and forth flow" was illustrated by Rafael's explanation of how class theory helped him understand a work place responsibility. He stated, "Class theory helped me understand this part of organization within my job." What he had not understood was why his organization wanted the employees to separate the trash by type. He came to understand a work requirement based on the class theory, but at the same time, he understood the class theory based on the work requirement.

The category "I do not know" describes how a class concept revealed a lack of know-how. Juan clearly expressed this when he said, "It was necessary for me to have this material because it was the first time that I was a leader. I didn't know anything about being a leader." He interpreted class theory by comparing it to his prior experience and discovered that he did not know how to lead.

The category "I was able" described how participants were able to implement a particular leadership concept as they performed their leadership responsibilities. Their responsibilities were concrete situations where they could employ a specific aspect of a concept, such as planning and evaluation of plans. Pancho talked about using the evaluation of plans in the evangelism ministry. He explained, "In evangelism, there were times when things went out of control. We analyzed, 'Where is the failure?' You know you fail, but why did you fail…you analyze and go back and modify, or take away, or put

more effort…" His words indicate that he constructed meaning through evaluation. He began to ask questions and analyze the situation.

Experience provided a tangible situation that the participants used to understand a concept. They evaluated their prior understanding with new knowledge, and they experimented by employing the new knowledge. Atkinson notes, "Regardless of how much classroom preparation, reading, philosophy, and theory a student may have, there is no substitute for experience to learn one's professional field of work."[232]

Reflection

The participants also constructed meaning of class theory by reflecting upon the theory in relationship to their experiences. They experienced eye-opening moments, which they expressed by phrases like, "I realized," and "I became conscious of." The participants indicated that they gained new perspectives about themselves. Reflection resulted in changes in their social behavior and their actions. Pedro reflected, "I realized that my leadership was lousy." As a result, he said, "This began to help me change in my giving of myself to the church, to myself, and to my family." Engaging in reflection is an important part of the learning process. Experiential education emphasizes the need for reflection. Hedin identifies two important components in experiential learning: "(a) engaging the learners directly in the phenomena related to their studies, and then (b) requiring them to reflect on the experience, analyzing it, and learning from it."[233] Although the final class assignment required the students in this study to reflect upon

[232] Atkinson: 11.

[233] Hedin: 109.

their leadership experience and compare it to class theory, their responses indicated that they continued to reflect upon the class theory.

Deficiency Awareness

The final category was deficiency awareness, which involved reflection. The participants became aware of deficiencies in their leadership skills. Rafael stated it clearly, “We were aware that the deficiency was not just in our being, but in all of our fellow leaders. Therefore, we saw a great need, all the students. How do we begin to work?” Deficiency awareness resulted from understanding class theory in relationship to ministry experience. Weaknesses, misunderstandings, failures, and other evidences of deficiency awareness are scattered throughout the interview data. It was the participants’ concurrent experience that allowed them to realize where they were deficient in relationship to class theory. When learners can recognize where they are deficient, it is because they have interpreted their experience in the light of theory and vice-versa.

Ministry awareness is an influential mechanism for constructing meaning of class theory. The participants in this study utilized their experiences principally by reflecting upon them in relationship to theory. They were able to make comparisons between their experiences and theory, and these comparisons helped them to understand what the theory meant in practice, where they were deficient and needed to change, and what they were able to do.

Theological educators and students need to utilize experience and reflection upon experience in the learning process. First, it is vital that seminary students have significant and real ministry and leadership positions. Wlodkowski notes, “Sometimes there is only the real thing to make learning meaningful and to involve all of the senses and modes of

engagement."[234] It is a challenge for both the institutions and the learners to find these opportunities and to capitalize on them.

Second, educators need to encourage reflection on experience in the context of class theory. This requires the development of meta-cognition. Meta-cognition requires being deliberate about learning. It is generally defined as "knowledge of our processes, such as how we learn and remember; it's the self-monitoring of our progress in the act of learning."[235] Bruning et al note that learners may not be aware of how they learn. They may be unaware because "many of these process are highly automated, at least in adults, and second, is that some of these processes have developed without any conscious reflection."[236] Therefore, learners and educators must think together about how to link experience back into the class theory and push theory into practice. They need to devise curriculums that encourage this type of learning. In this regard, Bruning et al make a very provocative statement, "As important as declarative knowledge is, we almost always will benefit from thinking beyond it to include both procedural and conditional knowledge goals."[237] Intentionally reflecting upon prior and concurrent experience is one of the best ways to think beyond just presenting declarative knowledge. Reflective papers, class discussions that encourage students and educators to ask questions, the sharing of stories and experiences, and verbalizing and reflecting about prior and concurrent ministry and leadership experiences in the light of class theory and vice versa are all useful tools to achieve this end.

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[234] Wlodkowski, 302.

[235] Haskell, 101.

[236] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 80.

[237] Ibid., 39.

Learning Context

Learning context describes the third mechanism that the participants used to construct meaning. There are two aspects to the learning context that enable learners to construct meaning. First, what they observe impacts what they understand. Second, their conversations among themselves and others enable them to clarify and solidify their understandings.

The participants identified observation as an important tool for understanding class theory. Adán mentioned, "Obviously it helped me when we were doing the planning with Pastor X…So I felt, at that point, 'This is what I saw in the class and this is how you apply it.' I was impacted in the sense that I knew how it had to be applied" Pastor X was one of instructors in the leadership class. Adán had the opportunity to read and discuss in class the concept of planning, and then to observe and participate with his instructor in practice. Julio spoke of how observing how the instructors conducted the class helped him to understand the concept of team building. He shared, "In the class, how we participated, how it was developed…how I saw the structure…this stayed with me." His comments make clear that what he observed in the class dynamics helped him understand the team building concept.

Other participants indicated that discussions with their peers in class and outside of class, as well as with others, helped them to make meaning of the class theory. Juan mentioned, "I always believed that the discussion is the most useful in the seminary…For example I read the material, but the class affirms what I have read. I like being in the class to learn because I believe I learn more." Later, Juan also spoke of how he benefitted from talking with his classmates outside of class. He said, "Therefore, I talked with

Rafael, and I understood it because he has a beautiful way of explaining things." Finally, talking with others outside of the cohort helped to strengthen a concept's importance.

Observation and conversation are two mechanisms grouped under learning context. Learners are impacted by the dynamics of the classroom and through conversation with one another. These serve to reinforce theory by clarifying what it means in practice and by promoting reflection. Educators should utilize these types of classroom dynamics to deepen learning. The leadership class utilized class discussion and question-and-answer time as mechanisms for engaging these participants in the learning process. Their mention of this as a factor favoring their understanding of the class theory is evidence that they benefited from this structure. Constructing meaning is always an on-going activity. Where possible, it is good for students to have the opportunity to accompany their teachers into the real world, where they can observe their teachers' actions. If this is not possible, then opportunities should be provided for students to discuss their experiences with one another and with those who teach them. There is great benefit to having these opportunities for feedback and reflection.

Motivation to Utilize Theory in Practice

Concurrent ministry experience motivated the participants in this study to utilize theory in practice. Motivation is closely related to constructing meaning, because without it, adult learners are less likely to see the relevance of declarative knowledge and to transfer it to their circumstances. If it is irrelevant, then they will not process it into procedural and conditional knowledge. Prior and concurrent experience makes the learning of declarative knowledge more relevant. It becomes substantial, as students are able to see real world connections that declarative knowledge has to procedural and

conditional knowledge. They experience the real thing, which helps them translate theory into practice. Knowles states, "Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy."[238] Wlodkowski explains that students in preservice teacher education benefitted from weekly visits to the local high school where they were given real responsibilities. He states, "Our visit…raised the level of relevance for our course and substantially increased motivation to learn."[239] Concurrent experience plays an important role in motivating learners to utilize theory.

The analysis of the data revealed that the six participants in this study were motivated by their concurrent experience to utilize class theory in practice. Their words provide rich and "thick" descriptions of what they experienced and felt as they associated class theory and their experience. Based on the seven categories listed in chapter four, it is possible to identify four ways that the participants were motivated by the intersection of their experience with class theory. They include: negative emotions, positive emotions, the emotional weight of ministry responsibility, and God's intervention.

Negative Emotions

The students experienced negative emotions during situations when they felt inadequate and become aware of prior failure. These two categories (feeling inadequate, and awareness of prior failure) are the ways the participants described the impact of their concurrent ministry experiences. First, their concurrent ministry responsibilities generates feelings of inadequacy – a lack of "know how." Rafael, Pedro, and Juan described how as leaders they felt inadequate for the responsibility. Rafael used the word "overshadowed"

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[238] Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species,* 31.

[239] Wlodkowski, 302.

to describe his experience, and Pedro said, “I was silent…I didn’t give an opinion for fear.” Juan shared, “It was the first time that I was a leader.” This sense of inadequacy was a feeling they brought with them to the class, and it motivated them to look for answers to their questions.

They also expressed areas of inadequacy that were brought to their attention by the intersection of class theory and their practice. Julio expressed very clearly, “One of the things that it did [was] to make me see that as a leader I was nothing – that I lacked many tools in order to see myself as a leader. I felt incapable of being in the group.” Other participants expressed specific areas where the class helped them recognize specific inadequacies. Thus, Julio could say twice, “The area that I did not have was team-building…I didn’t have it,” and again “One, the way of how to make a plan.” Juan also shared, “The idea of team-building impacted me a lot. Why? I don’t know, always when they gave me a responsibility, I did it alone. I didn’t know how to deal with other brothers.” In these instances, they recognized that they lacked the ability to do something. This became clear to them as they reflected upon their experience and class theory.

Second, they became aware of prior failure as class theory and their experience intermingled. The participants used words such as, “I thought,” “I realized,” and “I was confronted.” As Rafael summarized, “It is a great step forward when you become aware that you are doing things the wrong way.” The intersection of class theory with concurrent experience revealed false understandings, attitudes, and actions. Juan and Pancho both expressed similar thoughts concerning the way that they led. They realized that their prior understanding was wrong, because as Pancho stated, “I thought that a leader didn’t do anything but give orders, ‘Do this or do that.’” The class theory

confronted these men with a new insight into how leaders should lead, so that Pancho said, “But it is the opposite, the leader has to do more, to direct the group so that they follow the vision.” Others also recognized ways that they had held erroneous concepts as the class theory exposed their prior failures.

The motivation to utilize new knowledge flowed from the participants’ felt needs. Inadequacies and awareness of prior failures deal with negative emotions. Without their experiences, they may not have found the class theory to be very useful. Knowles stated, “Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs.”[240] These participants indicated that their concurrent ministry experience revealed their needs apart from and in interaction with the class theory. This, in turn, served as a motivation to utilize the class theory by changing their perspectives and actions.

Positive emotions

“Positive emotions” describes the way that the participants were motivated by the intersection of their experience with class theory. The three categories, “feeling special to God,” “positive results,” and “I can do this” result in positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, and increased self-esteem. These motivated the students to utilize theory in practice. The data analysis reveals the importance of this motivation for transferring declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge.

Rafael described how the leadership class helped him feel special about his role as an elder in his church. He elucidated,

> One of the things that help me a lot in the leadership class was to see myself: “Who am I, and where am I going?” Once I established this, who am I, not to deny that I needed to grow, but to feel in one sense special to God, who had established me in a church to take care of it. This gave me

[240] Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species,* 31.

> value and humility. "Good, okay, I am put here by God to take care of God's people…My participation has value"…My vision expanded. It got bigger. There was another way to see my leadership and eldership.

As Rafael began to feel special to God, he began to utilize the class theory on envisioning. Class theory positively impacted his understanding of his role as an elder in the church. It motivated him to want to learn how to use the different leadership skills discussed in the classroom in his ministry responsibilities in the church.

Other participants described how positive results motivate them. There were internal and external positive results. "Internal" refers to a student's experience of a positive emotion and change of perception as they saw that the class theory was helpful to them. "External" refers to the positive changes they observed in their ministry responsibilities as they applied theory to practice.

Several of the participants discussed the internal mechanism. Adán described the difference it made for him to see the theory as useful. He stated, "I mean…feeling the information useful for your life and for the church is different. It's a world apart, I'll say." This is set in contrast to his recollection that he had studied the same concepts at the Juarez Technical Institute, but failed to apply them. This time, he saw the usefulness of the class theory and began to apply it to his life situation. Juan, Pedro, and Julio expressed emotional responses to the class theory as they used it. Juan said, "It made me happy," Pedro stated, "I felt content," and Julio revealed, "This encouraged me." These positive emotions motivated them because they realized that the class theory was useful. Pedro described why he felt content as he used the class theory on team building with these words, "I learned to make decisions for not for myself, but for the group, to mature.

It helped me to mature." When these students saw positive changes in their abilities to relate to other people, they were encouraged to utilize the class theory in practice.

The external positive results also animated the participants to utilize the class theory in practice. These positive results flowed from the application of particular concepts, such as team building and planning, to their ministry responsibilities. This resulted in the advancement of those ministries or in a perceived change in others who were involved with them in the ministry. Rafael shared a long story about how he was able to utilize team building in a ministry situation. As a result, he described the change as follows, "It was much easier for this servant…because I no longer felt alone…It was a blessing to other families because this expanded. The cell groups grew." The positive results he experienced were an encouragement to continue to utilize team building. Juan also described a positive change in the youth group activities. He shared, "It changed…All the activities were well organized…And there wasn't just one [person] doing everything, but everyone was doing a part. And everything came out better." This positive experience came about as he utilized the class concepts on team building and planning with the youth ministry at his church. That, in turn, motivated him to continue to utilize the class theory.

The final category of positive results was when the participants realized that the theory was "do-able." This is described as, "Oh, I can do this." They understood that the theory was not just a good idea, but that it could be implemented. This realization involved two interacting thoughts. First, they realized that the theory could be implemented in practice, and second, that it was not beyond their ability to utilize it. Pedro shared that in relationship to team building the class helped him to understand,

"We can do this. Particularly, 'We can carry this out to execution.'" Adán explained that he became aware that he and other men in his church had to exercise leadership. He said, "Yes, it kind of opened my understanding at the time…It really kind of opened my eyes more…and so we can do it."

The positive emotions category provides educators with a powerful arsenal of tools that can be used to motivate learners to transfer theory to practice. The role of reflection is vital. The students in this research project indicated that positive emotions motivated them to utilize the class theory in practice. Positive learning experiences need to be teased out of learners so that they can verbalize them. Some learners focus solely on their failures, failing to see the positive results. This can be true in ministry situations where theological students do not receive a great deal of positive feedback. Positive results will produce encouragement, which will greatly increase the motivation to utilize class theory.

The Emotional Weight of Ministry Experience

The third area deals with the emotional weight of ministry experience. This motivation resulted from the participants' understanding that they had a responsibility. Julio elucidated this clearly with these words, "I believe that as a leader, or one who is out front, always has to make the way better. One has to show a better way. I think the only way of making things better. One as a leader must be prepared. This motivated me to study the book." He distinctly linked studying the class theory with his understanding that he was responsible to be better prepared so that he could lead. Others also talked about the ways that they felt the weight of ministry responsibility. Pancho stated, "I felt the responsibility as a leader, the duty with the church." Later in his interview he added,

"I was preoccupied with the weight [of leadership]." Juan related his ministry responsibility with the class concepts this way, "Of course, it was more impacting to have a leadership role and studying this…it impacted me, because I took it, so to speak with more desire than if I had not had the responsibility." Again, his words distinctly point out the role that concurrent experience had on his motivation to utilize the class theory.

Prior and concurrent ministry experience motivated these participants because they felt the weight and responsibility of their leadership roles. If they had not had these roles, they would not have needed to study the class theory and they may not have been as intensely interested in it. As Juan said, "It was more impacting to have a leadership role and studying this…" These remarks highlight how important concurrent experience is to adult learners. The motivation to utilize the class theory had a direct connection to their responsibilities. This is an excellent reason for Bible schools and seminaries to incorporate experiential education into their curriculums. Wlodkowski states, "Sometimes there is only the real thing to make learning meaningful…"[241] Atkinson agrees, "Field education becomes increasingly critical for a well-rounded education in professional ministry degrees…"[242] Concurrent experience creates a need in adult learners. As they experience the real thing and encounter the realities of their profession, they will feel the emotional weight of their responsibility. This "raises the relevance of theoretical classroom knowledge,"[243] because it increases their desire for theoretical knowledge that is useful to them.

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[241] Wlodkowski, 302.

[242] Atkinson: 11.

[243] Wlodkowski, 302.

God's Intervention

The final area was the role of God in the learner's motivation to utilize the class material. As noted in chapter four, the participants shared this without prompting from the researcher. Three of the participants directly attributed to God a role in their motivation to utilize the class theory. They used these words, "God was teaching me," "God was working in me," and "God has shown me that and by means of the class he showed me more," all indicate this direct connection. Juan indirectly attributed to God a hand in his life as a motivation for utilizing the class theory. He shared, "I believe that it was God who acted, because then, nearly, about [this time], I entered as a leader of the youth, I entered with this material."

The students' references to God's activity in their lives reveals an important motivation for utilizing the class theory. Whether as a direct reference, such as "God was teaching me," or the idea that "it was God who acted," they expressed their belief that God was active in their learning process. This coincides with the role of the Holy Spirit in theological education. Jesus promised his disciples that he would send them another helper, who would abide with them forever.[244] That helper is the Holy Spirit. According to Jesus, the Holy Spirit "will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."[245] Theological education does not depend solely upon human wisdom, or on the learner's ability to make sense of class theory. Rather, it incorporates the role of the Holy Spirit, who is active throughout the learning activity. When educators and learners acknowledge the present and continuous activity of the Holy Spirit in the

[244] John 14:26 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

[245] John 14:16-17 ibid.

learning process, it is a powerful motivation to utilize declarative knowledge in procedural and conditional knowledge. It brings encouragement and comfort to learners as they struggle to implement theory in practice, thereby increasing their motivation to push forward regardless of the difficulties experience. The participants in this study were motivated by the knowledge that God was active in their learning.

Transfer of Learning

The final research question focused on the transfer of class theory to the participants' concurrent leadership responsibilities. This transfer occurred in three broad areas. First, the participants experienced a change in their attitudes regarding the importance and proper exercise of leadership. Second, there was a change in their social behavior. They began to act differently towards other people. Third, they explained how they implemented new ways of doing things apart from the changes in their social behavior.

Analyzing this transfer of learning highlights three important considerations for educators and learners. First, learners who have concurrent experience can be expected to transfer a greater percentage of theory to practice. Second, the transfer described by the participants is best understood as connecting declarative, procedural, and conditional types of knowledge. Third, the three areas of transfer identified as attitude, social behavior, and action are interconnected. They mutually impact one another.

Concurrent Experience

The transfer of theory to practice requires that learners have significant and real concurrent experience. Class theory exposed these learners to new concepts, which they compared to their concurrent ministry experience. At this point, theory impacted their

concurrent experience. They analyzed their concurrent experience utilizing the class theory and made changes in the three areas of attitude, social behavior, and action. Without concurrent experience, it is not likely that these participants would have experienced the same level of transfer. The literature makes it clear that experience is necessary in order for learners to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

As discussed in the literature review, there exists a gap between theory and practice in pre-professional education. Burns notes that participants in his research recognized this gap. He states, "The pastors involved in this study did not criticize their pre-professional training through the traditional theological education…At the same time, a constant refrain among the participants was that, upon entering the ministry, they were naïve about what they might face."[246] To bridge this gap, learners need to have concurrent experience. Atkinson states, "…equipping for ministry is far more than the cognitive experience. Germane to ministry-related education is experience. Field experience in the form of practica, student ministry, and internships, provides the much-needed balance to classroom studies."[247] Students will compare class theory to their concurrent experience. They mutually evaluate each one (theory and experience) by comparing one to the other. By this means, they transfer theory to practice.

The participants in this study all had significant ministry and leadership responsibilities when they took the leadership class. As a result, they testified that their concurrent experience enabled them to transfer class theory to practice. Adán compared his experience of believing that the pastor was only the leader of the church with the class

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[246] Burns, 273.

[247] Atkinson: 7-8.

theory and discovered that he had a responsibility to lead. He shared, "I was thinking of the leader was…that the leader always had to be the pastor." This is a reference to his concurrent experience. Then he continued, "I became more conscious that it's not just the pastor who has to be a leader. But we who are a part of the church are role models for the younger generation…" Adán experienced a change in attitude and realized that he had to lead. This was possible because of the intersection of class theory with his concurrent experience.

Another example is from Rafael. He was an elder in his church at the time he took the class, but was struggling with feeling overshadowed by the other elders' years of experience. However, the class theory changed his attitude. He described his experience this way, "Well, okay, I am placed here by God to take care of the people of God…My participation has value…My vision expanded. It grew bigger. It took another way of seeing my leadership and eldership." Again, his concurrent experience intersected with class theory, and his attitude changed. His experience enabled him to see where he was wrong as he compared it to the class theory. All of the examples of transfer reported in this study show the same pattern. The participants' concurrent experience and class theory intersected, resulting in changes to their attitudes, social behavior, and actions.

Declarative – Procedural – Conditional Knowledge

Declarative knowledge is defined as a "knowing what" type of knowledge.[248] This corresponds to the theoretical knowledge presented in the textbook and in the classroom. Procedural knowledge is "knowing how" to perform certain tasks.[249] It "results from

[248] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 38.

[249] Ibid.

action and application of declarative knowledge."[250] Conditional knowledge is "knowing when and why to use declarative and procedural knowledge."[251] As Haskell describes, "When to apply our knowledge in context-appropriate ways: we don't behave in the same way in all situations."[252] Transfer of learning occurs as learners connect declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. It is a process that involves reinterpreting declarative knowledge into procedural and conditional knowledge.

These three knowledge types interact. Procedural and conditional knowledge answer the question, "What does this mean in my world?" "How do I use it?" "When do I use it?" Tobias and Duffy note, "A challenge of pre-service teacher education courses is that the students do not have sufficient prior knowledge of teaching in the classroom. In their teacher preparation courses, it is hard for the students to see the significance of the theories and map them into their future pupils' behaviors."[253] These words indicate that without concurrent experience, learners do not have the means to connect declarative knowledge to the real world. Students are limited because they lack the corresponding practice that can enable them to make sense of declarative knowledge. This limits their ability to transfer it to procedural and conditional knowledge. Declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge are equally necessary for successful professional practice. Declarative knowledge is of little use until learners make connections to their actions (procedural), as well as their attitudes and social behavior (conditional).

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[250] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 20.

[251] Bruning, Schraw, and Norby, 38.

[252] Haskell, 101.

[253] Tobias and Duffy, eds., 39.

The participants in this study indicated that they transferred declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge. They each had significant and real concurrent experience while they were taking the class, which enabled them to make the transfer. It is important to note that they utilized their experience to make these connections. If they had studied the class theory without being able to compare it to their real world experience, it is doubtful whether they would have been able to transfer the declarative knowledge to their actions, attitudes, and social behavior.

Knowledge Types Interconnected

An analysis of the data reveals that the three knowledge types are interconnected, and that they interact reciprocally. They are interrelated and provide a means of gauging transfer of learning by directing our attention away from empirical measurements to profounder and more permanent types of transfer. Changes in attitudes and social behavior are important indicators of transfer of learning. Knowing "how to do something" is good. It demonstrates that declarative knowledge has been transferred into practice. However, it is equally useful to know "when" and "where" to use declarative and procedural knowledge. Indeed, "when and where" to use declarative and procedural knowledge may be more important than "how" to use it. The participants in this study revealed that they transferred declarative knowledge to their attitudes and social behavior (conditional) and to their actions (procedural). What is more interesting is that their statements reveal interconnectedness to this transfer. In most cases, there is a connection between at least two of the categories described as attitude, social behavior, and action. Sometimes all three categories are involved. A change in attitude impacts social behavior that is connected to action. In the participants' learning process, the three built upon one

another and perhaps occurred simultaneously as they constructed meaning of class concepts by transferring it to their lives.

The following three categories were listed in the analysis found in chapter four under transfer of learning. Attitude described how participants experienced a change in their understanding, either about the importance of their leadership or how to exercise it. Social behavior described ways that the participants changed in how they related to other people in their leadership role. Both of these types of transfer exemplify the transfer of declarative to conditional knowledge. The changes they experienced in attitude and social behavior were profoundly personal and resulted in the transfer to procedural knowledge. Action described concrete manners that they changed in their practice of leadership. The theory interacted with these learners' prior and concurrent ideas about an aspect of leadership that had an impact on them internally and externally.

Juan's interview revealed that there was a corresponding change in his attitude, social behavior, and actions. He experienced a change in attitude related to how a leader should exercise his leadership. He stated, "Before I thought that the leader didn't do anything but was ordering, 'You do that and you do the other.' But it is to the contrary. The leader has to do more, to direct the group so that they follow the vision." Juan's interview also indicated a change in his social behavior. He mentioned, "Always when they gave me a responsibility, I would do it alone. I didn't know how to cope with other brothers." He emphasized that he did things by himself in his interview and again stated, "Always, the activities, I organized them…always it was I, I, I, always." But then he indicated that he changed his social behavior and explained, "When I was trying to work in a team, it was difficult for me, but it was something I needed, to work in a team." He

also talked about this change when he said, “to involve myself with the group and specify each one…” Before, he spoke of doing the planning and everything by himself. Later, he acknowledged that he was working on a team.

Comparing his change of attitude with his change in social behavior reveals a link. If the leader only gives orders, it implies that he is not working with others as a team. He is doing the planning and organizing alone and then telling others what to do. So not only did Juan have a change in attitude, he also had a corresponding change in his social behavior. Finally, he revealed a parallel change in his actions. He described this change by first recounting how things had been organized prior to the class with these words, “It impacted me because it was not just my idea, rather it was the idea of many brothers…” As a result, he said that the meetings changed. “It changed then, all of the activities were well organized and everyone had something to do.” Juan’s statements reveal that his actions changed in planning group activities. He began to include the group in his planning. It was no longer just his idea, and things were better organized. Juan transferred the declarative knowledge from the class, and his attitude, social behavior, and actions changed in tandem. The three impacted one another.

Pedro’s interview revealed a similar interaction between his change in attitude about how to lead and his social behavior. He experienced a change in attitude similar to that experienced by Juan. This attitudinal change was further reflected in the change in his social behavior. He stated, “Yes, my leadership changed. I learned to make decisions not for myself, but for the group.” He further described the change in his social behavior with these words, “[I began] to relax with the other elders, as a teacher, in helping the group.” His attitudinal change was directly linked to his social behavior change. A leader

who believes that leadership means giving orders is likely to be distant from people. However, Pedro stated that he changed in both areas. He understood that the leader leads by including others, and this led him to draw nearer to people.

Rafael and Adán revealed a connection between a change in their attitudes about the importance of their leadership and specific application of a leadership principle. This connection is between conditional knowledge and procedural knowledge. Rafael mentioned in his interview that he began to see his leadership with greater importance. He explained, "…but to feel special to God, that he established me in the church to take care [of it], that gave me value and humility. Well, okay, I am placed here by God to take care of the people of God…My participation has value…My vision expanded. It grew bigger. It took another way of seeing my leadership and eldership." This was eye-opening for him. As a result, he described repeatedly in his interview that he began to implement envisioning. He began to ask himself this question, "Who am I, and where am I going?" He said that envisioning impacted him describing, "'Where am I, and where am I going?' This continues to impact my life until today. Today by the grace of God, he has called me to be a worker. I am beginning to work. It is a new phase in my life. It is part of my vision, 'Where am I and where am I going?'" Pedro's change of attitude is directly linked to a change in action. As his vision expanded, he began to envision the future and came to understand that he was called by God to be a worker, which, in the Mexican Presbyterian Church, is one step in the process of becoming ordained. A change in attitude is linked to a change in practice.

Adán also spoke of a change in attitude that is linked to a change in action. He stated, "I became conscious of the need to lead." He added, "I became more conscious

that it's not just the pastor who has to be a leader, but we who are a part of the church are role models for the younger generation and our own peers next door to us." His attitude changed. In addition, Adán shared about ways that he began to utilize planning in his life. He described the following situation where he utilized planning for a business trip to receive training. He explained, "I had everything ready to go, and in a sense I knew I couldn't go [because of the lack of money], but it happened, because I had everything ready." His words reveal that he has linked his awareness that he must lead to a specific application of a leadership principle. The link between recognizing attitude and action is not as clear compared to Rafael's example, but it does exist. Planning is one component of leadership that has to be developed and used.

Finally, Julio's interview revealed a link between his social behavior and action. He expressed, "The area I didn't have was forming a team. I didn't have…how to relate to other people and to make a team. Two years ago, this idea of forming a team was a really good help to me." His social behavior involved not knowing how to relate to other people, and this is where he changed. He further explained that he struggled with self-control. He stated, "One, I had to learn to control myself." This lack of self-control was explained as, "Perhaps to impose, right?" He then admitted, "But this area of self-control also had gone from me." However, his application of the team-building concept impacted his social behavior as he began to learn to control himself by allowing others to speak and be heard. He explained, "Because in the team, in forming a team, it is the way that one has to control themselves, so you can direct yourself to other people." Later in the analysis of the interview data, it was noted that Julio indicated that he made a procedural application of the team building concept as a part of the church's committee that was

planning for future construction. He shared, "Two years ago, I was also working as part of the construction project. Therefore, starting to plan some things ahead…" It is not explicitly stated that he was a part of a team, but there is the indication that he was since he was part of the construction project. He was working with others to plan ahead. The link between his social behavior and his practical planning are observed in the use of teamwork.

The words of these participants reveal that there were corresponding applications of declarative knowledge to their procedural and conditional knowledge. Where changes occurred in conditional knowledge (attitude or social behavior) there was an impact on procedural knowledge (action). Sometimes there was a connection between attitude and social behavior, which are both conditional knowledge. These applications are evidence of transfer of learning. In all of these instances, it is important to realize that transfer was not one-dimensional. It did not just occur from declarative to procedural knowledge, or from declarative to conditional knowledge. Rather, it involved all three and, even within the conditional category, learning was transferred between attitude and social behavior.

It is important for educators and students in Bible colleges and theological seminaries to understand the complexity of the transfer of learning process. It is rarely a single entity. Declarative knowledge is important for successful ministry,[254] but it is not sufficient by itself. The institutions and learners need to be concerned with what is being transferred to attitudes, social behavior, and actions. What learners transfer is multifaceted. Declarative knowledge transfers to attitudes, social behaviors, and actions, and they all transfer one to another. So it is important to teach and learn so that we are

[254] Atkinson: 6.

engaging all of these areas. Using meta-cognition is one way to be conscious of the interconnectedness that exists between declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge types. Theological education is concerned about the whole person. Theological students preparing for ministry need to obtain more than merely declarative knowledge. Rather they must become aware of themselves – their attitudes and social behaviors – and understand how the theoretical knowledge transfers to these areas. They also need to be aware of how they are implementing theory into actions. Educators and learners must work together to make this happen as much as possible.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the literature and interviews revealed that concurrent experience is needed for learners to transfer declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge. The learning theory called constructivism describes learning as sense-making, and sense-making requires experience and experiential learning. Learners do not seem to be able to transfer information to a new context passively. The participants in this study indicated that they constructed meaning of class theory, were motivated to use class theory, and transferred class theory to practice as a result of their corresponding ministry responsibilities. Constructing meaning was closely aligned with the transfer of class theory to practice because it involves interpreting the theory to each individual's particular circumstance. To employ the class theory, they experienced changes in their attitudes, social behaviors, and actions. They were motivated by their concurrent experience to construct meaning and to transfer learning as they saw its relevance to their personal lives and responsibilities. When declarative knowledge is learned in isolation from the contexts where it is used, then we can postulate that learners might not be able

to transfer it or be limited in their ability to transfer it. Their ability to construct meaning of new knowledge will likely be truncated, because learners use their prior and concurrent experience to construct meaning of theory.

The findings from this study highlight the need to integrate field education into curriculum. To maximize the benefits from both the classroom and experiential learning it is necessary for educators and learners to reflect on the how theory and prior and concurrent experiences interact. Experience by itself is not sufficient and may mislead learners to erroneous conclusions. Theory by itself is not enough, because learners will not be able to fully appreciate its usefulness. The evidence presented in this study strengthens and enhances what is known about the transfer of learning by providing the rich and thick description from the participants' voices. The findings from this study can be used to help educators design curriculums that will enhance their students' ability to make sense of declarative knowledge, to motivate them to utilize that knowledge in practice, and to develop deeper levels of transfer to their attitudes, social behaviors, and actions.

Recommendations for Practice

In light of the findings described above, there are several important recommendations related to the pre-professional education of future ministers, missionaries, and other types of Christian service. These recommendations apply to those teaching at Bible colleges and theological seminaries, as well as to the learners enrolled in those institutions.

Curriculums need to be designed to include as much experiential education as possible. The literature and data analysis make it clear that students learn more when they

are able to combine experience and theory. Pre-professional education is criticized for isolating theory from practice. The tendency of professional schools is to emphasis the technical and scientific aspects of knowledge from the social and human practices of the profession. This creates a theory-practice gap. The technical and scientific aspect of knowledge – declarative knowledge – is not the same as procedural and conditional knowledge. It is an important component in professional education, but is insufficient by itself because learners who may excel at learning declarative knowledge will have a very limited understanding of how to utilize it in real world settings.

One clear example comes to my mind. I remember taking two college-level calculus classes during my sophomore year as an undergraduate. The only problem is that I never really understood calculus, and I have never been able to transfer it to real world situations, although it has many real world applications. I was capable of learning how to solve problems for exams, but could never transfer this knowledge to any practical problems.

Theological education can have the same disconnect between theory and practice, as do other areas of pre-professional education. The acquisition of declarative knowledge about the Bible, systematic theology, church history, and even pastoral theology does not mean that graduates are ready to put this knowledge to practice. Declarative knowledge can be forgotten quickly unless it is linked to experience. Learners can become conditioned to memorize declarative knowledge for an exam, but this is quickly pushed aside as they begin new classes. This is why the curriculum should include significant real world concurrent experience. Most institutions do require that their students devote some time to practical service. My own seminary experience is an example. I was

required to spend about two to three hours per week in a ministry. However, I do not remember that I gave this work my best preparation time, nor did I really reflect upon what I was doing. It was another requirement, but I did not consider it to be significant enough so that it made a great deal of difference to my transferring declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge. I also do not remember that my practical experiences were explicitly brought back into the classroom. I was oriented towards the classroom rather than practice.

For this reason, I believe that Bible colleges and seminaries need to do a better job of integrating concurrent experience into their curriculums. Larger institutions will probably have a more difficult time achieving this goal than smaller ones. A larger student body means less time to oversee the internships and practicums. However, reflective practice can be brought into class assignments. Class structure and assignments can include journaling on class material, in-class discussions on the subject matter, asking students to reflect on how class theory relates to their concurrent experiences, and purposefully bringing their experiences into the classroom through questions and answers. Learners should be encouraged to interact with one another and their professors about their studies. But whether an institution is large or small those running it need to appreciate and promote active learning experiences in the real world.

Students at Bible colleges and theological seminaries also need to push themselves to be involved in significant ministry responsibilities. It is not solely the institution's responsibility to see that this occurs. Perhaps learners need to become less concerned with their grades and more concerned with practical experience. If a lower grade results from taking more time in concurrent ministry, then that is a sacrifice that

should be made to enhance significant learning. Institutions can help in this area by de-emphasizing grades based solely on the students' abilities to master declarative knowledge. Evaluations can also be based on the students' self-evaluations and reports about what they are doing. As students determine to worry less about their grades, and institutions de-emphasize evaluating only classroom work, perhaps there can be a positive movement towards achieving an atmosphere where deeper learning takes place because experience is given the same importance as reading, papers, and tests.

The classroom experience needs to be linked to fieldwork via discussion, drawing upon the experiences and stories of the students and professors, and interviews with those involved in ministry. This recommendation is an outflow of the one above. Experiential field education is important, but so is orienting the classroom away from lecture and examinations that only measure a student's mastery of declarative knowledge. Students need declarative knowledge, but it is possible to present this knowledge in a way that reduces the gap between knowledge and practice. First, students and professors both have prior and concurrent experiences that they bring with them to the class. These experiences need to be acknowledged and discussed. The participants in this study indicated that class discussion was a mechanism they used to construct meaning of the class theory. There is a time for lecture, but there can be an equal or even greater need to promote discussion. Allowing time for questions and discussion can be a great learning tool. Second, professors and learners need to be deliberate about drawing upon their prior and concurrent experiences during the class. Listening to the experiences of others and the insights that a professor has gleaned from practice will provide insight into the real world phenomenon. It helps learners make connections to what they can expect to

encounter during their interactions with people and events. Third, the classroom needs to include times to interview men and women who are actively involved in ministry. This can be true for courses not considered practical or pastoral theology. For example, students can learn how a theological concept is important in practice as they hear from a practitioner.

Life-like assignments should be required of students, instead of relying only on tests of cognitive memory. Tests that use true/false, matching, fill in the blank, short essay type questions, and writing reports and term papers have their place in evaluating learning. But they are not sufficient for evaluating how this knowledge is understood in procedural and conditional settings. Other types of real world assignments need to be used as well. These could be assignments such as writing a friend to explain a theological concept, or requiring a telephone or face-to-face discussion with someone. Dr. Jerram Barrs, professor at Covenant Theological Seminary, requires the students who take his evangelism class to write a letter to a friend explaining the gospel and then mail it. Sunday school lessons, sermons, and other types of preparation can be evaluated for content as well as presentation. Case studies can be presented in the class, allowing for time to analyze and discuss what is happening, and real life problems can be presented in the class and assignments, which will require the learners to think about solutions. These life-like assignments require learners take the next step to connect declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge.

Reflection needs to be included in theological education. The class used for this case study had a requirement for the students to write a six to ten page reflective paper. They were to reflect upon their concurrent leadership experience and upon the class

theory. The interviews revealed that this reflection continued even after the class. It is my conviction that the interview process for this study promoted further reflection. All of this highlights the importance of reflection in the learning process. Learners need to be encouraged to reflect upon what they are learning and how they are learning it. Experiential education underscores that experience without reflection is not necessarily good and can be misleading. Reflection needs to be a part of the classroom experience. Students can be required to keep a journal, write reflective papers, and share in the class about their experiences. Ideally, professors should also have time to converse with their students about the class and their experiences.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on how learners described the importance of their concurrent leadership experience in transferring classroom theory to ministry practice. As with any study, there are limitations as to how extensive the focus can be. Therefore, pursuit of the following areas of study could be highly valuable for understanding the phenomena of transfer of learning. First, this case study focused on a practical/pastoral theology course that might be expected to have greater connection to the real world. It would be good to conduct other case studies that draw from other areas of the curriculum, such as systematic theology, church history, and Bible content courses to see how students are utilizing their concurrent experience to transfer these to practice, or how they incorporate these studies into their practice.

Second, the twenty-month gap between the time the participants took the class and participated in the interviews allowed for a lot of further reflection and opportunities for them to transfer class theory to practice. It was difficult to discern from their

interviews what may have occurred concurrently or almost immediately after the class and what occurred over the intervening weeks and months. Clearly, they shared about ways that they transferred class theory to practice, but they were not as clear in delineating when they did this. Therefore, similar types of studies should be conducted closer to the time the students are exposed to the class material. This can provide a new understanding of the immediate impact the class is having in practice.

Third, the participants in this study shared a unique set of circumstances. They were part of a cohort that studied together for four years, and there were only seven of them. Four of them were involved in the same church, and two of them were members of another church. This is probably not a typical situation for most seminaries, which have larger student bodies. Therefore, the results from this case study maybe skewed so that they do not reflect the reality of other students. I would recommend that further studies should be conducted so that a larger representation can be made. In this way, a more complete picture can be obtained.

Fourth, further study should focus on older versus young adult learners. Since experience influences what adult learners value and utilize, it would be interesting to discover whether older students (perhaps those starting seminary at age thirty or older) are better able to transfer learning compared to younger students (perhaps ages twenty-three to twenty-nine). This might allow a researcher to discern to what extent prior experience plays in the transfer of learning.

This study was undertaken because of my interest in understanding how to effectively equip others for Christian ministry. Why is it not enough to provide learners with declarative knowledge of the scriptures, systematic and pastoral theology, and

church history? If I give learners information: Why do they not use it? Why does so much of what passes as learning seem to result in little change in learners?

My interest in this topic began around the year 2000 through interaction with Dr. Gary Waldecker, a fellow missionary colleague. His thoughts and writings on theological education began to change my understanding about the aim of learning in general and about theological education in particular. I began to understand that theological education implies more than mastering declarative knowledge. My interest has been strengthened through my course work for my Doctor of Ministry degree at Covenant Theological Seminary. The application of adult learning theory to our class work, which utilized participative learning experiences, drawing upon our prior and concurrent ministry experiences, and reflection on theory and practice, provided me with a deeper appreciation for the role that experience and reflection exercise in adult learning. The research and investigation for this dissertation, as well as the discipline to express my thoughts on paper has broadened my understanding and my conviction that mastering declarative knowledge is not enough to effectively equip learners for ministry. There are many ministry skills that cannot be learned by reading a book or listening to a lecture. In dependence upon God, I anticipate that what I have learned about ‘learning’ and the importance of experience and reflection in facilitating the transfer of declarative knowledge to procedural and conditional knowledge will enable me to be a better equipper of future leaders. I trust it will be for the glory of God.

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