

Liven Up Those Listeners and Kiss Distance Learning Goodbye

The author asks your indulgence as he shares four pictures from his memory of lectures past:

Snapshot 1 - He was in his second semester of teaching graduate school, and a student seated in a corner of the crowded classroom asked him an application question about a point in his lecture. The professor had to turn his back on a large percentage of the students in order to face his questioner. After briefly responding with a personal illustration from his own ministry experience, the professor panned the remainder of the lecture hall as he walked back to the lectern. In a startling moment of surprise, the new professor observed the rapt attention of everyone in the room, even the ones to whom his back was turned. In that instant he was both paralyzed with dread and invigorated with adrenaline – they had come to hear what he had to say and learn from his experience.

Snapshot 2 - As the cartoonist Charles Schultz often expressed through the typewriter of his eloquent dog Snoopy, "It was a dark and stormy night." The students in the doctoral seminar gave little attention to the professor's esoteric ramblings about Chester Barnard's Functions of the Executive. Without warning, a gust of wind from the storm rattled the Venetian blinds exposed by an open window with such force that all the students were jolted from semiconsciousness. The professor turned poetic and uttered a few lines from the first stanza of Edgar Allen Poe's

"The Raven," "Once upon a midnight dreary . . . suddenly there came tapping ... at my chamber door." Without hesitation or good sense, a student filled in the missing lines his professor had skipped: "While I nodded, nearly napping, over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore." Fortunately the professor chuckled at this insight.

Snapshot 3 - By virtue of being a second-semester senior, a student was given special permission to audit a class on the romantic poets taught by Provost Wilson of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Such permission was needed because every seat in the hall would be taken and the auditing student agreed to sit on the floor so that the other students would be able to take notes. He observed in many class sessions, however, that few notes were taken by those who arrived early enough to get a seat. For long periods of time, these students sat transfixed as they listened to the melodious voice of their professor read lengthy passages from Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Snapshot 4 - Another popular professor at the same school consistently ran out of class time because he took questions and allowed brief discussions during his lectures on Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, and C. S. Lewis. Finally, he offered to conduct a discussion session for no extra credit for any students who wished to participate. Much to his surprise, the room was filled to capacity the following afternoon for the two-hour discussion of theology in literature.

Every student has a similar album of memories, some rich with meaning and purpose, others recorded in one's mind's eye because they were so painfully boring. The purpose of this

article is to explore what current literature says about effective lectures and the style of those who deliver them. Such examination is paramount at this point in this history of higher education because of the rapidly growing popularity of distance learning. Without question the classroom in snapshot #2 would have been empty (except for the wind and hot air) had any other alternative existed for the obtaining of credit. The material in that case could have more effectively, or at least less painfully, been presented over the Internet had it existed then. Should this threaten those who make their livings teaching in seminaries and colleges?

Each teacher must settle in his/her own mind his/her role in the educational process that occurs in the classroom. We must ask, "If I lecture, does learning take place? If not, to what degree am I responsible?" Bruce Wilkinson has greatly influenced the attitude of this professor in his presentation, The Seven Laws of the Learner. Wilkinson boldly asserts, "The teacher is 100% responsible for the learning that does or does not take place in his classroom." His conclusion is based on his understanding of the Hebrew root word for our words teach and learn. Lamad means to learn or know, but it also, in a slightly different form, means to cause someone to learn or to teach. Wilkinson concludes that when a teacher teaches, he or she is basically causing another person to learn. On the other hand, if no learning takes place, then no teaching has occurred.¹

¹Bruce Wilkinson, *The Seven Laws of the Learner*, textbook ed. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1992), p.26. See Wilkinson's discussion of Deut. 4:1 and 5:1 on page 26-27.

Dr. Ed Neal heads the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and has spent more than two decades researching the teaching and learning styles of professors and students. In his article "Thoughts on the Lecture Method," he points out that from Plato's Academy to the modern university knowledge has been transmitted orally for more than 2,000 years. Although the original Socratic method required a dialogue between teacher and student, the lecture, as it was developed in the medieval university, did not. Originally, lecturing was the way that the knowledge stored in books could be transmitted to a large number of students; the word "lecture" is derived from the Latin legere, "to read." Many centuries after the invention of movable type and other significant advances in technology, lectures continue to be the primary mode of instruction in higher education. The reasons for their popularity are not difficult to adduce: lectures are cheap because a single teacher can lecture to an auditorium full of students. They are easily changed and updated, and they are efficient in covering material quickly. Finally, and perhaps most important, the method is familiar to students and teachers alike, and their roles are clearly defined.²

Since there are several strong advantages for the use of the lecture method, and it is the method with which most professors appear to be most comfortable Are there discernable techniques which can be employed by all lecturers (even though their teaching styles may be very different) to bring about more effective teaching and to cause more students to learn? The following seven principles are the product of Neal's research. Each will be presented by this

²Ed Neal, "For Your Consideration #6: Thoughts on the Lecture Method" Center for Teaching and Learning, (Chapel Hill, N.C., November 1989), www.unc.edu/depts/ctl/fyc.html.

Southeastern Seminary researcher with illustrative comments based on his experience on his campus.

Do not talk longer than 15 minutes at a time. Provide for changes of rhythm during the period by shifting from lecture to other teaching formats.

Several studies have shown that the attention span for uninvolved listeners is roughly fifteen to twenty minutes. After fifteen minutes students begin to tune out, and although some may continue to take notes, they are no longer processing the information they receive. Since passive listeners have short attention spans, the way to overcome the problem is to involve them in some way.³ (Neal, p. 1)

This teacher has discovered Neal's premise to be accurate in a variety of settings including college classes, graduate school, and adult Bible studies. A change of pace can occur easily without distraction or loss of time, but can be vital in keeping students focused. Such simple instructions as, "Go back to the text for a moment," shifts the focus from listening to reading. The next point will provide additional techniques for changing the rhythm of a lecture.

Try to involve students in the lecture by questioning or interacting with them to keep two-way communication alive.

Some teachers at UNC have discovered that a highly interactive, question-and-answer lecture style will keep students actively engaged for the entire class period. Instead of providing information, the teacher tries to elicit much of it from the students through "unfinished statements" and direct questions. (A previous issue of *For Your Consideration*, Vol. 1, No. 2) contains tips on using sophisticated questioning techniques in the classroom.) Another approach teachers use to overcome the attention-span problem is to divide the class period into 15-or 20 -minute blocks of time, alternating lecture with discussion or some other activity that requires student participation.⁴

Students in this author's Church Management and Administration class write reaction papers related to lecture topics and assigned readings. One technique that can be used to apply this principle is to have one or two students comment from their papers or ask one in advance to read a paragraph from his paper at a designated time in class. Another approach is to announce during the lecture that each student should create a one -or two-word example of the topic being presented. In the case of church management the professor asks each student to name a specific ministry that can be found in a local church. After two minutes, thirty or more students contribute to the discussion and vividly make the point that ministers must equip laypeople to lead if all these activities are going to be administered properly.

³(Neal, p. 2)

⁴Ibid.

Provide students with ample cues to help them discriminate between more important and less important material - - lecture outlines and handouts can supply many cues.

Another problem with audience attention has to do with the way they process the oral information they receive. It is difficult for students to discriminate between the more important and less important material in a lecture unless they are given appropriate cues. Although most teachers give oral signals during a lecture ("Now, this is important"), students also need to understand the overall structure and organization of the lecture so they can focus their attention on the more important concepts and the way these elements fit together. Many professors regularly provide topical outlines on transparencies, handouts, or the blackboards, that reveal the organization of the lecture and give students clues to its most significant elements. Some teachers include a unit-by-unit outline of their lectures in the syllabus for the course. The basic principle is that students will filter out less-critical information if they are told, in various ways, what is essential.⁵

Dr. William Yount, professor of Christian Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, describes lecturing without such cues as being "toxic telling."⁶ Yount argues that "while scholarship is essential to effective teaching, the emphasis in effective teaching is more on telling than knowing . . . The problem with 'toxic telling' is its love for

⁵Ibid.

⁶William R. Yount, *Called to Teach*, Broadman & Holman, 1999, p. 46.

discrete bits of information and its lack of appreciation for structure and meaning."⁷ Yount suggests the antidote for this poison is mapping out for the audience where the lecture is going. The professor must provide for his students a known destination, a specific route, and landmarks which mark the group's progress.⁸ This point is illustrated by Steven McKinion, Assistant Professor of Church History at SEBTS. In describing his lecture style McKinion explains:

In order to enable my students to discriminate between more important and less important material in my lectures, I utilize multimedia presentations via the computer which outline, highlight, and illustrate the various points I wish to make. The most important material for each lecture is always included in the outline. I can then "fill in" the outline with additional lecture material that supports the principal point I wish to make, but itself may not be essential. Quotations that illustrate a point or focus the student's attention on a particular issue are in the presentation at the place where I am trying to highlight a central component to the lecture. For example, in a lecture on Gregory of Nyssa's view of baptism I have two quotes; the first says that baptism washes away sin. However, at the point where this is included, I am discussing the importance of reading the patristic writers in context. After showing the first quote, I then include a statement from Gregory in which he calls baptism a *symbol* of the inner washing away of sin by the Holy Spirit. These statements illustrate my point, which is then projected onto the screen as I make

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

my point. In this manner, students are able to see the outline, with important elements of it highlighted, simultaneously with my lecture on those elements. (Personal Interview)

In addition to utilizing the presentations in class, McKinion offers students at the beginning of the semester a compact disc with the entire presentation along with printable outlines for the students. This enables them to (1) preview the lecture material, if they so wish, (2) follow along on the printed outlines, taking notes directly on them, and (3) review the lecture material later. McKinion finds that students listen more attentively to the lectures when they are not having to write down the outline headings, but can “fill in the gaps” from the lecture. Additionally, students spend less time trying to figure out where the lecture is headed and more time synthesizing the material that is given. On the side, the multimedia component adds to the dynamics of the lecture, which prompts not only auditory learning, but visual as well.

Use many concrete examples to illustrate new concepts. Experiment with visual representations of complex ideas.

In addition to relating new information to pre-existing fields of memory, one must also provide many concrete examples in order to help students form new concepts and understand new processes. Although examples can be given orally, they might also take the form of pictures, diagrams, illustrations, or even exercises that the students perform. A professor of business law illustrates case studies in the course with a series of overhead transparencies that show, in

cartoon format, the figures and the issues involved in each case. A psychology professor illustrates the Freudian concepts of superego, ego, and id through conceptual diagrams, thereby creating concrete examples of theoretical constructs that students have difficulty grasping.⁹

In his Faculty Lecture address entitled "Pagan Sexuality at the Center of the Contemporary Moral Crisis," Dr. Daniel Heimbach, Professor of Christian Ethics at SEBTS, described the subtlety with which "dissatisfied scholars" can be drawn away from biblical sexual ethics by the power of paganism.¹⁰ He maintains that these incremental changes in their thinking take place because "what immediately attracts does not look anything like pagan sexuality as it appears in raw form."¹¹ To assist his audience in grasping the "drag effect" that pulls scholars away from a biblical position, Heimbach establishes the metaphor of a schoolyard game of "tug of war." In so doing he draws his listener's attention to the powerful influence of the anchorman (paganism) at the end of the rope.

Dr. David Lanier, Professor of New Testament at SEBTS, uses his love of history to illustrate abstract concepts such as the subjunctive and imperative moods in Greek class. To illustrate the subjunctive mood and the fact that it is removed from reality, he tells the following story:

The father of Alexander the Great, Philip II of Macedon, was conquering all the city-states of Greece and molding them into a united kingdom. However,

⁹(Neal, p. 4)

¹⁰Daniel Heimbach, "Pagan Sexuality at the Center of the Contemporary Moral Crisis".

the city of Sparta in the region of Lyconia held out.

"If I come down to Lyconia," Philip said, "I will bring my army. And if I bring my army, I will conquer you. And if I conquer you, I will subjugate you." He sent the message by runner.

Some time later, a runner came from Sparta with a scroll. Philip took it and unrolled it. Written in the center of an otherwise blank scroll was the "laconic" reply: "If." (Personal Interview)

To illustrate the fact that the imperative mood is even further removed from reality and depends on the will of the listener, he tells this story, drawn from the American Civil War.

At the battle of Cold Harbor in 1864, Gen. U.S. Grant sent wave after wave of Federal soldiers against Lee's earthworks. In one twenty-minute period, Grant's army suffered seven thousand casualties. Before going into action, his men were writing their names and addresses on slips of paper and pinning them to the backs of their tunics so that their bodies would receive proper burial. At the end of one particularly grueling and fruitless day, Grant gave an order to advance across the line. His order was ignored at every level, from corps to company. That day there had been enough killing, Grant did not press the point. He cashiered no officers. However, he learned the truth that a command only becomes reality if the hearers are obedient. (Personal Interview)

¹¹Ibid.

Provide blank time, through internal summaries, anecdotes, and illustrative material to allow students to process new information.

Lecturers must also be aware of the limitations on learning imposed by the way humans encode and retrieve information. As we receive bits of information, they are first sent to short-term memory where they are encoded before being sent for storage in long-term memory. Most individuals can hold about seven bits of information in short-term memory (which is why our telephone numbers are in seven digits), and if more new information is received before the encoding process can take place, some information will inevitably be lost. When students receive a long, unbroken stream of new information in a lecture, they don't have time to encode it for long-term storage - - they can only try to record it in their notes.

In order for students to learn from a lecture, they need blank time in which no new information is being presented to interrupt the encoding process. Some professors pattern their lectures so that, after introducing a series of new ideas, they always provide subordinate, illustrative, or anecdotal material which is not new but is related to the new information in some way. Frequent internal summaries in a lecture also provide blank time for processing the new information.¹²

Dr. Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., provides those wishing to improve their lecture technique with a multitude of

outstanding examples for skillfully providing "blank time" in the midst of a lecture or sermon on new and complex concepts. As he exegetes a Hebrew or Greek phrase in a lecture, he suddenly whisks his listeners off to a Texas ranch or a coral reef in the Caribbean or a tiny seminary apartment he shared with Mrs. Patterson. More often than not, he is the victim in a hilarious story that creatively crystallizes the scholarly point he was making. In his monograph entitled "Johnny's Teacher – The Problem and the Solution," Patterson laments the state of education brought on by teachers who do not like children. After touching on numerous well-known writers and several that are obscure even to the most experienced reader, he begins to discuss important educational principles found in Deut. 6:1-12. To illustrate his first point (It is fundamentally impossible to teach that which you do not know), he launches into a story from his college days when he attempted to ride a rodeo bull for the first time. Patterson goes on to describe his mount, a bull named Cream Puff, as "a ten-thousand-pound killing machine with two 30-foot scimitars on his head and a considerable attitude problem."¹³ Unfortunately, he listened to the untutored advice of his college friend who recommended that he sit as far away from the bull's horns as possible. Predictably, the young Patterson went airborne as soon as Cream Puff was freed from his stall. As he scurried out of the arena, he shouted to his friend, "Don't ever try to teach what you don't know!"¹⁴

¹²Neal, p. 4

¹³Paige Patterson. *Magnolia Hill Papers II*, Wake Forest, 1997, p. 7-8.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

Cal Guy, adjunct professor of missions at SEBTS, once emphasized the importance of learning about a new culture and being sensitive to the lifestyle of a group of people as you reach out to them with the gospel. He vividly illustrates this point with the story of the British attempts to convert the people of India to Christianity in the nineteenth century. Their approach was to enter a target community and construct ornate churches, much like the cathedrals in England. The end result of this misguided attempt to reach a lost country was a series of empty churches dotting the countryside of India. The story provided a memorable illustration of one of the semester's major themes.

6. Constantly verify, through eye contact and questions, that students accurately perceive and understand the information in the lecture.

One-way communication, as in the traditional lecture, can also cause problems with audience perceptions of the message being sent. It is well established that people screen messages in a variety of ways, and what is expressed may not be what is received and understood. Neal points out that young children may say in their recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, "and to the Republic for Richard Stands," because that's what they thought the teacher said. Another example is the Rorschach test. Not everyone sees exactly the same images in the inkblots.

Most lecturers study the reactions of their students in order to ascertain their level of understanding based on facial expressions that reflect interest, boredom, excitement, or

confusion. However, two-way communication must be established to actually verify the students' degree of understanding. Neal maintains that it is not really sufficient to ask, "Are there any questions?" because the students may actually think they have grasped the material and because these types of questions do not require students to test their perceptions against those of the professor.¹⁵

Are there efficient and effective ways to establish this type of communication? This professor argues that the possibilities are endless. Challenge the groups to select a key point or theme and express it in their own words. Their responses can be written down or expressed orally. If the class is large, ask for volunteers or have each student discuss his response with two others. Another method is to help the students review while the instructor evaluates their understanding. Simply say, "Without looking at your notes, give me the name of one of the five theories I just presented," or ask, "Who can name three out of five?" These responses could even be written down and collected at the end of class. A quick look at the papers by the instructor or by teaching assistants would provide a snapshot for how students are grasping the material.

At this point this author wants to propose abolishing quizzes at the beginning of class. In their place require a written reaction to the outside reading to be handed in at the start of class. At the conclusion of class give a quiz that covers a few of the main points from both the reading and the lecture, provided they intersect. Now this would be fun and informative! This test should genuinely evaluate the student's understanding of the material after reading, listening, and

¹⁵Neal, p. 3

interacting with the concepts. It is preferable to grilling them at the beginning of class on how many factoids can be shoved into short-term memory banks for the obligatory pop quiz.

Principle #7 Provides links, using metaphors or other associative devices, between new ideas and previous learning or experience.

Another problem related to perception is the difficulty students have in learning new information unrelated to any former learning or experience (particularly for first-year students!) There is evidence that people learn by organizing new ideas and information under preexistent categories in their cognitive structure. Put another way, perceptions are related to specific fields of memory. The implications of this concept are clear: new ideas and terminology should be linked to previous experiences or associations. Perhaps one of the most famous practitioners of this technique is Jamie Escalante, the brilliant math teacher who is the main character in the movie, "Stand and Deliver." He developed a variety of metaphors that help students understand and remember concepts in mathematics.¹⁶

For many young pastors and church leaders the concept of delegation is misunderstood at best if not totally rejected because of bad memories of failed leadership attempts. With this in mind, this professor presents a simple but potentially life-changing outline on situational leadership. Ken Blanchard has described the four-step process of developing leaders in four words: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ken Blanchard, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* cited in Don Cousins, *Mastering Church Management*, Portland: Multnomah Press, 1990, p. 141.

Unfortunately, many seminary students have never experienced this firsthand. What they have experienced is learning to use a lawn mower, so the professor reminisces about the various stages of instruction he used to teach his son over a ten year period, from age five to fifteen, to care for their lawn. The story concludes with the professor proudly announcing that he no longer has to cut grass at his house.

Roy Zuck examines the lectures of Christ in his work, *Teaching as Jesus Taught*, and lists numerous examples of how He moved from the known to the unknown in His lectures. In John 4, Jesus began his encounter with the Samaritan woman by referring to literal water, which she had come to draw from the well. From there He led her to recognize that He is the source of living water, the understanding of which would change her life forever.¹⁸

Numerous other examples are found in the "I am" sayings. In each there is a concrete object from his listeners' everyday lives, such as bread, light, and shepherds, which become the basis for a new way of understanding God's kingdom.

6. In addition to employing these principles from Neal's research, it is crucial for presenters to consider the individual needs of students.

Christian author Marlene LeFever argues in her book, *Learning Styles*, that every teacher must be aware that within each class there are students with different styles of learning and in most cases each student has a preferred or dominant style. That is the way in which the student

best perceives the information and then processes it. Based on the research of Kolb¹⁹ and later McCarthy,²⁰ LeFever points out that most students will follow into one of the following four categories: imaginative, analytical, common sense, or dynamic.²¹

1. The Imaginative Learner: This student is primarily motivated by the question "Why?" The lecturer must acknowledge that students who are primarily imaginative learners must have this question answered before they move on to specific content objectives. Without a satisfactory answer to this question, no effort by the lecturer will be successful.

Dr. David Black, professor of Greek and New Testament at SEBTS, responds to the needs of the imaginative learner in the following passage:

There are at least three very important reasons why you should study Greek. The first, of course, is to be able to intimidate your pastor. The trick is to sit in the front pew with your Greek New Testament wide open and watch the poor soul sweat to death. (Note: This procedure is considerably less effective if your pastor is preaching from the *Old Testament*.) Second, you

¹⁸Roy Zuck, *Teaching as Jesus Taught*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995, p. 166

¹⁹D. A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1984.

²⁰Bernice McCarthy, *The 4MAT System: Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/Left Mode Techniques*. Barrington, IL, EXCEL, Inc., 1987.

²¹Marlene LeFever. *Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach*. Colorado Springs: CO, David C. Cook. 1995. p. 24.

also need to take Greek to be able to impress others with your considerable learning. You see, anyone can say what the Bible means, but only Greek students can say what the Bible *really* means. The key is to use all kinds of impressive jargon – *aorist passive imperative*, for example – that nobody understands but with which all can be impressed. Take a lesson from your medical doctor: Why say a child is turning blue when you can say he's *cyanotic*? The final reason to take Greek – *and by far the most important one* – is because some day, if you're really lucky, you too can become a Greek professor.

There are, I think, better reasons for investing your time and effort in taking this course. The first is that – as R. C. Sproul once put it – a great preacher is like an iceberg: you see only 10%, but underneath you sense the other 90%. What he meant is that you need *depth* in your teaching and preaching, and only a knowledge of Greek can give you this depth. I am teaching this course with one goal in mind: to enable you to teach and preach the Word of God with integrity, credibility, and authority. This course, then, has an enabling purpose – it *equips* and *empowers* you to have a personal encounter with the sacred text itself. Second, I have discovered that knowing Greek is a source of personal renewal and revival. The Greek New Testament has always produced a spiritual earthquake when allowed to shed its light. Through Greek, God can bring you in touch with the power of the original text and apply its truths in your life in ways never before thought possible. My hope is that your Greek New Testament will not be just another study tool, but a book you will read and savor for the rest of your life. Finally, as preachers and teachers of God's sacred Word, we have a moral obligation to understand the original languages. If

our purpose as ministers of the Word is to understand and proclaim what God has said to his people for their spiritual growth, and if it pleased God to reveal himself in the Greek language, then a knowledge of New Testament Greek should not be considered a luxury but an imperative. Let me repeat: I am not arguing for a knowledge of Greek *per se*.

Greek must not be taught like Edmund Hilary's Mount Everest – "because it's there." But for that reason it cannot be ignored. Greek is most certainly "there," and no preacher can be called an informed professional without a knowledge of it.

2. The Analytic Learner: LeFever's second category describes those learners who most often ask the question, "What do I need to know." Whereas the imaginative learner is primarily concerned with meaning, the analytic learner is concerned with content. These students want to see the recipe; they need to see the list of objectives, they cannot wait to see the list of assignments.

Without fail, these students are easy to spot! During the introduction, when the lecturer establishes the rationale for that class, the analytics grow restless. An expression of disinterest grows until it approaches the look one may have when confronted with a used car salesman. The look seems to say, "I don't care about why's, just tell me what you want me to do!" For example, at the beginning of a professor's lecture on the successful recruitment of lay volunteers in the church, it is essential to make the case that this practical skill could possibly mean the success or failure of a new pastor's ministry. However, after about seven to eight minutes, the analytic grows impatient with what he perceives as a pep talk and wants to know step one in the recruitment process.

3. The Common-Sense Learner: LeFever summarizes the approach of these learners in the question, "How does what I've studied actually work today?" The common-sense learners are not satisfied with learning content; they must find out how to put what they have learned into practice.

Dr. Greg Lawson, associate professor of Christian education teaches F.A.I.T.H. evangelism at SEBTS. After lecturing on the importance of evangelism in the life of a believer and the church (imaginative), he presents the five-step process of witnessing entitled F.A.I.T.H. (analytic) Fortunately for the common-sense learner as well as the entire group, Lawson requires the next step of practical application. After committing the presentation to memory, the students go out every week during the semester to apply the course content in new witnessing opportunities.

4. The Dynamic Learner: The learners in LeFever's fourth group are interested in the creative application of new material. They ask the question, "What can this become?" Dynamic learners want to enlarge what they have learned by adding creative ideas and teaching what they have learned to others. Dynamic learners want to create something new from the material gleaned from lectures. Examples of this can be found throughout a seminary campus: Students preach trial sermons before real congregations; these messages are then analyzed by comparing them with material presented on campus several lectures before. Other students write master's theses in order to apply their new skills in the context of a new paradigm. A third example is musical recitals which showcase the talent and potential of music majors.

One project that is required of all students in the class entitled “Minister of Education” is particularly popular with dynamic learners. One of the major themes of the class is the importance of a minister of education being able not only to teach effectively but also to know how to train others to teach. The professor first introduces the significance of modeling in the overall leadership of the Minister of Education (imaginative). Next, the professor outlines for the class what topics need to be covered in a teacher training seminar presented to lay teachers (analytic). Third, the professor demonstrates for the class an actual teacher training model, and the students discuss how the material could be most effectively presented at their local churches (common-sense).

Then it is time for the students to take these new concepts and design their own workshops (dynamic). At the beginning of the semester each student selects a book about teaching techniques that can be applied in a local church. After reading the book, each student designs a one-hour seminar which can be presented to lay teachers using the points he or she believes to be the most valuable. Following the series of lectures and discussions, each student "road tests" his seminar with three other students in the class, none of whom have read the book the presenter used as his source. Over a period of three class sessions, the professor has spoken to the preferred learning style of each of the four categories while challenging all the students in a variety of ways.

The approaches to teaching designed by Richard Felder, professor of chemical engineering at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, have been greatly influenced by Kolb's model, (which in turn influenced LeFever). Felder has learned that teachers favor their own learning styles, instinctively teaching as they were taught. He has found that the

style of teaching used in most lecture courses supports the learning style of only a small number of students (i.e., those who are verbal, deductive, reflective, and sequential). This places a significant number of students at a disadvantage. Laboratory courses which are sensory, visual, and active can offset some of this imbalance. However, Felder concludes that the content covered in labs constitutes only part of the concepts presented in lectures and seldom provides significant insights or skill development²². He summarizes his concern as follows,

The mismatches between the prevailing teaching style in most science courses and the learning styles of most of the students have several serious consequences. Students who experience them feel as though they are being addressed in an unfamiliar foreign language; they tend to get lower grades than students whose learning styles are better matched to the instructor's teaching style and are less likely to develop an interest in the course material. If the mismatches are extreme, the students are apt to lose interest in science altogether and be among the more than 200,000 who switch to other fields each year after their first college science courses. Professors confronted by inattentive classes and poor student performance may become hostile toward the students (which aggravates the situation) or discouraged about their professional competence. Most seriously, society loses potentially excellent scientists.²³

²²Felder, Richard, "Reaching the Second Tier: Learning and Teaching Styles in College Science Education." *J College Science Teaching* 23 (5) p. 289 (1993). (For full text and additional discussion see www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder).

While Felder maintains education would be greatly enhanced if professors would adjust their teaching style to accommodate the learning styles of all the students in their classes, he acknowledges that it is a daunting, if not impossible, task to address all the multiple learning differences simultaneously. He concludes, "The point, however, is not to determine each student's learning style and then teach to it exclusively, but simply to address each side of each learning style dimension at least some of the time."²⁴

Anyone who predicts the failure of distance learning, (i.e., receiving college or graduate school credit for courses taken by way of the Internet) is ignoring the history of technology. Nearly every advancement since the nineteenth century has been met with skepticism and scorn by traditionalists. However, those who earn their livings by lecturing need not fear obsolescence if they sharpen their presentation skills and make a commitment to energize their listeners. This can be accomplished by all teachers, whether on college campuses or in local churches, if the individual instructor has the willingness to put into practice at least some of the techniques reviewed above. Each Christian teacher has been given not only the precious message of our Savior but also the added burden of training others to communicate it. The Holy Spirit will empower each of us to recognize and respond to the needs of the learners He has placed under our care. As His ambassadors, we need to make ourselves available and respond with Jesus' own perceptiveness to those who hear us.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.