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Send out your light and your truth! Let them guide me. Psalm 43:3

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The Teaching and Learning Cycle: Integrating Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

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Cover Page Footnote

I would like to thank my husband, Steve Jones, for listening to my ideas and papers and constantly encouraging me.

Erratum

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The Teaching and Learning Cycle: Integrating Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction

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Abstract

The philosophies of educators and government entities guide the teaching and learning cycle of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The educator's worldview plays an important part in developing these concepts which is demonstrated throughout history. Studying the history of educational philosophers reveals their beliefs about curriculum, instruction, and assessments and the effects on education today. It shows the importance of integrating all three concepts in the educational process creating the teaching and learning cycle.

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The Teaching and Learning Cycle: Integrating Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction

Introduction

“My mama says I can’t read,” an elementary boy says. “I am reading a good book. I read it every night before I go to bed,” a middle school student affirms. “Look, I read this word, mul--ti---pli---cation,” a wide-eyed, elementary student excitedly whispered as she took a standardized test. “I don’t like reading out loud,” one middle school student wrote. Another one wrote, “I’m good at writing, but I think I need a little help on reading books.”

The preceding statements are statements from struggling readers in Georgia schools. All the statements have a common theme. Each statement reflects a self assessment of the student’s own individual reading performance. Each of these students also has another commonality. They were identified by the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) to be at risk in reading. Did the assessments create within the students a lack of belief in his or her ability to read, or did the assessment identify a need for more effective curriculum and instruction in teaching the student to read? What role did teaching and learning have to do with the students’ self assessments? How did curriculum and instruction affect the assessments? How important is curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the teaching and learning cycle?

Studying the educational philosophers, teachers, government and reading entities that have affected the teaching and learning cycle throughout history, one can easily determine that all three components influence the educational process. The effective educator realizes the benefits of assessments in identifying if the curriculum and instruction have guided the student to the level of knowledge that is expected and utilizes them to identify if the student is prepared for the next step in the educational process. If the assessment identifies that a student lacks understanding, the effective educator adjusts instruction accordingly. Cobb (2003) said that

assessments were a critical part of teaching and learning. Cobb also stated that curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be integrated and reciprocal. Throughout history until today, educators have influenced how curriculum, assessment, and instruction are implemented in the teaching and learning cycle, and effective educators demonstrate the importance of integrating and balancing the three components.

Instruction, Curriculum, and Assessment

The History of Educational Philosophers

Analyzing the educational philosophers of the past, educators can identify the roots of the prevailing philosophy in education today toward curriculum (what is taught), instruction (how curriculum is taught), and assessment (how learning is measured) (Gutek, 2005). As the philosophers developed ideas based on their worldviews, they created “important and far reaching implications” (Deckard & DeWitt, 2003, p. 16). Beginning with Confucius from 551-479 B.C.E. and continuing to Paulo Freire from 1921-1997, a brief sketch of the philosophers’ worldviews demonstrates how their beliefs about education influenced the teaching and learning cycle regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessments in education today (Gutek, 2005).

Using the words of the Bible in Luke 2:14, Confucius wanted, “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” He believed that as one learns to give goodwill toward men that peace would come to society, but he did not base peace on man’s relationship to God (Confucius, 500 BC). Confucius called curriculum *the Great Learning*. He believed that education’s ultimate goal was to demonstrate illustrious virtue (Confucius, 500 BC). Through the educational process, Confucius believed that people should be instructed “to lead the benevolent—the good life—by doing what is right” (Gutek, 2005, p.15). Confucius assessed students individually identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Confucius incorporated lessons to reinforce their strengths and to

overcome their weaknesses demonstrating his effectiveness in using assessment as a checkpoint to identify the next step in the educational process (Gutek, 2005; Guskey, 2003).

Plato began to probe the question of the meaning of life. He was an idealist and focused on what exactly was good, true, and beautiful. After his year of required military service in the cavalry at the age of eighteen, his real philosophy of education began to develop under the teaching of Socrates. Socrates' instruction stimulated Plato's focus and search for knowledge and meaning. Plato, like Socrates, believed that if one knows the good and the truth, he will choose it which is the integration of knowledge and virtue (Gutek, 2005). True assessments measured the application of the knowledge learned throughout the student's life that demonstrated justice, temperance, courage, and wisdom (Plato, 360 B.C.E., Book VI). Plato's philosophy of education was that the general knowledge (curriculum) that the student attains should lead him or her to make good decisions and choices in all areas of life.

One of the students that Plato mentored was Aristotle (Gutek, 2005). While Plato focused on idealism, Aristotle focused on realism. Aristotle's approach emphasized human reason as giving life definition, meaning, and purpose. While Plato's worldview was founded on a perfect and unchanging view of reality that could be seen by those who were trained in philosophical speculation, Aristotle wanted to find truth that existed beyond the senses (Gutek, 2005). Aristotle prepared his students through curriculum and instruction that focused on using nature to provide knowledge upon which one could make rational decisions. Aristotle (350 B.C.E.) did not believe in assessing for a right or wrong answer as evident in his writing from Book VIII, *Topics*, "for a learner should always state what he thinks: for no one is even trying to teach him what is false..." (Part 5, ¶ 1).

After Aristotle, Quintilian created a coherent doctrine of rhetoric education (Gutek, 2005). Quintilian believed that a good orator did not develop over night but through long-term preparation. Students of Quintilian would be assessed as adequately prepared when they became effective orators.

Aquinas was an educational philosopher that believed in the teachings of Aristotle. To Aquinas, education's purpose was to help human beings to reach the goal and destiny –“he beatific vision of God” (Gutek, 2005, p. 87), relating to both spiritual and physical. Aquinas believed that the supernatural and natural were not equal, but they should be placed in curriculum according to the most important area of study that needs the greatest priority. Education's ultimate purpose was to “convey knowledge that will help them attain fulfillment on earth and salvation in heaven” (Gutek, 2005, p. 88).

Unlike Aquinas, John Stuart Mill, 1806-1873, did not have any religious background to direct his philosophy but was trained by his father under such a regimented curriculum that John Stuart Mill became depressed and even wrote of having no reason to live (Gutek, 2005). John Stuart became a developer of the concept of liberalism and believed that no one had the say on truth, and individuals had freedom of thought to form new ideas and challenge existing ones. Ironically, Mill fought against “the conformity of the mass,” but in reality, his educational theory was based on a regimented program or curriculum that pushed individualism which looked to social progress (Gutek, 2005, p. 290). This ideology, liberalism, included freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, and trade, but opposed any government restrictions; therefore, John Stuart would not believe in the assessments or evaluations that are mandated today. He would assess a student to be prepared if he demonstrated happiness and the ability to think for himself.

As society looks for the answers to education in the individual and the individual's ability to reason, formulate, and express new ideas without any restrictions, the result is individualism (Gutek, 2005). Herbert Spencer helped to develop this concept as a classical liberalist who opposed any form of the government's restrictions on individual freedom. Spencer's theory led to an evolutionary theory of society which made a "strong statement for individualism, human freedom, and the need to keep state and church from interfering in human affairs" (Gutek, 2005, p. 300). His lifelong purpose was to develop a comprehensive sociology of knowledge (curriculum) that explained the evolution of society and predicted social change (Gutek, 2005). His worldview was materialistic and believed that true religion had to do with the worship of the "unknowable" (Gutek, 2005, p. 301). The way to find the knowable was to instruct by applying science to vital life activities.

Thomas Jefferson, like Spencer, believed that education should be scientifically based. He described the curriculum that every school should teach "reading, writing, and arithmetick, and the books which shall be used therein for instructing the children to read shall be such as will at the same time make them acquainted with Graecian, Roman, English, and American history" (Jefferson, 1778, p. 2). He believed that their education should "advance both general and scientific knowledge" (Gutek, 2005, p. 191) and establish equality so that there is "a more general diffusion of knowledge" (Jefferson, 1778, p. 1).

While Jefferson believed that education should be scientifically-based, Robert Owen believed that the curriculum should be efficient and effective but not based on scientific research. The instruction should be based on the children's interests using object lessons, creating a child-centered classroom (Gutek, 2005). The curriculum should consist of reading, writing, arithmetic, natural science, geography, history, singing, and dancing and girls should be taught sewing and

needlework, “a broad fields curriculum” (Gutek, 2005, p. 250). Through observation and questioning, Owen could assess the student’s learning.

Jane Addams focused on the bilingual and immigrant students. She would be able to see the advantages of testing and segregating data that are used today to identify weak areas and help to close the achievement gap. She believed that the curriculum should include the history, customs, tradition, songs, crafts, and stories of diverse cultures to develop a closer relationship with the immigrants (Gutek, 2005). The curriculum should use practicality in the instruction teaching students how their knowledge can be used in solving critical, social, and economic problems. If Addams lived today, she would find it necessary to assess a school’s effectiveness through its ability to focus on the possibilities of human and social improvement (Gutek, 2005).

Horace Mann, like Thomas Jefferson, believed in the common school and developed the idea further. He was born eight years after the United States Constitution had been in effect and grew up with a thirst for knowledge (Gutek, 2005). As Mann developed his concept of civic education, he believed that individuals should put aside their own interests and join for the common good. A common school was one where people from diverse backgrounds could live “peaceably and productive in a common society” (Gutek, 2005, p. 232). He believed in developing a curriculum that taught moral values and ethics using a basic morality apart from any religious ideas. Seeds of Spencer’s philosophy can be seen in Mann because he believed that education could develop a perfect society which is a form of social evolution (Deckard & DeWitt, 2003). Horace Mann would measure a student’s success in education much the same way that learning is measured today.

Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori were philosophers who developed their educational theories around children. Their philosophies had foundations in their own childhoods

which were manifested in their ideas about structured, orderly, child-centered environments where children were loved (Gutek, 2005). Each saw the importance of understanding the effects of the child's developmental stages in the instructional process. Each expressed their views of the child, the child's nature, and God in different ways, but the views carried a similar theme. The similar theme was children were basically good, and the educational process helped the children to reach the ultimate intellectual and moral development as they were taught in a natural environment. Student learning would be assessed by the child's motivation and interest in learning as well as observation of social skills developing through play (Gutek, 2005).

Freire, Wollstonecraft, Ghandi, and DuBois were philosophers that shared the belief that traditional education was not the means to provide transforming power to education (Gutek, 2005). Wollstonecraft fought against the "appropriate education for women that defined them as obedient wives, child bearers, and caregivers," but she pushed for "the right to an education that endowed the power of reason" (Gutek, 2005, p. 210). Ghandi believed that a child's education should free a child's creative impulses leading to activities with meaning and purpose containing a cultural element. Du Bois believed the power of education would come from a learning environment that encouraged a child's interests and curiosities (Gutek, 2005). All the philosophers' environments were marked by the quality of leading a child to learn freely and find the knowledge within himself; therefore, students would not be restricted by boundaries but would be constructors of their own learning and assessments.

One of the most influential philosophers on the educational system today was John Dewey. Dewey created a new philosophy of education. His ideas included creating learning environments and activities based on the child's interests and needs (Gutek, 2005). The major idea that was the basis for Dewey's philosophy was using a child's experience not only to help to

teach a child, but also to guide instruction and change society. Allowing the students' situations or experiences to be the catalyst to drive instruction, problems arose because experimentalist ethics was "free of fixed regulations" (Gutek, 2005, p. 347). As students brought multiple experiences to the classroom without set regulations but open to new attitudes and dispositions, any type of instruction was appropriate for discussion. This created a "dangerous relativism" (Gutek, 2005, p. 349). Dewey developed the idea of a changing curriculum which said universal truths change that as times and circumstances change, certain universal truths change that may once have been valid, and due to the situations or experiences of the student, they could be identified as no longer relevant. Dewey was on the opposite end of the continuum of Plato who believed that "truth reflects unchanging perfect, universal, and eternal ideas to which human behavior should conform" (Gutek, 2005, p. 342). This experimentalist view of education began to shape the curriculum in the United States (Gutek, 2005). The curriculum was no longer a body of vital academic subjects to be taught. The curriculum became what the students wanted it to be. With no structured curriculum, no set organization, no wrong, no right, no accountability, and no quest for higher achievement, the bar was set low. Since there was no right or wrong; therefore, there would not be a valid assessment because there would be no standard by which to measure.

As the worldviews of each philosopher built on one another, ideas regarding the way that educators approached and viewed curriculum, instruction, and assessment changed as well. Plato on one end of the continuum believed that through education man could find absolute truth, but he never had access to the Bible; therefore, his searching was apart from God. On the other end, Dewey believed that there were no absolutes, no truths, no right, or no wrong.

As each philosophy led to another, new approaches to curriculum and instruction were implemented. For example, a whole language approach became the prevalent way to teach

reading which had its roots in the teaching and learning philosophy of John Dewey (Gutek, 2005). The whole language approach was a constructivist approach to teaching reading with a holistic perspective where readers used their knowledge of language and symbol relationships and tried to make sense of the text (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987; Weaver, 2002). This caused a devastating effect to the literacy of students across the United States. Because of the problems with student achievement, the effectiveness of the public school became the focus due to *The Coleman Report* (Coleman, 1966) and *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). An excerpt from *A Nation at Risk* (1983), sums up the devastation,

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility...the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur--others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments... Each generation of Americans has outstripped its parents in education, in literacy, and in economic attainment. For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents. (§1, ¶14)

An Example of the Effects of Educational Philosophy on Reading

The words from *A Nation at Risk* became prophetic. An example of the history of reading and the problems that developed within the children across America demonstrates the result of what happens when an unbalanced approach toward curriculum, instruction, and assessment is

implemented. The poor assessment results caused the government to become more involved in the educational process.

In the nineties, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provided a report that created concern over literacy in America because according to its released data only one third of the students read above the basic level (Quatroche, 1999). These findings caused Congress to send a mandate in 1997 to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to create a national panel to evaluate the status of research-based knowledge regarding the effectiveness of different approaches in the teaching of reading (National Reading Panel, 2000). The formed panel was called the National Reading Panel (NRP) which conducted a two-year meta-analysis study of experimental and quasi-experimental research literature. The findings of the NRP were significant in the development of Reading First, the literacy component of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, a federal policy implemented to address the issues of school effectiveness (Silberglitt, 2006).

President Bush's education reform act, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB; 2001), redefined the role of the federal government in the education of all students in kindergarten through 12th grade (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). NCLB represented four major principles, one being.

H.R. 1 will result in the creation of assessments in each state that measure what children know and learn in reading and math in grades 3-8. Student progress and achievement will be measured according to tests that will be given to every child, every year. (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2003, ¶ 4)

Because the problem of illiteracy continued to persist across the United States, many federal and state policymakers took initiatives to fix the problem (Brynildssen, 2002). These

initiatives were two-fold. One was to be in compliance with NCLB, and the other was to find solutions to the problem of illiteracy. NCLB (U. S. Dept. of Ed, 2004) required that each state had to prepare an annual report identifying the greatest improvements in reading achievement, reduce students who were reading below grade level in grades one through three, and increase the percentage of students who are reading at or above grade level.

To demonstrate effectiveness of instruction in reading, NCLB (2001) required that states measure progress annually in reading in grades 3 through 8. By the 2005-2006 school year, every state had to yearly test students in reading and math in Grades 3 to 8 and in grades 10 through 12 at least once (McLeod, D'Amico, & Protheroe, 2003). The requirements of NCLB also stated that a school's effectiveness would be measured yearly by showing that 95% of students met yearly measurable objectives. The *Reading First* component of NCLB 2001 turned the focus to reading and established guidelines to measure reading achievement. States responded to the mandates with standardized tests usually given in the spring as a summative evaluation to measure the academic achievement, or in this discussion, the reading achievement of each student. For example, the writer's state, Georgia, uses the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) (Georgia Department of Education, 2008) as the standardized summative assessment to measure reading success. The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) along with other states, adopted grade level specific criterion or standards to identify specific elements of reading to teach as the curriculum (GADOE, 2008). The Georgia Department of Education (2008) states under the heading *About Testing*:

The assessment program includes customized criterion-referenced tests at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; the National Assessment of Educational Progress in grades 4, 8 and 12; and a norm-referenced test at grades 3, 5, and 8. These mandatory

state assessments include the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), End-of-Course Tests (EOCT), Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT), Georgia Writing Assessments. (§ 1)

The state mandated summative evaluation is analyzed by the federal government and a report is provided to the school showing a summary of the student's progress in reading upon completion of instruction (Cobb, 2003). They present a final analysis of the reading instruction and assessments that the students received throughout the school year. Sometimes the summative evaluations are used for grade placement. For example, if a student does not meet expectations in third, fifth, or eighth grade according to the set Georgia state guidelines or curriculum, then he or she cannot be promoted to the next grade (GADOE, 2008).

Because of the high-stakes testing, teachers and school systems have turned to utilizing ongoing assessments, or progress monitoring, to see if the students are progressing in a particular subject according to the curriculum, usually the standards or benchmarks of the grade level. When teaching students who are at-risk, a teacher uses progress monitoring to measure the effects of an intervention (Ardoin, 2006). Using ineffective interventions and instruction for extended time periods can create problems for the student; therefore, implementing a supplemental assessment procedure to help in deciding if an intervention is ineffective within a shorter period could benefit the student (Ardoin, 2006). Progress monitoring also benefits the advanced student by helping to identify mastery of concepts to be able to provide more challenging curriculum and instruction. Elliott and Fuchs (1997) summarize effective progress monitoring as indicating yearly curriculum proficiency, providing current and historical information regarding the students' skills acquisition, producing valid and reliable information

about a student's academic standing and skills mastery at a specific time, providing a routine, quick assessment of learning, and enhancing instructional planning.

What the students were to learn (curriculum), how they were to learn (instruction), and how was learning to be measured (assessments) became debated topics throughout educational communities. Putting the pieces together—effective curriculum, instruction, and assessments—became vital to the educational process. Ignoring the pieces that need to be incorporated creates a bigger problem. To impact student learning, educators should use assessments that are meaningful and are able to guide instruction (Cobb, 2003). Ongoing collaboration must take place regarding student work, instructional methods, and specific uses of curriculum. These assessments are crucial in the development of effective curriculum and instruction (Cobb, 2003).

As each educational system measures learning through multiple and diverse assessments, one must never forget that each piece of data reflects a student. Each piece of data that demonstrates growth is a representation of one more child that has learned, which should be the aim of every educator.

Throughout history until the present, the educational philosophers, teachers, and government entities integrated their philosophies into the educational system by demonstrating through their lives and writings what they believed was the best curriculum and instructional methods in guiding the student to truth (Gutek, 2005). The philosophers had strong beliefs or worldviews regarding what was truth, what the student should learn, and how the student should be assessed (Gutek, 2005), or in other words, their beliefs about the teaching and learning cycle. The perfect example of a teacher who recognized the importance of each individual student and the teaching and learning cycle is Jesus Christ. He is the Truth that links education in the past, present, and future.

The Ultimate Teaching and Learning Cycle Linking Past, Present, and Future

In Jesus...

Confucius would find the Great Learning, illustrious virtue, and peace.

Plato would discover the universal, absolute Truth, and the ideal.

Aristotle would see reality.

Quintilian would hear a perfect orator.

Aquinas would find the unifying of the supernatural and the natural.

John Stuart Mill would have a reason to live.

Spencer would see the evidence of creation.

Thomas Jefferson would realize the source of “publick happiness” (Jefferson, 1778, p. 1).

Owen would meet the originator of the perfect object lessons.

Addams would embrace the One who came for *all* to learn.

Horace Mann would find the standard for teaching moral values.

Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori would see One who loves children.

Freire, Wollstonecraft, Ghandi, and DuBois would discover the transforming Liberator.

Dewey would have a standard of right and wrong.

America would find all the answers.

Jesus provides the best example of an effective teacher by modeling how the teaching and learning cycle should be implemented. Throughout the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—much of the writings were about Jesus teaching his disciples with the ultimate purpose of answering the guiding question, “What is truth?” This question was the foundation for the curriculum that Jesus taught. He used ongoing progress monitoring (questioning and observation) of his disciples to assess if the disciples understood. If the disciples did not, Jesus

re-taught the concept with different strategies or methods, such as using parables, performing a miracle, or teaching one-on-one. Then Jesus would assess the disciples again. His frequent questions were similar versions of, “Do you still not understand?” (Matthew 16:9; Mark 4:13; Mark 8:17, 21; John 13:12). “Do you still have no faith?” Mark 5:40; Luke 8:25; Matthew 14:31). “What do you want me to do for you?” (Matthew 20:32; Mark 10:36; Luke 18:41; John 18:41; John 1:38) (New International Version).

Jesus’s questions were mapped to what He wanted them to learn because Jesus knew that He would die, and the disciples would have trouble understanding. Jesus wanted the disciples to genuinely believe His words; therefore, He demonstrated that He was God through the teaching and learning cycle. For example, in Mark 6:30-44, Jesus was instructing His disciples about who He was. Jesus and His disciples went to rest, but about five thousand people followed them. Mark 6:34 says that Jesus had “compassion on them” and wanted to give them something to eat, but Jesus also wanted to teach the disciples that He was God and had the power to do all things. The disciples were almost shocked when Jesus told them to feed the people because they said, “That would take eight months of a man’s wages” (Mark 6:37). Jesus patiently told the disciples to go and see how many loaves of bread there were, and that was when they found the boy with a lunch that had five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus gave thanks for the meal, broke the bread and fish, and fed the whole crowd. The amazing teaching component was how much was left over, “twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish” (Mark 6:43). Jesus had just enough left over so that each disciple could collect a whole basketful to see firsthand what He could do. Two chapters later, Jesus was in a similar situation with four thousand people and wanted to feed them. In Mark 8:4, His disciples asked, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?” In Mark 8:14-17, the disciples still seemed confused, and Jesus asked,

What are you talking about no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?. Do you still not understand?"

The ultimate purpose of the curriculum that Jesus taught was to guide His disciples to truth. Jesus used questions and observation to assess the disciples understanding of truth, and He used repetition to help them to remember truth. Jesus used instructional methods, such as object lessons, parables, and miracles to help the disciples understand truth. He balanced teaching and learning by recognizing different learning styles and adjusting instruction accordingly.

Jesus frequently said, "I tell you the truth" (Matthew 25:45; Luke 18:29; John 5:24, 25; John 6:26, 32; John 13:16). In John 14, Jesus knows that the disciples "summative evaluation" is nearing. Jesus gets intense with His teaching and questioning because He knows that they must be prepared for the big "test" when He leaves. In John 14, He tells the disciples not to be afraid but to trust in God because He will be leaving soon. Philip asks, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:5). Jesus replies in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me." Jesus explicitly gives them the answer regarding the only way to pass the *final evaluation*. In John 15 and 16, Jesus begins to teach in-depth because He has successfully guided the disciples to a higher level of thinking.

Even though the disciples still did not fully understand everything, they had made progress because they were recognizing truth (Deckard & DeWitt, 2003). The disciples had shown through their actions that they understood (hands on). They expressed verbally what they had learned (minds on), but Jesus knew that true understanding came from genuine belief (hearts on) (Deckard & DeWitt, 2003). Jesus's words in John 16:31 is an illustration of when a teacher

finally gets the pupils to understand. Jesus says, “You believe at last!” Jesus’s interventions finally had proven to be effective. In John 16:33, Jesus’s final words to His disciples, just before His death as He was going to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane were, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Now Jesus could leave the disciples for His teaching was complete; it was their responsibility to demonstrate understanding of the knowledge that they had learned.

Conclusion

Jesus effectively demonstrated the teaching and learning cycle leaving an example that should evoke a response from any educator. Every Christian educator should understand how his teaching is guiding the students to a standard of truth (curriculum) (Deckard & DeWitt, 2003) as well as the final standard that each student should reach. Every Christian educator should teach using different methods and strategies of instruction. Assessing or progress monitoring should be done along the way to make sure the students understand and are prepared for the final evaluation. When progress monitoring shows that there is a lack of understanding, new interventions need to be implemented. Progress monitoring should continue until it is time for the final evaluation. When the final evaluation arrives, the teacher’s work is complete, and what joy when learning is the outcome. Then as the student leaves the room on the last day of school, the teacher will know that he or she has prepared them for the next step and can say, “You understand at last!”

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