

Education that Enables and Satisfies

Gwayaweng Kiki and Ed Parker

Abstract: Education (including theological education), by its very nature is deeply theoretically based. This is as it should be, but there are some real problems for non-first-world learners. Not only are they confronted with ideological issues, and theoretical problems, there is the issue of cultural diversity including communal and individualistic ways of being and doing. This article argues that the assessment task is where the two ways (Western and non-Western) can meet. Facilitating students via a pathway of compassion, care and concern becomes crucial. The educational insights of Terry Lovat have been used to open doorways that enable students to discover, understand and use effectively the knowledge and understanding that they have gained. The article arrives at a practical conclusion by opening avenues for non-first-world learners that traditional first-world-lecturers have tended to ignore. Human kindness should always be part of the tool bag of effective teaching and lecturing.

Key Words: education, seminary, wokabaut-karikulum, Habermas, Dewey, Lovat, critical knowing, teaching, learning

In his PhD Gwayaweng Kiki thesis sought to provide the theory and the practice of a balanced and well-rounded educational model for theological education within Papua New Guinea (PNG).¹ This model has also been presented in a journal article, but directed to the wider theological context of the South Pacific/Oceania.² The thesis is broadly based on sound educational principles that apply in particular to students that are not first world persons. The PhD is entitled “*Wokabaut-Karikulum: A Community Praxis for Theological Education Training in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG)*.”³

The basic argument of Kiki is that education should have a close fit with the epistemology and the cultural context of the student(s). Many persons/students not born into the first world have found that while very useful Western educational models have often alienated them from both their familial and cultural base. In *Wokabaut-Karikulum* the principles of community, reciprocity and exchange have been set into a learning model

¹ Gwayaweng Kiki and Edmund A Parker “Issues in Seminary Education for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea,” in *Journal of Religious Education*, 56/2 (2008): 32-39.

² Gwayaweng Kiki and Ed Parker, “Is There a Better Way to Teach Theology to Non-Western Persons? Research from Papua New Guinea that Could Benefit the Wider Pacific,” *Australian eJournal of Theology* 21/2 (2014): 108-124.

³ Published as a book by Lambert Academic Press in 2009: Gwayaweng Kiki, *WOKABAUT-KARIKULUM: A Community Praxis for Theological Education Training in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea*. [The ideas that follow are dealt with in some depth in the thesis and are summarized in two journal articles above, in fns 1 and 2.]

that works much like an apprenticeship. Here there is a pathway of observation, imitation, listening, participation, and then the asking of a few questions.

One of the problems with the modern so-called first world is that it has by and large defined how education should function in the rest of the world. It is important to notice that while Kiki's original study was undertaken in a theological setting, the principles enunciated are sound educationally. The hallmark of *wokabaut-karikulum* is its emphasis on active participative learning, integration and community focus that displays the characteristics of PNG Melanesian epistemology.⁴ This works towards developing a community praxis for theological education training in PNG. In a real sense, *wokabaut-karikulum* is a relationally-shared process of engaging the "place," that is, the community, in which people interact with other people in their social and cultural context. This is the learning principle on which *wokabaut-karikulum* is based as a community approach to learning and knowing in the PNG cross-cultural context. *Wokabaut-karikulum* finds expression in Freire's notion of praxis,⁵ that fits with Groome's notion of shared Christian praxis,⁶ and it displays characteristics of relational/reflective/experiential education.

THE ARGUMENT IN REVIEW

The research articles by A. Erickson, Kurt Riecke, and Greg Schiller on training methodologies in the seminaries of the ELCPNG have challenged the Western style of education in Papua New Guinea.⁷ They identified the problems as seen through their expatriate eyes. The points that emerged from these articles reflect a disturbing trend both contextually and culturally. Many common problems in present-day learning practices within both government and church school systems in PNG were highlighted by these scholars well before these problems had reached their current level of malaise.

⁴ Perhaps Kraft's orientation of educational procedures applies here. That is, the *wokabaut-karikulum* approach "facilitates participation in real life contexts. ... It does not treat life in compartmentalized units [but as] an integrated whole; emphasizes [not] thinking only, [but] living as well; oriented toward the formation of individuals" (Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996] 277-278).

⁵ Paulo Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom*. Preface by Jao da Veiga Coutinho. Reprint, (Middlesex: Penguin Education, 1974); "Liberation Through Literacy," in *Education in Melanesia*. Papers delivered at the Eight Waigani Seminar held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 5-10 May 1974, edited by J. Brammall and Ronald J. May (Port Moresby: The Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra and The University of Papua New Guinea, 1975) 245-249; *Education: The Practice of Freedom* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1976); "A Few Notions about the Word 'Concientization,'" in *Schooling and Capitalism: A Sociological Reader*, Roger Dale, Geoff Esland, and Madeleine MacDonald, eds. (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul in association with The Open University, 1976); *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*, introduction by Henry A. Giroux, trans. by Donald Macedo (Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 1985); *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. by Robert R. Barr. (New York: Continuum, 1994); *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, new rev. 20th-ann. ed. trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 1997); *Education for Critical Consciousness*, introduction by Denis Goulet. (New York: Continuum, 1998).

⁶ Thomas H. Groome, "Shared Christian Praxis: A Possible Theory/Method for Christian Education," *Lumen Vitae* 31 (1976):186-208; "The Cross-roads: A Story of Christian Education by Shared Praxis," *Lumen Vitae* 32 (1977): 47-70; *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry-The Way of Shared Praxis* (New York: HarperSan-Francisco, 1991); *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent* (Allen, TX: Thomas More, 1998).

⁷ A. Erickson, "Search for Alternatives," *Catalyst: Social Pastoral Journal for Melanesia* 4/3 (1974): 53-58; Kurt Riecke, "Why are Changes so Difficult to Make?" *Catalyst: Social Pastoral Journal for Melanesia* 23/1 (1993):17-38. Greg Schiller, "Cultural Anthropology, Teaching Methodology and Theological Education," *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 15/1 (1999): 55-71.

Western-oriented delivery of education to non-first world persons, according to Kiki's thesis, restricts them from active participation in learning and frequently turns them into mere passive learners. This method denies and blocks their creativity as well as their ability to absorb and apply knowledge in real life situations.⁸

LECTURE METHOD IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION TRAINING

The lecture is a tool of education that is used in the formal classroom setting, but it is one that does not reflect PNG ways. Lecture methods have been the dominant teaching and learning approach, and this does not augur well for student learning in both the government and church schools in PNG. Students are sensitive to their surroundings and relate to problems holistically in real life-experience situations. The method of lecture alone tends to neglect the holistic anthropology of PNG.⁹

Practically, the classroom approach based on the lecture method does not enable active student participation and this inhibits their ability to learn. Also, it tends to turn PNG students into under-achievers academically. This method often fails because it negates the transmission of PNG cultural values of life and community in the educative process and isolates learning from the student's life experiences and community needs in ministry. There has been no ongoing and continuing consideration given how PNG students come to know and to learn. Unless a more PNG culturally and epistemologically oriented process is set in motion, theological educators and students will be persistently plagued by a learning system that is culturally unresponsive to the people(s) of the nation. Clearly there is a large gap between the two systems (of learning and knowing), namely, the Western formal system over against the PNG informal system. The purpose of the Kiki thesis was to develop a PNG shared praxis approach to learning and knowing.

SIGNIFICANCE OF WOKABAUT-KARIKULUM CONCEPT

There are a number of reasons why *wokabaut-karikulum* is significant: First, it is unique in the context of current advanced seminary education in PNG. To develop the *wokabaut-karikulum* concept as a learning approach for theological education training in pastoral ministry is essential. *Tok Pisin*, the official language of PNG, is a natural choice in this highly multilingual society. The task as such is difficult and challenging. The only way to help improve learning methods in PNG cross-culturally is to employ a common language.¹⁰

Some might argue that English can be made common, but that is an imposition from above. Really, what needs to happen is to accept what has in fact already naturally

⁸ In Groome's words, we "rob them of their word and capacities for reflection, imposing our own thoughts ... rather than creating environments in which students are actively engaged as participating subjects in events and communities marked by relationship of inclusion and mutuality, where they are able to speak their own word in dialogue with others, to deal critically and creatively with their own reality" (Groome, *Sharing Faith* 13-14).

⁹ See Riecke, "Why are changes so Difficult to Make?" 32-33.

¹⁰ Melanesian students as they develop in their educational journey need to become fluent in English usage, but that should never be done at the expense of *Tok Pisin* which is the lingua franca of PNG. Education that is divorced from the context of the general population tends in the direction of isolation and loss of meaning.

transpired in the country. *Tok Pisin* is the common language now, and it has an added bonus, it has become more modern, yet remained thoroughly Melanesian.

Second, since the pre-independence period, the drive to establish formal Western education was to accelerate broader social change. The system that the PNG nation inherited from Australia (and some other Western countries) has had negative cultural consequences. After political independence the main concern was the lack of relevance of education to the lives of PNG people. Much of the rhetoric about the relevance of education in PNG in relation to educational policy, concepts/philosophy found expression in the Matane Report published in 1986.¹¹ The philosophy behind this report sets the platform for reform. In particular, it is the reform of the national curriculum targeting primary and secondary education. This Western alignment is a post-colonial PNG legacy. *Wokabaut-karikulum* applies cross-cultural critical theory to theological education training programs.

The relationship between national educational directions/focus and theological educational training has been somewhat tenuous and spasmodic. How does, the Western aligned approach fit within a post-colonial PNG legacy? A study of educational methodology which does not take into account these historical factors and which is confined to an exploration of narrowly-defined educational approaches cannot ever be adequate. Advocates of the reform in education within PNG are keenly aware of the relationship that exists between knowing and learning when cultural context is based on engaging the place, where people live, work, play and gather. Significant locations include the house, the garden, the place of hunting or fishing, the village meeting place, the places at the river where the women gather to wash clothes, the hospital, the prison, the market place, the town hall, the youth camp, the Bible study camp, the sports stadium, the exclusive men's or women's club, and even the night club. Learning does not just take place within large groups, frequently it is smaller groups that enhance the whole process of education (learning).¹² Practical implementation of a community praxis approach to learning is how it needs to happen.

Third, the significance of Kiki's thesis lies in the contribution it seeks to make to the academic debate concerning the tensions between the formal learning processes and the cultural context of PNG. The understanding of *wokabaut-karikulum* exhibits a concern for bridging this gap between the formal Western learning processes and Indigenous informal learning processes. By using a national (or common) lingua franca concept it is hoped to speak a language which can be understood by Christians of PNG as they participate in theological educational training. Kiki aims to challenge theological educators, students, and congregations. In one real sense it could be said that *wokabaut-karikulum* is not a new conception for PNG. The views of *wokabaut-karikulum* as a way of knowing and learning are already deeply embedded in the everyday life patterns of the PNG people. The real task is to embed these ideas within the seminaries that have expatriate and expatriate-trained-national-staff well trained and indoctrinated in Western ways. *Wokabaut-karikulum* is a

¹¹ See Ministerial Review Committee, 1986. *A Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea (Matane Report)* cited in Thirlwall and Avalos, *Participation and Educational Change*, 103-104. (Charmain Thirlwall and Beatrice Avalos, eds. *Participation and Educational Change: Implications for Educational Reform in Papua New Guinea* [Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1993]).

¹² See Jon Paschke, "The Small Group as a Learning Environment for Teaching Melanesian Christians," *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 20/2 (2004): 54-74 at 59. The small group context is a key to learning within Melanesian societies and cultures.

concept that not only gives identity to PNG people but to theological education training for ministry in a PNG context. In the PNG traditional communities, people learn informally (non-formally). It is not so much a village problem, it is rather, the intransigence of the Western oriented institutional approaches that often fail to take into consideration PNG ways of being, knowing, and learning. Kiki's thesis seeks to speak the same praxis language in an educational context to strengthen theological educators, students, and congregations so that they can be culturally responsive and responsible and thus fulfil their educational responsibilities.

Fourth, the contribution to learning is bringing to the attention of scholars (inside and outside of PNG) what has already been achieved and what yet needs to be achieved. This can be done when an appropriate national language concept of theological curriculum, teaching, training, and research is implemented.

In relation to the above points of reference, Kiki's approach to theological education training as a community praxis is that it "creates opportunities for new levels of teacher, student and community participation in meeting local learning needs."¹³

Lastly, but not the least, this thesis is somewhat unique, in that nothing like it currently exists. Moreover, its uniqueness opens the agenda within an ecumenical context relating to the churches in PNG/Melanesia. Kiki's thesis has the opportunity to do something new and fresh in this arena of equipping theological educators, students, and pastors, at the same time learning from both the successes and mistakes of the Western missionary colonial education movement.¹⁴

Before this article transitions to Western educational theory, it should be stated that a person being educated at sub-tertiary and tertiary levels in Papua New Guinea (or the wider Pacific region) in today's modern world should ultimately be able to work in both *Wokabaut-Karikulum* mode and in Western educational methodologies. In a sense one could argue that the case is not an either/or, but a both/and. So, rather than conceptualizing two circles: the first being Papua New Guinea ways and the second Western ways, maybe an ellipse is useful. With the two points of focus functioning there can be a deliberate and gentle move to achieving both approaches to education.

A CRITICAL EDGE TO EDUCATION

This brings us back to some important educational theory that comes from the Western world to support what Kiki has argued. For most students that have a communal background there needs to be a movement that facilitates growth and not disjunction. Furthermore, the transition to Western ways of education in this essay could work as an analogy that brings into focus the difficulty that many students face when moving from a non-Western to a Western way of education. (Hence, the practical suggestions later in the essay of enabling this growth of understanding and insight.)

¹³ See Michael Olsson, "Serving Through Education," in *An Introduction to Ministry in Melanesia*, ed. Brian Schwarz (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1985) 219-244 at 240.

¹⁴ See William David Taylor, preface to *Internationalizing Missionary Training: A Global Perspective* ix.

John Dewey, an American philosopher, social critic and educational theorist, argued that education should have a critical edge.¹⁵ In relation to Dewey's work Delaney states:

The ideal social order for Dewey is a structure that allows maximum self-development of all individuals. It fosters the free exchange of ideas and decides on policies in a manner that acknowledges each person's capacity effectively to participate in and contribute to the direction of social life. The respect accorded the dignity of each contributes to the common welfare of all. Dewey found the closest approximation to this ideal in democracy, but he did not identify contemporary democracies with this ideal. He was not content to employ old forms of democracy to deal with new problems. Dewey is probably best known for his views on education, but the centrality of his theory of education to his overall philosophy is not always appreciated. The fundamental aim of education for him is not to convey information but to develop critical methods of thought. Education is future-oriented and the future is uncertain; hence, it is paramount to develop those habits of mind that enable us adequately to assess new situations and to formulate strategies for dealing with the problematic dimensions of them.¹⁶

Dewey was not proposing that individuals should ignore their past experiences, or that they should forget the lessons and learning of the past. Rather, he was suggesting that the past cannot be valued for its own sake alone. This, he suggests, simply represents a nostalgic approach to the past. Instead, the past is better used to guide "those critical capacities that will enable us to deal with our ever-changing world effectively and responsibly."¹⁷

There is reciprocal relationship between education and democracy because, in the fullest sense of the term, education cannot exist without democratic ways of thinking, and democracy cannot exist without an appropriate educational approach. "Democracy is itself an educational principle, an educational measure and policy."¹⁸ Thus, if democratic ways of approaching ideas are not present, then it may only be a short step to indoctrination or worse, coercion.¹⁹ Importantly,

Only as the schools provide an understanding of the movement and the direction of social forces and an understanding of social needs and of the resources that may be used to satisfy them, will they meet the challenge of democracy.²⁰

Significantly, Dewey has used the term "understanding" rather than the word "knowledge". This is because knowledge can refer to information alone, without understanding. Yet, according to Dewey, understanding is the spring of intelligent action.²¹ Students need to be shown where to find, and evaluate, and to apply information in ways that benefit local communities and the wider society in which they live. In reality, the role of education is not to fill heads with data and information. Rather, it is the development of ways of teaching, thinking, and behavior that demonstrates insight and responsibility on the part of both teacher and student.

¹⁵ See John Dewey, *Philosophy and Education* (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, 1958).

¹⁶ C. F. Delaney, "Dewey, John," in Robert Audi ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995) 200.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Dewey, *Philosophy and Education* 34.

¹⁹ Ibid. 36-37.

²⁰ Ibid. 48.

²¹ Ibid. 49.

THE THINKING OF HABERMAS

Dewey argued for an environment in education that would enable students to develop the ability to think critically for themselves. In basic harmony with this outcome is the later work of Jürgen Habermas. Habermas was a member of the Frankfurt School, a group of social scientists, critics of culture, and philosophers that were associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in 1929 at Frankfurt, Germany. Habermas was the leading representative of the second generation of scholars within the school. The Frankfurt School is not recognized so much for its theories or doctrines, as it is acknowledged “for its program of ‘critical theory of society.’ Critical theory represents a sophisticated effort to continue Marx’s transformation of moral philosophy into social and political critique, while rejecting orthodox Marxism as a dogma.”²²

The approach of critical theory is “primarily a way of doing philosophy, integrating the normative aspects of philosophical reflection with the explanatory achievements of the social sciences.”²³ Its goals are: to link theory and practice; to provide insight concerning oppressive circumstances; to empower subjects to change these oppressive circumstances; and in so doing to achieve emancipation for humans; thus bringing about a rational society that delivers satisfaction for human needs and power.²⁴

The first generation of the school passed through three phases, with Habermas reacting to the final phase. The phases have been summarized as follows:

1. “interdisciplinary historical materialism” particularly under the influence of Max Horkheimer. This was a method of revising “historical materialism” so that it could “organize the results of social research and give it a critical edge.”²⁵
2. Marxism was abandoned and a “more generalised notion of critique” was adopted.²⁶
3. Nazism was dominant in the early 1940s, with Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno moving to a position designated as “the critique of instrumental reason.”²⁷

The response of Habermas to this third phase was a serious endeavour to recast the idea of critical theory in accordance with the following principles: a new emphasis on normative foundations; a return to the social sciences with wide ranging interdisciplinary research; a special emphasis upon the “unavoidable presuppositions of communicative action and an ethics of discourse.”²⁸

It would be useful to explore the key aspects of Habermas’ arguments as they potentially relate to issues that inform this this article. Terence Lovat indicates that at the time Bloom’s distinctions of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in education

²² James Bohman, “Frankfurt School” in Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995) 279.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

were being challenged, Habermas put forward a concept of education and learning that focused on (1) technical knowing, (2) interpretive knowing, and (3) critical knowing.²⁹

According to Habermas, any area of study reveals three distinct types of human *interest*, and each type of interest leads to a 'way of knowing'. The first interest is in *technical control* which leads to an *empirical* type of knowing: at this point, the learner wants *answers* to questions, wants to know the *rules* and the *laws* which govern any discipline....

The second interest is in the *inner workings* of any discipline, which leads to an *interpretive* type of knowing: here, the learner wants to *understand*, to *make links* between one thing and another, to be on the inside of the subject: in this regard, it is a little akin to Stenhouse's 'Initiation' and 'Induction' functions....

*It is in the third interest that the distinctiveness of Habermas can be seen. Over and above the interests in technical and interpretive understanding, there is the quest for what he terms emancipation. People yearn to be free, and to form their own opinions, to think for themselves. Knowledge is only truly knowledge when it liberates us from what he calls 'bondage to the past'.*³⁰

Habermas also placed special emphasis on the notion of "praxis" in contrast to theory alone. When critical reflection takes place in combination with theory and practice, and the intent is to bring about change, then emancipation can happen. Lovat maintains, "The idea, again, is that education is of no value if it only fills heads with a set of information or even fills hearts with predictable and stereotyped attitudes. Education, ultimately, must give people *power* and the *will* to improve the human lot ... in that sense its ends are quite *unpredictable*."³¹ This enables Lovat to call it "the sharp end of education."³² It is a time when change happens, when barriers are broken down, when new structures are set in place, and to use Lovat's expression, "new lights going on in people's minds."³³

Action Research is one of the more prominent methods used to translate Habermas' ideas and concepts into practice. One of the purposes has been to transform "communities of self-interest into learning communities."³⁴ When used within an educational system for the development of new approaches to learning, the stages of this process are as follows:

1. The interaction stage, a "feeling out" time when a new set of ideas for example is tested on some fellow teachers or peers.
2. The critical intent stage where everything in the present system that may need revising or updating is placed under close scrutiny.
3. The group deliberation stage when a thorough analysis of the situation takes place.

²⁹ Terence J. Lovat, *What is This Thing Called Religious Education: Summary, Critique and a New Proposal* (Wentworth Falls, NSW: Social Science Press, 1989) 31–32. [This text has now been reprinted 2nd ed. *What is This Thing Called R.E.: A Decade On?* (Australia: Social Science Press, 2002)]

³⁰ *Ibid.* 33.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.* 34.

4. The enlightenment stage when everything is seen in a new way, with particular attention given to assumptions (presuppositions) and organizational controls that may inhibit the forward movement of the enlightenment itself.
5. The enlightenment deliberation stage when the goals, aims, intentions and the objectives of the new approach or curriculum are set out.
6. The praxis stage, when implementation takes place.³⁵

In his book *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Habermas describes a range of ethical and moral issues, combining his ideas of communicative ethics with a theory of social action.³⁶ His propositions were derived following an examination of social psychology within the domains of interpersonal and moral development. It seems evident that there was a deliberate intention on the part of Habermas to move beyond the realms of cultural traditions alone, and to search for something deeper and more universal. In his approach to moral theory and morality, Habermas comes “closest to the Kantian tradition”³⁷ of seeking enlightenment, but not at the expense of the loss of ethical and moral principles.³⁸

QUALITY OUTCOMES

By way of transition to the next part of this paper we enunciate where we have travelled:

- Kiki has challenged the ineffectiveness of much Western oriented education for Papua New Guinea schools.³⁹
- Kiki has also suggested a viable pattern that would enhance educational outcomes for PNG people (and many others in the world⁴⁰) that combines community, students and schools working together.
- Dewey, Habermas and Lovat have seen the need for better ways of educating, moving into the direction of “freedom producing” education that is emancipating and that switches on “lights in students’ heads”

This next part of the paper seeks to gather together the best from both worlds in a praxis approach that brings about useful outcomes. Stated plainly, the way education is developing internationally means that what has been written in *Wokabout Karikulum* is in danger of not being implemented because Western pressure upon tertiary institutions in non-first world countries to conform to first world expectation is too great. For them to be found outside of the Western power-structure is just too hard a road to take. Maybe, the

³⁵ The ideas presented here are from Lovat, *Religious Education* 33–34.

³⁶ Jurgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Oxford: Polity, 1990).

³⁷ Thomas McCarthy in his Introduction to Habermas’ book, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* vii.

³⁸ A critique of many of the ideas of Habermas, and its relation to critical theory is presented in J. M. Bernstein, *Recovering Ethical Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

³⁹ The focus of Kiki is Papua New Guinea education, in particular theological education. However, the issue is a world-wide problem that impinges upon all forms of education in non-first world countries. Many students not born into the Western world find the imposition of Western models and protocols a real hindrance to their understanding and educational growth. Not only does the Western approach often alienate national students away from their cultural base, it also separates them from their familial connections and ideologies. Some may respond and say that all education in a way does that, but that is the defence given by the perpetrators of the cultural dominance, a dominance that is often not too far removed from a modern form of colonial control. The remainder of this essay seeks to marry in a harmonious way the best of Western models with the best of *Wokabout Karikulum*.

⁴⁰ Kiki and Parker, “Is There a Better Way to Teach Theology to Non-Western Persons?”.

way forward is to build bridges between the two orientations (non-Western and Western) and to make sure that the educational assessment tasks are framed in such a way that they can challenge both cultures: those that have a tendency towards individualism as well as those cultures that are communally oriented and based.

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

All assessment tasks should be at such a level that they meet the standards of the certificate/diploma/degree requirements. However, consideration should be given to enabling students that come from varying backgrounds to learn the processes of thinking, evaluating, writing and speaking. Scaffolding is useful, but it must not contribute to either student laziness or over-control. At times formal education inhibits learning and creativity, particularly for those students that do not fit the mould, so to speak, of modern, middle class Western world-views. Conformity is useful, but sometimes it becomes a prison rather than a facilitating device.

SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT

Julie Hinde McLeod and Ruth Reynolds have given some important guidelines concerning teaching and learning.⁴¹ To effectively assess teaching and learning there needs to be in-depth reflection that works around the parameters of planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating. Assessment should be authentic. Assessing data recall is not the limit of the task. Many aspects need to be probed including values, learning skills, teaching skills, and application to life skills. Learning should make a difference to the person, not just filling their heads with information. Contexts need to be addressed, and there needs to be diagnostic components that deal with both formative and summative parts of the task.

Claire Wyatt-Smith and J. Joy Cumming have edited a text dealing with twenty-first century assessment.⁴² They have examined how teaching, learning, education, assessment, and educational processes have changed and are continuing to change. It is at the level of assessments (this paper will argue) that some significant changes should take place. In reality, if one wishes to gain deep insight into another culture, one of the best ways is to become fluent in the language—learning the language from an informed native speaker.

Both authors of this paper have had many years of experience dealing with (and teaching) persons that do not have English as a first language. Frequently, when teaching such students in English for example, it is often a case of misdiagnosis, claiming that the students are not up to the task. One issue for second and third language users is that they have not always become aware of the rich nuances and scope of meanings that most words have, including a wide semiotic range. In general first language persons come with an advantage that second and third level users have not achieved. This may apply to some first language participants too, but it tends to create massive problems for those that come to a new language later in life. Given this problem, how can one craft assessment tasks to bring out the best in each student without unfairly favoring those that have a first

⁴¹ Julie Hinde McLeod and Ruth Reynolds, *Quality Teaching for Quality Learning* (Australia, Brazil, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, United States: CENGAGE Learning, 2007).

⁴² Claire Wyatt-Smith & J. Joy Cumming eds., *Educational Assessment in the 21st Century: Connecting Theory and Practice* (NY: Springer, 2009).

language facility? This should be done in such a way that it does not diminish the quality of the assessment for the first language users.

A number of years back the second author, as head of a theology department in Papua New Guinea, had the task of lecturing/teaching/mentoring students in a three year course that functioned at a tertiary diploma level. A number of problems were observed. Firstly the curriculum for the three years needed to be re-written into a new format, this was because the College had changed from three terms in a year to four quarters in a year of teaching. The transformation of the students over three years was quite dramatic. Each of the problems faced and dealt with are now presented:

Problem 1: The students were used to their cultural ways of learning, but they were not conversant with a Western approach to education. The department up-front told the students that it was seriously working on keeping contact with their PNG roots. Even though at times Western ways of education would be introduced it would not be presented as challenging what it meant to be Papua-New-Guinean.

Problem 2: The students could speak every day conversational English reasonably well from the viewpoint of an expatriate. However, it soon became evident that their knowledge of English was limited. Short sentences with simple words were understood rather well, but longer sentences with more complicated words confused them. Word definitions were learned in somewhat of a rote manner almost like a simple dictionary definition. Word meanings were basically held to a literal way of understanding, with any metaphorical or non-literal nuance completely bypassing them. Fortunately the lecturer had lived in the villages of PNG a decade back. His experiences had covered a period of nine years exposure. In the intervening decade whilst back in Australia he had reflected on how better to communicate with persons that were not native speakers of the English language. In the new situation this enabled bridges of trust and communication to develop and grow.⁴³

Over a period of three to four weeks discussions were held on how to improve their comprehension of spoken, written and read matter. At a communal level it was decided that the lecturer would read stories in English to the students and then ask them ten questions. They were to listen only to the stories, not make any notes. They were told that to begin with it would be hard, but they would get better over a matter of a month long participation. When the majority of the students had reached a level of answering 8 out of 10 questions, the same process would take place again for the next month but with stories that were a little more involved. This process took place over six months, hence each month the stories and the questions became more difficult. What this did was change the students from hearing separate words read in a sequence, to hearing a sentence that flowed and hence had a meaning, not just a jumble of words one after the other. It was an eye-opener to both the students and the lecturer, the vast improvements that were made.

Problem 3: When asked to write an essay the students plagiarized from text to text and book to book. It was easy to see where they had copied the material, each change ended up with a different grammar and syntax. The author never castigated the students, but commended them on finding material that would answer the question. Neither were the

⁴³ The most important thing to guard against was conveying any sense of shame.

students failed. They were given a mark of 10 out of 20 with a note that said, if you write your essays in your own words you will get a better mark next time.

Problem 4: When they wrote in their own words, alas a problem, to begin with their answers were largely incoherent to the marker. However, the marker did three things. Firstly he kept his word and commended them for writing in their own words. Secondly, he did increase their mark and gave them 11 out of 20. Thirdly, he made just one single recommendation on how to improve their next effort. This meant that the marker was marking a page long effort each week from each student. Each time he kept his promise, and each time he added one more recommendation.⁴⁴ Mark increases were then by half a mark a time (if deserved).

Problem 5: They had now learned to write in their own words, but the next effort was to teach them how to give appropriate references (footnotes and bibliography)

Problem 6: How to research. This took a while to teach, but it certainly had its rewards. At the end of the third year each student had to write what was called a mini-thesis of 5,000 words. They did extremely well.⁴⁵

One comment that should be remembered by all that choose to teach cross culturally and into different ideological worlds: "Do unto others as you would that they should do to you!" We keep reminding each other that we all learn one step at a time, and what is needed is someone that will act as facilitator and mentor.

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

What has been written above within an educational framework has very important theological implications for all theological/religious educators. A number of issues come to mind. Both authors have grown and developed along maturing pathways of religious/denominational/academic understandings. Both reflect that these pathways were ones that were evolutionary and not revolutionary. It has taken both authors many years to come to their present positions of understanding. Many biblical teachers/lecturers face the dilemma of observing promising religion students flounder from loss of personal faith during their academic journey.

The processes discussed above in this essay do not just fit in with teaching theology and religion in Papua New Guinea. All persons need to see modelled a way of doing theology, not just a way of learning the language of theology. In a sense theology at the best level is caught, not just taught. This is not to deny the skills of being academic and the quality of being able to argue and write a brilliant essay. Neil Ormerod said it well:

⁴⁴ That meant that over a period of 15 weeks some fifteen new recommendations were made to enable them to do better next time. A list was kept so that all students did not receive the same one at the same time, but each received them all over a period of 15 weeks.

⁴⁵ Over the years a good number of these students have gone on to do a first degree and then progressed to successful completion of Masters level work.

As theology comes to reflect more on the methodological question, it will be more able to break free from the dogmatic authoritarianism which seeks to suppress theological research.⁴⁶

Theological enquirers should be given the space of open enquiry (within reason) to explore ideas, concepts, theologies, and personal journeys of faith. However, all students and professors need to have a combination of the privilege of enquiry balanced by the responsibility of thinking, writing, being and doing. It was only when the lecturer/author interacted honestly with the students the problems of their own growth and understanding that they were able to progress and develop into better prepared and functioning persons. Similarly, both lecturer and student need to have the humility of being learners together—it is not a jug-to-cup exercise.

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⁴⁶ Neil Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies: The What and the Who of Theology Today*, (Newtown, NSW: E. J. Dwyer, 1990) 177.