Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education

Volume 10 | Issue 1

Article 1

2020

Full Issue

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Recommended Citation

(2020). Full issue. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.31380/sotlched.10.1>

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The Journal

of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

for Christians in Higher Education

THE JOURNAL

*of the
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
for Christians in Higher Education*

Volume 10 Number 1 2020

Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
for Christians in Higher Education

Volume 10 Number 1 2020

ISSN: 1559-8624

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Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education is published annually in May.

Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education is indexed through the Digital Commons (<https://www.bepress.com/impact-analytics/>). *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education* contents may be searched at http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/sotl_ched/ and through any web search engine.

Cover designer: Aleah Fortenbery.

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*Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
for Christians in Higher Education*

The purpose of *The Journal* is to support and inspire Christian educators in higher education by providing an open forum for the exchange of scholarship related to teaching and learning, including discovery (research), integration (synthesis), application (practice), and teaching (instruction).

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EDITORIAL

POST COVID 19 CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Hayoung Lim

It is April 10, 2020, Good Friday in the peak week of the COVID-19 pandemic. Writing this editorial for the 2020 publication of *The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Christian Higher Education* as being affected by the greatest pandemic of the last 100 years will be one of the most memorable moments in my professional life. Dr. Wilson, president of Oral Roberts University, wrote to the faculty that “We are part of a higher education sector that was already being disrupted significantly. Now, we are enduring perhaps the greatest disruption this disrupted sector has ever experienced.” With our brightly lit classrooms, grandiose halls, spring flowers, and previously booming campuses lying vacant, higher education is forced to react to new demands and to struggle with sudden changes as if our body is fighting against the corona virus itself.

One of the major demands in the recent higher education systems is online teaching and learning. This particular demand not only includes providing all educational instruction online, but also constantly monitoring and evaluating the students’ progress in reaching learning outcomes while removing the entire curriculum from the sanctity of a lecture hall to a collection of individual students sitting behind a webcam. The necessity of increased online and virtual learning can no longer be denied. As a result of the COVID-19 school closures and the rapid transition to online teaching and learning, more and more students, faculty, and staff may well stay away from the physical presence-oriented educational settings once the pandemic has passed. Presidents, provosts, and academic deans are being forced to reconsider which parts of their institutions’ delivery system will be offered in

person and which parts will be offered online. It is an inevitable move in any higher education sector; the majority of higher education systems will eventually make choices whether to embrace the uncertain, yet the current, distance learning and/or hybrid models of virtual education. Online education may become a strategic priority at every institution.

While most universities and colleges are finding new and creative ways to teach their students using virtual tools and strengthening an online academic forum with the purpose of providing high-quality education, are we ready to look beyond this pandemic and rebuild the post COVID-19 Christian higher education system? Can we develop online programs to substitute for face-to-face contact that nurtures and strengthens the spiritual growth and Christian faith of college and university students? However, before assessing the readiness of virtual Christian higher education, we should ask more fundamental questions such as “What is Christian education providing to higher education?” or “What pedagogical changes do we see on the horizon in Christian education for the new generation?” Once we can give some solid answers to these questions, we might step in the right direction to create and produce the virtual tools to facilitate Christian higher education in the future.

Students may choose to come to a Christian university or college to strengthen their faith through not only well-received education but also through daily life involved in spiritual aspects on campus (e.g., chapel services, prayer groups, theological discussions). People having experienced a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit often seek ways to make meaningful changes in the world. Therefore, a priority of Christian higher education is to provide opportunities for each student to experience or strengthen a personal relationship with Christ for him- or herself. Professors, staff, and fellow students in the same spiritual commitment can nurture the individual student and help support each other.. Cultivating the spiritual environment with a clear sense of academic direction and purpose in daily life has been the core of Christian education and should be the main feature of virtual education for Christian college students in post COVID-19.

COVID-19 has ironically united the nations as one; wars and fights between nations, ethnicities, and religions have stopped. We are

simply the citizens of the united world, facing a great pandemic that has woven our lives together. True “globalization” has come, even if it looks different than our expectations. Some cohorts of students, including international students, may well opt to study closer to home. According to a recent news report in *The PIE News* (News and Business analysis for *Professionals in International Education*) (Dennis, 2020), more Asian students are planning to look to study in Asia. Globalization in higher education may shift from international students from various countries going to Europe or the United States and instead remaining in their various countries and enrolling as international students online. Therefore, creating and producing those programs/curricula under a solid mission and vision embracing the majority of global groups of students might be the key for successful globalization of the university.

Almost every human being in this world wants to get back to “normal” life and do what they used to do before COVID-19 happened. With God’s grace, we will eventually get there, but we must prepare the returning journey carefully because it will not be exactly the same as before—the criteria for “normal” has already shifted. Therefore, we should not focus on merely restoring what we have lost during the pandemic; we should move forward with the eminent knowledge and the intensive experience that we have obtained to reach the essential purpose and vision of every institution. For us, we should keep seeking Jesus Christ, our savior.

Hayoung Lim
General Editor

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WELCOMING

UNFAMILIAR VOICES IN FAMILIAR SPACES:
HOW CAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES RESPOND TO THEIR GRADUATE
POPULATIONS WHOSE FAITH AFFILIATION IS
DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE SCHOOL'S?

Ruth Givens

*Journal of the Scholarship
of Teaching and Learning for Christians in
Higher Education* 10.1 (2020) 5–24
http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/sotl_ched/

Key Words *graduate education, undergraduate education,
Christian, faith, belief*

Abstract

This grant project surveyed students' experiences from different faith affiliations (or none) who attended Christian graduate programs, asking how they navigated the university's Christian worldview and language in light of their own beliefs (or non-belief). The goal was to conduct a small pilot study to explore how Christian universities with a definitively Christian ethos could maintain their identity but shift their paradigm from discipleship in their undergraduate schools to a mission field in their graduate schools. This project targeted schools with a definitively Christian undergraduate program but who opened their

enrollment to graduate students of all faiths. To access student feedback on their views and experiences at a Christian university, the research method relied on questionnaires for and interviews of graduate students who did not profess Christian faith. The results reveal that non-Christian graduate students often feel disenfranchised and suggest that engaging students in an open and honest dialogue about faith issues will help create an atmosphere that is more inclusive.

Introduction

Although Christian universities generally draw from a specific population among undergraduates, some also open their doors to graduate students who have little or no faith affiliation. These schools too often assume that the students will assimilate to the evangelical environment, leaving them to figure out where they have landed and how to maneuver in a strange (to them) environment. Being unaware of—or ignoring—students who are outside the vocabulary of faith and the life of the spirit is to lose the point of the Great Commission.

The study was designed to recognize the experiences of these graduate students, particularly to understand whether or not they felt welcome and included in a faith-based educational environment. My intentions were to gather enough data to suggest ways in which Christian colleges and universities could cast a wider net by listening to students' experiences and by using language that is both comprehensible and inclusive. Although the quantity of data was disappointing, the study began questions that will create opportunities for more inquiry regarding students whose faith affiliation differs from the faith-based institutions which they attend.

Statement of Purpose

The Problem

My interest in the perspective of students outside the Christian faith began when I moved from teaching undergraduates to graduates. Because my former universities required a faith statement from their

undergraduate students, I was accustomed to an atmosphere accommodating faith discussions among faculty and students. However, when my role changed to teaching graduate school, so did my students. Older and more experienced, they based their advanced degree choices on different criteria, like the program's fit, cost, or convenience. Their application process was unlike undergrads' applications from the same institutions. For example, the graduate applicants were not required to sign faith statements, nor were they informed about faith integration expectations in their program.

Some of the students had attended the same college as undergraduates or knew that they were choosing a Christian school; however, others found themselves unprepared for assignments that seemed disconnected from their program. Unprepared for the expectations and assumptions germane to faith integration activities, many students felt uncomfortable and kept silent or decided to make up something rather than speak out. Overall, the faith integration experience was often disingenuous for these students unfamiliar with the language shared by evangelicals.

Aims and Specific Questions

This study seeks to identify—through self-identification—the faith backgrounds and worldview perspectives of graduate students in effort to encourage Christian colleges and universities to recognize and respond to their graduate populations who are from different faiths or whose faith affiliation is distant or nonexistent. It is important for administrators and faculty to understand the diverse backgrounds their students come from so that students are not inadvertently excluded from classroom discussions or put in awkward situations among their peers. This research aims to better understand non-Christian graduate students who have chosen to attend a Christian university. More specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Where do the students categorize themselves in terms of their faith? (e.g., no interest in any faith, affiliated with a non-Christian faith)
- What do students know about the university's religious

affiliation before enrolling?

- How does the university environment acknowledge or affirm its religious affiliation?
- What reasons do graduate students give for choosing to attend a Christian institution?
- Which adjectives describe the religious ethos of the school? (e.g., religious identity is evident, not at issue, too extreme)
- How do students feel the university treats students whose beliefs differ from the school's?
- How do students feel when among their peers? (e.g., welcomed, uncomfortable)
- How do students feel about sharing their differing views in class?
- Do students feel that assignments geared toward integrating faith and learning are helpful?

Limitations

Originally, this research was intended to survey graduate students from four Christian universities, but two did not follow through when asked if they would be willing to allow their students to participate. Consequently, students from only two universities—Azusa Pacific and Seattle Pacific—were surveyed, and due to focusing on students who did not profess Christianity and to procuring permission to survey only half of the intended graduate schools, the sample size is reduced to only 23 students. However, this study, despite the small number of student participants, serves as a pilot study for further research into how Christian graduate schools can more readily welcome non-Christian or nominally Christian students into a Christian educational institution.

Review of the Literature

This study is based on a grant examining students' experiences from different faith affiliations (or none) who attended Christian graduate programs. Because millennials aren't as familiar with the vocabulary of faith as previous generations have been, it is important to understand how their constructs inform their understanding of faith. Even

those who were raised in Christian homes or who are familiar with Christianity live in an environment where secularity pervades the culture around them. Without this understanding, the gap between college students and faith-based institutions will continue to increase in scope.

In his comprehensive book, *The Secular Age*, Charles Taylor describes the historical shift from an accepted transcendent belief, which interprets reality in light of the metaphysical and supernatural, to the modern immanent order, where a buffered individual operates within a practical context, relying on self-sufficiency and objectification of social reality (Smith, 2014).

This shift, from transcendence (i.e., that which is beyond comprehension) to immanence (i.e., that which inhabits the here and now) characterizes the underlying presuppositions of both believers and non-believers. In other words, we are all moderns, according to Taylor.

In his interpretive reading of Charles Taylor's book, James K. Smith describes in his book *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* our shift from a view of an ordered natural "cosmos," where meaning is construed *for* us to a "universe," where meaning is construed by us. Smith explains that these changes evolved over hundreds of years, whereby our perspective shifted from meaning and significance beyond us to an "autonomous, independent 'meaning' that is unhooked from any sort of transcendent dependence" (Smith, 2014, p. 34).

This modification of meaning doesn't preclude belief completely; religion has not thoroughly lost its footing in the secular environment in which we live. Rather, believers live in what Taylor identifies as cross-pressured space, where belief is individualized and unbelief has become the default option. This perspectival shift is not altogether ruinous, according to Walker Percy, who welcomed the diminishment of Christendom's cultural power, stating, "If Christians believe in the kingdom, that's their business, but they should realize that the world has by and large turned away" (qtd. in Smith, p. 12).

What we have now is Individualized belief, which characterizes much of the Christian world, according to Taylor, and if that is so, how should Christian universities address this kind of culture? Too often, the effort to change non-belief to belief has been interpreted in light of evidence, but Smith suggests that "the Christian response to unbelief is

not to have an argument about the data or ‘evidence’ but rather to offer an alternative story that offers a more robust, complex understanding of the Christian faith” in which the goal of this story would be an invitation to sacramental, historic Christianity (Taylor, 2007, p. 77).

Methods and Materials

Exploring the essence of a central phenomenon, the research for this grant sought to understand the experiences of graduate students whose faith preferences were not the same as the Christian institution they attended (Creswell, 2014). The methodology used for this study was a phenomenological case study that addressed these concerns through surveys for graduate students in education programs—both Christian and non-Christian students—who were willing to share their experiences while attending a Christian university. I also created surveys for faculty who were willing to share their experiences teaching faith integration in their classes to both Christian and non-professing Christian students, although these surveys never materialized.

Before creating and distributing surveys, four graduate education schools in Christian universities that admit non-Christian students were asked for permission to allow their students to receive the surveys. Two of the four universities, Seattle Pacific (SPU) and Azusa Pacific (APU), followed through beyond an original response and agreed to participate in the study. Consequently, the target group was smaller than hoped. From this point forward, the two participating universities are referred to as Institution A and Institution B, respectively.

The students were informed that the study was investigating the level of comfort they felt among their peers and professors as non-professing graduate students, and students receiving the online surveys had the option to answer the survey questions or not. Those who participated were added to a drawing for a \$100 Amazon card.

Of the 66 total responses, 23 students indicated little or no Christian affiliation (see question 1 below), and these 23 provide the research data presented in this research article. Of these 23 students with little or no Christian background, four students additionally

participated in one-on-one interviews with me to discuss their experiences further; these students were each given a \$10 Starbucks card as a thank you.

Results and Discussion

The data here display the responses of graduate education students enrolled in either Institution A (SPU) or Institution B (APU), but not professing Christianity.

Question 1

Where would you place your faith affiliation?

- a. Nonexistent interest in any faith
- b. Somewhat interested
- c. Of a different faith, not interested
- d. I am nominally Christian.
- e. I am a former Christian.
- f. Other (Please explain.)

Fig. 1: Where Would You Place Your Level of Interest in the Christian Faith?

Student Comments from the Survey

- I grew up Catholic, but do not practice a religion. I consider myself to be agnostic. I am spiritual, but my beliefs and values do not align with any organized religion.
- Disappointed in Christian culture and people, indifferent to

Christianity as a whole now. Would not say I am a Christian and seriously doubt some of the Biblical stories.

- I'm interested in faith intellectually, but I have not found it myself.
- I was an Evangelical Christian when I started the program, but I became an atheist during my studies at Institution B. I felt free to discuss Christian faith. I did not discuss my emerging atheism.
- I slowly transitioned from being an evangelical Christian to becoming an atheist during my doctoral program. I do not credit or blame Institution B with my transition to atheism. I read books that were critical of religion so that I could become a better Christian apologist. These books helped me to leave religion. I did not "come out" as an atheist before graduation.

Researcher Comments

These comments reveal the disturbing fact that unbelief exists, not only among non-believing students, but also among former believers. Included in the above responses are two who considered themselves evangelicals and abandoned their faith *while they were attending* the Christian university. Here we might consider Taylor and Smith's discussion of the crisis of faith among all sorts of people who find themselves "caught in the face of opposition between orthodoxy and unbelief" and who are looking for another way (Smith, 2014, p. 64).

If we accept both Taylor and Smith's position that individualized belief dominates the Christian conscience, the responses, though few and representing a slim margin, can serve as a harbinger of what students may be deciding about their beliefs in the future.

Question 2

What did you know about your university's religious affiliation before enrolling?

- a. I was completely unfamiliar with the school's faith connection.
- b. I was vaguely aware that it was religious.

- c. I knew of the school's faith affiliation, but didn't care.
- d. The school's faith connection was intriguing to me.
- e. I am religious myself, but I practice a different faith from Christianity.
- f. My understanding of the university's religious affiliation is different from those mentioned above. (Please explain.)

Fig. 2: What Did You Know about Your University's Religious Affiliation before Enrolling?

Student Comments from the Survey

- I knew of the school's faith affiliation and was uneasy about it from the beginning. I was very uneasy signing all the consent forms that specified "moral" behavior, and I researched things such as SPU's stance on LGBTQ identity beforehand.

Researcher Comments

In the graduate education program at Institution B, students are required to write a faith and learning paper in every class, so they often "fake it" just to fulfill the assignment. Many of the students are from different cultures and unfamiliar with the evangelical environment there, even though they many have had religious experiences that they would call Christian.

Question 3

In what ways does the school environment recognize and affirm its religious affiliation?

- Activities and school functions do not include a faith-based component.
- Activities and school functions offer ways for Christian students to affirm their faith, but they are not required.
- Activities and school functions require that all students attend some religious functions.
- Activities and school functions assume that all students share the same religious values.
- Activities and school functions stressing Christian faith integration make me uncomfortable because I don't share their faith.
- I would describe the school's environment differently. (Please explain.)

Fig. 3: In What Ways Does the School Environment Recognize/Affirm Its Religious Affiliation?

Researcher Comments

This question sought information about the school's proactive affirmations, or lack thereof, regarding their faith affiliation. Since the question's purpose was to gather university information, students didn't feel the need to make additional comments.

Question 4

What was the strongest reason for choosing to attend this institution?

- a. Convenience
- b. Reputation
- c. Cost effective
- d. Degree I wanted
- e. Attracted to a value-based school
- f. My reason is not included among the above. (Please explain.)

Fig. 4: What Was the Strongest Reason for Choosing to Attend This Institution?

Researcher Comments

This question sought information about the participants' reasons choosing the institution. Since the question's purpose was to gather somewhat objective information, students didn't feel the need to make additional comments.

Question 5

How would you describe the ethos of the school in terms of its religious identity?

- a. Religious identity seems moot, not an issue.
- b. Religious identity is evident among artifacts and in print, but not discussed openly.

- c. Religious identity seems mixed among students and faculty.
- d. Religious identity is clearly evident among students and faculty.
- e. Religious identity is far too extreme for my comfort.
- f. I don't feel free to express my own religious identity because it is different.
- g. I would describe the school's religious identity different from those listed above. (Please explain.)

Fig. 5: How Would You Describe the Ethos of the School in Terms of Its Religious Identity?

Researcher Comments

From the above pie chart one can see that 52.2% of the graduate students surveyed feel that the religious identity is clearly evident, which is good news for Christian schools. However, 17.4% find the religious identity too extreme for their comfort. Taylor's suggestion that "being in on or [having] another perspective" can create potential dialogue rather than confrontation, or in some students' case, marginalization (Smith, 2014, p. 81).

Question 6

Given that the graduate programs do not limit their enrollment to students of faith, how would you say the school treat students whose beliefs differ?

- a. They do not address anything about our differences.
- b. There is no evidence of differences because faith is not discussed in classes.
- c. They make efforts to be inclusive to students who do not share their faith or whose faith may be different.
- d. They assume all students share the faith of the institution, despite their claims to include students whose faith perspective does not match the school's.
- e. They treat non-Christian students differently.
- f. I would describe their treatment of non-Christian students differently. (Please explain.)

Fig. 6: How Would You Say the School Treats Students whose Beliefs Differ?

Researcher Comments

Although, again, the pie chart's 52.2% positively represent inclusive behavior towards students with different beliefs, 26.1% of students feel the school ignores the differences among student beliefs supports a need for awareness and sensitivity among faculty and administration.

Question 7

Although the graduate students in your cohort include faith-based and non-faith-based students, how would you describe your comfort level among both groups?

- a. I feel accepted by all students, and religious preference makes little difference within my cohort.
- b. The students in my cohort seem to cluster among believing and students of other faiths or non-believing students.
- c. Most of the students are inviting, but a few keep their distance when they find out I'm not a practicing Christian or profess a different faith.
- d. Faith is never discussed among my cohort.

Fig. 7: How Would You Describe Your Comfort Level among Both Groups?

Researcher Comments

The higher, more positive response, represented in the pie chart above reveals another potential for Christian educators to consider. The non-professing Christians seem to feel more comfortable among their peers. More telling, the two options (21.7%, 8.7%) pointing to a distancing from the believers to the nonbelievers is disconcerting. Taylor and Smith recognize that these modern times require a different way of relating to others, where understanding the fragility of what all of us face in term of belief and unbelief, opens us to more possibilities (Smith, 2014, p.127).

Question 8

When discussions over the Christian faith occur in class, how open do you feel sharing differing views?

- a. I haven't experienced any discomfort in class discussions over Christian faith because my professors and peers welcome differing views.
- b. When I express differing views, I feel alienated.
- c. When discussions over the Christian faith occur in my class, I just keep quiet.
- d. I have heard students who are more outspoken about their beliefs marginalized by faculty and students.
- e. My experiences are different from those listed above. (Please explain.)

Fig. 8: How Do You Feel Sharing Differing Views?

Student Comments from the Survey

- I have not felt comfortable declaring myself as an atheist. I honestly am a little afraid of the repercussions. I don't want that information to go in my permanent student record.
- This class was neither about theology nor about morals, and furthermore was not academic, just preaching to the choir of Christian beliefs, with a required text that cites only from the Bible, and an evangelical professor who proclaimed statements such as "the ancients [in Biblical times] did not know about homosexuality."

Researcher Comments

The need for more genuine communication propelled my research, and the responses from this question validate the importance of honest dialogue, which means listening to the views of opinions outside the school's religious paradigm. According to Smith and Taylor, this kind of dialogue would require including a wide range of spiritual and semi-spiritual beliefs and casting our nets even wider by discussing students' religion as the shape of their ultimate concern (Smith, 2014).

Question 9

Are You Willing to Participate in a Focus Group or One-on-One Interview?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe: Please send me more information.

Fig. 9: Are You Willing to Participate in a Focus Group or One-on-One Interview?

Researcher Comments

Although 39.1% of the survey respondents stated that they were willing to participate in a focus group or interviews and 26.1% stated that they could consider it, only five students answered the follow-up letter—even with the promise of a Starbucks gift card. I was able to meet four of the five who answered the request for an interview. The

fifth participant was on maternity leave and needed to wait. She was the only respondent from Institution A.

Student Interviews

Because she had been born and raised in church, Student A easily connected to the evangelical ethos that pervaded Institution B, although she found herself juxtaposed against other Christians who declared a faith position without much thought behind it. She found a pervasive assumption among faculty and students that they were spiritually on the same page, when actually many denominations and faith practices were represented at the school. For example, some of her peers made blanket statements about LGBTQ as sin, when she knew that two women in the class were gay. Silence was the only answer available to those outside the evangelical paradigm. Most disconcerting to her was the general sense of “group think” in her on-campus classes, where professors and students shared the same presuppositions that Christianity embraced the same political, moral, ethical, and spiritual beliefs when she knew from personal experience that it wasn’t true. There seemed to be what she called “consensual ignorance” that everyone could find interchangeable answers to moral issues just by reading the Bible. These experiences served to distance Student A from faith exploration rather than draw her in that direction.

Student B’s experience included both regional and on-campus classes. He preferred the regional center’s open atmosphere where faith integration seemed more like conversations instead of assignments. Most disconcerting to Student B was that it seemed like Christians thought they had the monopoly on caring and that non-Christians weren’t as capable of becoming caring teachers. He told me that there seems to be an ego that comes with faith, even among members of his own family.

Student C told me immediately she was a Christian, but when I told her about my research, she seemed to change her tone and opened up about growing up as a Jehovah’s Witness. She wanted to attend a Christian school but felt like an outsider because she didn’t have the background. She has experienced a great deal of pain from her family’s

rejection, but she didn't feel safe to share about it at Institution B. Everyone assumed they shared the same beliefs, so she just kept quiet.

Student D's experience with faith integration was positive. Although he stated that he was a spiritual person, he said he didn't believe in Jesus as his Savior. He appreciated the faith integration conversations and said they were one of the activities he enjoyed most.

Researcher Comments

The interpersonal nature of the interviews resulted in extended responses that were particularly helpful in articulating the general themes identified in the surveys. Despite the small number, these interviews appear to provide a reasonable sample of graduate students' experiences, especially since they resembled the answers on the survey.

Interpretation of the Results

The following themes emerged as I compared the answers to surveys and interviews, which can serve as blueprints for educators and administrators in Christian higher education to use when considering their graduate students whose faith practices differ from the school's mission position.

- *Being Outside:* One theme that pervaded many of the surveys and interviews was the sense of being outside the norm. Several expressed a sense that they needed to hide themselves from what seemed to be mainstream belief, even if they were Christians.
- *Being Heard:* One theme was the desire to be heard. Genuine interest in students' faith positions might be more inviting to the uninitiated. If faith integration provided a platform for students to share their faith journey rather than regurgitate it, faith integration might be valuable to the students who are unfamiliar to the language and practices germane to evangelical Christianity.
- *Feeling Awkward:* Even among Christian students, several admitted that they didn't like to share their faith in a classroom setting or in front of people. One student wrote that because

everyone believes differently, it's hard to open up. Another wrote that it was "a little weird" because he/she did not affiliate with a particular religion.

- *Being Uninformed:* Several said that the school needs to be more proactive and inform incoming graduate students that faith integration is part of the course requirements and that they will be required to respond to questions where they will apply biblical principles to their pedagogical practices.

Implications for Further Research

Although all of the surveys among students (there were 66 among the Christian and non-professing Christian participants) have been collected and assessed, I still hope to collect surveys from faculty and conduct more interviews. Student comments indicate that many students appreciated the faith integration efforts, and their willingness to participate in the study indicated that they wanted to share their opinions.

For Christian academics and universities, welcoming non-Christian students should be something faculty, administration, and university/college boards address directly. Without an intentional effort to understand the students' faith backgrounds, universities may miss many opportunities to help non-Christian students feel welcome in a Christian environment, understand a Christian worldview, and support students questioning their belief systems. Failing to do this almost certainly leads to missing opportunities to minister and to heed the Great Commission.

This study has surveyed a small sample of non-Christian graduate students in two Christian universities but has opened the door for further research along this line. This study suggests the need to survey graduate and undergraduate students attending other Christian colleges and universities and learn how widespread it is to have student populations who are not acquainted with basic Christian tenets.

Listening to our students is the first step in faith integration and opens the door for genuine communication to begin.

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Dr. Ruth Givens has been in Christian higher education over 44 years. She has a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Tulsa and an Ed.D. from Oklahoma State University. She taught English for 19 years at Oral Roberts University and was the founding editor of the freshman composition textbook. Dr. Givens then taught for seven years at Wheaton College, chairing the Master of Arts in Teaching program and teaching the capstone course in philosophy of education. Following Wheaton, she became professor of graduate programs at Seattle Pacific University followed by Azusa Pacific University until 2019 when she retired. She has published in *Christian Scholar's Review*, *Issues in Teacher Education*, *Journal of Curriculum Discourse and Dialogue*, *Action and Teacher Education*, and has written three book chapters. She can be reached at givensruth@gmail.com.

Q&A:

A CAREER IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INTERVIEW

Linda Gray, Oral Roberts University

*Journal of the Scholarship
of Teaching and Learning for Christians in
Higher Education* 10.1 (2020) 25-33
http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/sotl_ched/

Key Words *teach, Christian higher education, education, university, college, undergraduate, graduate, students*

Abstract

Much has changed in U.S. culture since the 1970s, requiring teachers to adjust their methods of reaching students who are markedly different from their parents' generation. But through the decades, Christian educators have tried to demonstrate God's love through caring, patience, knowledge, and commitment, and in a Christian institution, they also seek to bring a Christian worldview to their students. But if some students at Christian universities are not believers nor seekers and when students lack basic biblical knowledge, teachers in Christian institutions must adjust their teaching methods. Online teaching creates even more challenges as students and teachers can see each other and communicate only through electronic equipment, which can enable students to "hide" behind a computer screen or,

conversely, provide a safety net so students can speak more openly. To meet the changing belief systems of students over the decades and changing technology, Christian higher education should be innovative to meet ever-changing student needs and higher education's goals.

Introduction

The Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education (*The Journal*) seeks to support Christian educators by providing a forum for an exchange of research, educational resources, and ideas in order to encourage excellent teaching for the benefit of the students. *The Journal's* mission for Christian educators is—in part—the following statement:

Called by God, Christian educators allow their faith to influence (either directly or indirectly) all that they do in and out of the classroom. They transform their students by inspiring love for God and others and by stimulating intellectual curiosity and creativity. The ability to teach is a gift from God, and those who are truly called to teach have a desire to see learning take place (https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/sotl_ched/aimsandscope.html)

One such teacher answered the call and dedicated herself to a career in educating and connecting with students. Much has changed in U.S. culture since the 1970s, requiring teachers to adjust their methods of reaching students who are markedly different from their parents' generation. But through the decades, Christian educators still strive to demonstrate God's love through caring, patience, knowledge, and commitment, and in a Christian institution, they also seek to bring a Christian worldview to their students.

The Interview

Dr. Ruth Givens' experience in Christian higher education spanned over 40 years, beginning with Oral Roberts University, where she taught English for 19 years and was the founding editor of the freshman composition textbook. Dr. Givens then began teaching at Wheaton College, chairing the Master of Arts in Teaching program and teaching the capstone course in philosophy of education. Following her seven years at Wheaton College, she became a professor of graduate programs at Seattle Pacific University followed by Azusa Pacific University until 2019. She has published in *Christian Scholar's Review*, *Issues in Teacher Education*, *Journal of Curriculum Discourse and Dialogue*, *Action and Teacher Education*, and has written three book chapters.

Question: Dr. Givens, you've recently retired after 44 years teaching in Christian higher education. Did you grow up attending Christian schools too?

Dr. Givens: No, I didn't. My teaching career in Christian higher education began when I was 26 and ended just after I turned 70. I began teaching English at Oral Roberts University (ORU) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, after four years of teaching in the public high schools. As an undergraduate instructor, I taught the required freshman composition courses and ended up editing the textbook that ORU used for the next 30 years. Because my public-school training didn't acquaint me with Christian education, however, I was unfamiliar with religious schooling, so beginning classes with prayer or preparing devotions didn't occur to me. My faith qualified me to teach at an evangelical university, but my understanding of what that entailed came later through personal experience.

Question: Since you didn't attend Christian schools yourself and had only public school training, how did you adapt to teaching in a Christian university?

Dr. Givens: I spent the first 19 years of my teaching career at Oral Roberts University, where the Christian ethos was clearly communicated through its mission to teach the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. The emphasis on integrating faith into the curriculum characterized the school's focus on faith and experience. As a charismatic university, ORU held a unique position among other colleges in the Christian College Coalition, and with Oral Roberts having had an extensive tent ministry, world-wide crusades, and radio and television evangelistic programs for decades, its uniqueness gave the school an identity that drew students from all over the globe. As a prominent American Choctaw evangelist, Oral Roberts influenced mainstream Christianity with charismatic/Pentecostal beliefs in healing and worship practices that included gifts of the Holy Spirit, like speaking in tongues. Even in the early decades of the university, which opened its doors in the 1960s, students came from many families and communities shaped by Roberts' dynamic preaching and from dozens of countries on nearly every continent. These students' active engagement in the world embodied the ORU students' collective consciousness and created a diverse school before diversity became part of the educational conversation.

Question: With Oral Roberts University being not only Christian but also Pentecostal/charismatic, did you have to adjust to fit into the ethos of ORU?

Dr. Givens: Although I enjoyed the synergy that pervaded ORU's campus, the whole charismatic movement was foreign to me. Because I was raised a Southern Baptist, my faith was rationally and cognitively based, so behavior beyond my ability to comprehend threatened my personal experience as a Christian. In other words, my perspective was constructed by my own history, and my experience at ORU challenged my interpretations of what it meant to be a Christian. Despite my unfamiliarity with the charismatic movement, I learned what it meant to integrate faith and learning there, and that way of teaching became natural for me.

Question: After almost two decades of teaching undergraduates at a charismatic/Pentecostal university, you moved on. Where did you go next and why?

Dr. Givens: I left ORU to teach at Wheaton College in Illinois, and it was a completely different faith environment. I had dreamed of teaching there because Wheaton is known for its exemplary academics, and for me, its connection to C.S. Lewis made teaching there my ultimate goal. So, it was with heightened expectations that I arrived on that campus; however, such elevated expectations can only result in diminished returns when they are extraordinarily high. The inclusive community I experienced at ORU became an exclusive community at Wheaton, where all expectations were reversed. Regarding the shift in each school's ethos, I made a comment once and found myself later quoted by another Wheaton professor. I claimed, "At ORU, it's all grace and no accountability, and at Wheaton it's all accountability and no grace." My point was that the stakes had changed because the schools operated with such different expectations. ORU's emphasis on experience and faith didn't fit the Wheaton model, where "sola scriptura" hung on the library wall.

Theologically, Wheaton identified itself as more Calvinist, although its roots were Wesleyan. A Wheaton professor, Mark Noll, had written *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, which basically articulated Wheaton's paradigm: Reformed Christianity trumped pietistic practices characterized by many evangelical churches. In an environment where students sign a pledge endorsing their faith in Christ, belief is assumed. The calendar included chapel and activities centering on discipleship and evangelism, so the curriculum followed in kind. Some classes began with prayer, some did not, but a discussion always included a biblical perspective in various ways. Similar to ORU, faith integration emerged naturally, where students and faculty connected their faith perspective to academics.

Question: Did you find the students at these two schools similar, or were they different because the ethos of each school was different?

Dr. Givens: Reflecting over my experiences teaching undergraduates in Christian higher education from 1975 to 2002, I realize that the similarities far outweigh the differences. Perhaps because both are situated in the Midwest, my theology didn't change significantly; I considered myself an evangelical who leaned toward liturgical worship, but the sense that I was serving Christians remained the same. In fact, I considered myself a kind of gadfly who provoked complacent students to think beyond their comfortable assumptions. I knew my audience because I had been one them myself, cradled in Christian belief throughout my life. I wanted my students to grapple with unfamiliar ideas and emerge stronger in their faith rather than simply endorsing practices handed down by their parents.

Question: So Oral Roberts University and Wheaton College are both Christian institutions in the Midwest, and you taught undergraduates at both. However, one was charismatic and the other Calvinist, and you taught English in one and education in the other. You stated that the students were largely similar; was that true with the faculty and administration at these two schools?

Dr. Givens: Teaching English at ORU and education at Wheaton, I discovered that each field's trajectory presented enormous challenges that I hadn't anticipated. My own doctoral program in education had been immersed in theoretically based curriculum, which inadequately prepared me for the practical ends required for teacher education, such as lesson planning, classroom management, and standardization requirements from state and federal levels. Furthermore, research dominating the social sciences differed significantly from the theoretical scholarship germane to the humanities, which was more familiar to me. However, emphasizing testing procedures, control groups, and statistical interpretations, and quantitative research dominated the field of education.

I also recognized the disturbing dismissal toward education faculty among other departments and schools, primarily because, as a general rule, educational faculty published less prolifically than some of

their colleagues in other fields. However, I learned from experience that heavy workloads, extensive fieldwork, and standards-driven paperwork based on credential requirements accounted for the paucity of publications rather than inferior academic skills of education faculty. Education professors have been the workhorses of higher education and deserve the same esteem as professors from other disciplines.

Question: After approximately seven years at Wheaton, you moved to Washington to teach education courses to graduates at Seattle Pacific University. Was that an easy transition, or did the move to the West Coast or the change to teaching graduate students create unexpected challenges?

Dr. Givens: Christian higher education shares a similar, and in part, unified ethos. Whether it's Wheaton's "For Christ and His Kingdom" or Azusa Pacific's "God First," the purposes and goals of these schools are biblically based on the message of and salvation through Christ. Each institution's mission statement delineates the school's character. However, because the graduate students at Seattle Pacific University and Azusa Pacific University are not required to sign a faith statement, a unified Christian identity is impossible to maintain at these graduate schools. Many graduate students, and I can only speak for education, choose a professional program like teaching for reasons that may not be related to their faith position. The timing, convenience, and the courses offered are among some of the reasons graduate students choose to attend these Christian graduate schools, regardless of any religious affiliations of the students and universities.

I discovered that I was not prepared for this shift in the students' faith perspective, so during my first few semesters teaching graduate school, I held onto some misguided assumptions about my students' belief systems. Challenging my curriculum choices happened occasionally. For example, the Christian bastion of sound theology, C.S. Lewis, didn't always fly with my graduate students at Seattle Pacific University or Azusa Pacific University. While some

rejected Lewis' views on marriage, others didn't share his biblical beliefs. These challenges, among other oppositional views about Christianity, were sometimes spoken but more often confessed to me confidentially.

Question: Eventually you moved to Southern California to teach graduate education at Azusa Pacific University. Were the spiritual beliefs of the education students at Azusa Pacific similar to those you had taught at Seattle Pacific?

Dr. Givens: After four years at Seattle, I began teaching at Azusa Pacific, and largely because both universities are on the West Coast, and both universities didn't require faith statements of their graduate students, the students at both schools were similar. A major difference between teaching undergraduate students and graduate students was their degree of Biblical knowledge and their experience with any religious faith; graduate students were more theologically skeptical and less likely to know even common Bible stories. At Azusa, all students were required to participate in faith integration activities, through writing papers, making presentations, or engaging in faith integration class discussions to varied degrees of success. However, some students admitted to me that they falsified their answers to avoid being isolated or singled out.

After teaching graduate school for 17 years, my whole teaching philosophy changed. I no longer assumed that all of my students shared the same faith—or any faith, for that matter—so I envisioned teaching to a different audience where the students could share their faith journey in the context of their own experiences. Although I was open and honest about my own Christian faith, I tried to make it clear that all faiths were welcome. Some students let me know how much they appreciated the honesty they felt in my class when they didn't have to hide who they were.

Question: By this time in your teaching career, online education was becoming widespread. Have you taught any online courses, and if so, what adjustments did you have to make?

Dr. Givens: The last five years of my teaching career, Azusa Pacific's master's program went completely online, which posed even more substantive challenges for faith-based institutions where both believing and non-believing students have become invisible participants in the program.

Educators from my generation didn't sign up for this radical shift in pedagogy. Forming relationships, which drew many of us into Christian higher education, has created a multi-dimensional challenge—that of reaching students we can't see or touch and caring about students who are able to hide behind a computer screen. In some cases, online learning provides a safety net for students who can more boldly state their philosophical reasons for ethical choices. The temptation for “God-talk” is actually less frequent online because I introduced the classes as a safe zone for open discussions and varied opinions.

Still, the relational aspect of learning—particularly for Christian schools whose students may not share the same beliefs—requires even greater efforts to reach them in ways that may be less conventional. With each dimensional distance, the faith challenges and the virtual distance, Christian higher education needs to reinvent itself in ways never imagined when I began teaching over four decades ago.

Dr. Linda Gray is Professor Emerita of English at Oral Roberts University where she has taught composition, linguistics, technical writing, and education courses for more than 35 years. She has served as president of the Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate and of the Education Faculty Senate as well as the chair of the English and Modern Languages Department. She has a B.A. in Linguistics from California State University-Fullerton, an M.A. in Theology from Fuller Theological Seminary, and an Ed.D. in English Education from Vanderbilt University. Dr. Gray can be reached at lgray@oru.edu.

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ANDRAGOGY
FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LEARNERS IN
AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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*Journal of the Scholarship
of Teaching and Learning for Christians in
Higher Education* 10.1 (2020) 35-52
http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/sotl_ched/

Key Words *CLEED, ELL, English language learners, andragogy, diverse, international, IIE, students, higher education*

Abstract

“Higher education institutions throughout the United States and other countries are experiencing significant increases in the number of international students enrolled at their campuses” (Washburn & Hargis, 2017, p. 2). However, the rate of growth for this cohort of culturally, linguistically, economically, and ethnically diverse (CLEED) students exceeds the rate of faculty preparation and capacity to effectively serve their needs. Statistical evidence corroborates the view of Enright (2011) and others that today’s diverse

student body is now “the ‘new mainstream’ of the 21st century classroom” (p. 80). Research in the last two decades points to a real need for culturally responsive andragogy that is inclusive of all learners. Faculty development that includes training in linguistic and culturally sensitive andragogy is a meaningful response. This paper contains a review of extant literature pertinent to this issue and recommends practical, culturally relevant, and responsive, research-based teaching approaches that are framed within sociocultural learning theory and effective for use in classrooms with international English language learners.

Introduction

*T*he Institute of International Education (IIE) (2019) reports that in the last four consecutive years, over a million international students have been recorded among those pursuing college education in the United States with the highest number, 1,095,299, recorded for the 2018-19 academic year (see Table 1). The number represents students in academic programs as well as Optional Practical Training. The data reveals that the highest percentages of international students come from nations whose native languages are other than English, with 52% represented by China and India combined. The IIE (2019) notes that this growing cohort of English language learners (ELLs) represents over 400 languages from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds. In light of these and other realities, educators need to reevaluate the way they package and deliver their content to “the ‘new mainstream’ of the 21st century classroom” (Enright, 2011, p. 80), a diverse demographic and cultural group that is replacing the traditional higher education student body. In U.S. higher education, both domestic and international students comprise this new mainstream

Top Countries of Origin of International Students					
		2017/18	2018/19	% of total	% change
World Total		1,094,792	1,095,299	100.00	0.05
1	China	363,341	369,548	33.7	1.7
2	India	196,271	202,014	18.4	2.9
3	S. Korea	54,555	52,250	4.8	-4.2
4	Saudi Arabia	44,432	37,080	3.4	-16.5
5	Canada	25,909	26,122	2.4	0.8
6	Vietnam	24,325	24,392	2.2	0.3
7	Taiwan	22,454	23,369	2.1	4.1
8	Japan	18,753	18,105	1.7	-3.5
9	Brazil	14,620	16,059	1.5	9.8
10	Mexico	15,468	15,229	1.4	-1.5

Table 1. *Top 10 Places of Origin of International Students Enrolled in U.S. Higher Education*

Table adapted from Institute of International Education: Open Doors Fast Facts (2019).

A majority of international students come to the United States to pursue a college education (Garcia, Pujol-Ferran, & Reddy, 2013) after successfully completing high school in their home countries and demonstrating their English language proficiency on a standardized test, often the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Unfortunately, because the TOEFL score for college admission differs among institutions, proficiency levels vary among international students, resulting in some students needing personalized support that considers their cultures and prepares them for academic rigor in their fields of study (Bergey, Movit, Baird, & Faria, 2018). Those who are unable to access help or don't risk asking for help use their language proficiency to mediate or mask their learning across disciplines (Enright, 2011). Furthermore, unlike their native English-speaking counterparts, to achieve academic success and complete their studies in the requisite time, international ELLs have to adapt to the new culture

and learn academic content in English while simultaneously developing their academic English language proficiency (American Institute for Research, 2018).

The readiness of educators in American higher education institutions to effectively deliver instruction to a growing linguistically and culturally diverse (CLEED) international student population is gaining more attention in the extant body of literature. Many of these recent studies principally focus on the learners' English language deficits, the cultural adjustment challenges they face in their new contexts, the paucity of academic and other support services, and reports of perceptions of invisibility among some ethnic groups. References to teacher preparedness either allude to the under-preparedness of instructors in higher education to serve their diverse student body or highlight the need for cultural responsiveness training among educators in higher education (Gay, 2002; Harrison & Shi, 2016; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Wang & Machado, 2015). They also continue to emphasize the traditional teacher-centered or learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning. Teacher effectiveness, measured by students' achievement of the stated learning outcomes, is optimized when everyone in the learning community invests in the knowledge fund and assumes the role of teacher-learner.

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the existing literature on the need to develop culturally sensitive classrooms in the higher education space in order to identify instructional approaches that are used in teaching international English language learners. The paper then recommends culturally responsive, research-based teaching strategies—using sociocultural learning (SCL) as a guiding theory—strategies that faculty can adapt to help the international English language learners in their classrooms.

Theoretical Framework Background

Numerous theoretical perspectives have shaped existing research focused on dealing with the multiple challenges that have accompanied the growing number of CLEED international students to higher education. To focus this paper, the authors therefore decided to review only

education studies that fit the following criteria: empirical or peer-reviewed, published between 2000 and 2020, and relevant to teaching English learners in English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) in higher education settings in the United States and abroad. The authors realize that many of the studies that match these criteria specifically address teaching children and adolescents in the preschool through twelfth grade (P-12) context. Nevertheless, the dominant theoretical arguments that emerge in the review of relevant P-12 studies cluster around theories that are similar to those predominant in higher education: positivists/behaviorism, social constructivism, socioculturalism, and critical theories. The authors selected sociocultural learning theory (SCL) because of its recognizable relationship to culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally responsive teaching is an approach that uses “the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p.106). Lopez (2011) points to the need for teachers to be intentional about “engaging in culturally relevant teaching practices” and “. . . drawing on relevant socio-cultural theories and creating their own purposeful praxis” (p. 76). The underlying assumption of the SCL theory is that “human mental activity is a mediated process in which symbolic and socioculturally constructed artifacts, the most significant of which being the language, play an essential role in the mental life of the individual” (Vygotsky, as cited in Shabani, 2016, p.2). In other words, language is an essential element of every culture and the learning process itself. According to Halliday (1993), language is critical to learning because learning is a linguistic process that occurs in three interrelated areas: learning language, learning about language, and learning through language. In concurrence with the view that language and social interaction share a symbiotic relationship, Nieto (2010) reiterates that language learning is not solely cognitive, but rather, a consequence of learners engaging in multiple forms of interactions with others in their learning community, all of which are informed by one’s culture. Unfortunately, in many of these learning contexts, students and teachers assume the traditional roles of consumers and transmitters of learning respectively, and because of their language differences, international

students are often marginalized and stereotyped. Despite the dynamism implicit in the features of SCL—which emphasizes the critical role that culture, community, and social relationships play in learner cognition and development—the learning often conforms to a learner-centered approach (Wang, 2007). Consequently, SCL’s effectiveness is in question in today’s CLEED classrooms.

Sociocultural Learning in Classrooms

The literature reviewed on teaching English language learners highlights the role that students’ background knowledge and culture play in the learning process. In their analysis of empirical research conducted in the United States on the preparation of reading teacher educators, Risko, Roller, Cummins, Bean, Block, Anders, and Flood (2008) conclude that the sociocultural theory assists educators in their understanding of options they can use to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. A classroom is the place where learning, a social process, formally occurs (Behroozizad, Nambiar, & Amir, 2014; Lee, 2015; Umer & Gul, 2019; Wang, 2007) and is essentially a mini society. The primary role in the classroom is ascribed to the instructor, whose responsibility includes lesson preparation, delivery (Umer & Gul, 2019), and the facilitation of learner interactions in varying degrees.

In her study of sociocultural theories and information literacy teaching activities in higher education, Wang (2007) describes how the zone of proximal distance, a feature of SCT, guided students in various learning activities to develop information literacy. She describes collaborative pedagogical learning models based on SCT:

- Problem-based model—learners collaborate to solve content-related problems (i.e., collaborative peer group learning);
- Reciprocal model—students scaffold others or are scaffolded during class interactions through questioning, clarifying, predicting, and summarizing course content;
- Resource-based model—learners use resources (e.g., people, books, equipment, tools and agencies to aid learning; and
- The jigsaw model—student reinforce content learning by taking turns to teach assigned sections of an area of content to others in the learning community.

Wang concludes that students optimize learning by collaborating and engaging in the learning process and capitalizing on available resources in their learning community. She also notes that SCT promotes active learning during which learners have the added benefit of participating in meaningful cultural exchanges. Wang believes results from her study confirm that SCT positively impacts student achievement and cognitive development. Dongyu, Fan, and Wanyi (2013) concur, adding that since learning is the product of shared activities among learners, collaborative learning should take precedence over the traditional teacher-student relationship. Reporting on her investigation of classroom discourse between Chinese international English learners and their British instructors who employ the communicative language teaching approach from a sociocultural theory perspective, Yang (2016) notes that “how students participate and engage in meaning-making activities depends largely on how teachers socially and culturally organize activities” (p.195). In the study, interactions occurred only between the students and teacher. Hence, in her conclusion, she remarks, “Teachers can employ effective discourse to liven up the classroom atmosphere and provide opportunities for students to involve themselves in the classroom activities” (p. 198); however, that does not automatically result in making meaning, which is necessary for academic success and authentic communicative competence in the wider speech community.

In a study on the impact of implementing the sociocultural theory in an adult ESL classroom, Lee (2015) identifies three emergent themes: (1) the impact of the student-teacher relationship on student learning; (2) the advantage of interaction in the learning community over lecturing; and (3) the importance of cultural sensitivity. An analysis of the themes led her to conclude that the sociocultural theory is valuable for adult learners in ESL programs as it is composed of a cultural and an educational approach that can be identified in social collaboration, cultural connection, and all components of the education environment. Themes (2) and (3) also emerged among the findings of other studies that link instructional approaches to the sociocultural theory of learning (Gay, 2010; Marambe, Vermunt, & Boshuizen, 2011; Muñoz de Cote & Dijk, 2012; Zhou et al., 2008).

Cultural Influence on Pedagogy

Dongyu, Fan, and Wanyi (2013) observe from their study of the sociological theory applied to Chinese second language learners that Chinese students traditionally tend to prefer teacher-centered classrooms. They surmise that Chinese students generally expect learning to occur in the same manner as in their home country where the teacher is the sole dispenser of information and knowledge. In that cultural setting, students rely on memorization and produce the information on a test or when asked to do so. The findings from this study correspond to those from Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, and Todman's (2008) review of the development theories of culture shock. According to their study, the Chinese students' learning approach while studying in Britain was informed by deep-rooted aspects of the Chinese culture. They also viewed teachers as models of knowledge and morality and expected them to initiate communication and take care of them and their learning. The students in the study were passive learners who desired to learn like they did in China. In contrast, the British instructors expected that because the students were from collectivist cultures, they would want to collaborate and participate in group learning. They expect university students to be autonomous, independent learners and were very surprised when they experienced the opposite. Based on this finding, the authors encourage instructors to make every effort to learn about their students and their cultural backgrounds so that they can develop appropriate culturally responsive instructional strategies.

In a comparative study of learning patterns of students across different cultures, Marambe, Vermunt, and Boshuizen (2011) note a distinct difference between the learning patterns of Asian and European students. The sample comprised Dutch, Indonesian, and Sri Lankan groups of students. Other results from the study show remarkable differences between the learning patterns of the two Asian groups, dispelling the myth that Asians have similar learning patterns. Like the Chinese, "In Sri Lanka, at examinations students are required to reproduce the information and knowledge transmitted in the classroom considerably, despite the fact that this practice is being criticized in many instances" (p. 302). The findings also support the need for

teachers of international students to acquaint themselves with the study habits, norms, and perspectives international students bring to the new learning context.

Discussion and Conclusions

Findings that emerge from the review of the literature indicate that educators in American higher education institutions are aware of the large numbers CLEED students on their campuses and are concerned about how to effectively teach them. The call to develop and deliver culturally relevant courses is a growing preoccupation in the minds of instructors and administrators alike. Larke (2013) notes that at its inception, culturally responsive teaching was directed at P-12 teachers who were challenged to provide equal education to their diverse student population. In addition to navigating the culture of their students, instructors also must consider ways to mediate the language challenges that some international students bring to the classroom. Although international English language learners may present some challenges for many instructors, it is important that everyone realizes that “it is not enough to understand the theoretical underpinnings of culturally relevant or responsive pedagogies; teachers must be able to answer for themselves the question of what does this look like and feel like in my classroom” (p. 76).

Culturally responsive andragogy is a step beyond being culturally sensitive. It is the action that instructors take to plan engaging, inclusive lessons, after conducting an honest personal cultural awareness inspection, to identify biases that could potentially impair their views of students who speak, look, and think differently from them. The literature points out that some instructors default to a deficit approach when they engage with international English learners, rather than embrace them as assets who possess knowledge, skills, perspectives, and a rich resource that they can withdraw from and invest in (Colbert, 2010; Gay, 2002; Wang & Machado, 2015). On the other hand, some instructors wrongly assume that all international ELLs in higher education have attained high academic mastery in English. Per their study, Harrison and Shi (2016) discovered that was not always the case. They affirm that international English learners “rely on a complex set

of personal language and academic learning skills as well as culturally embedded notions” (p. 418) to navigate their academic environments. Some students struggle academically because they are afraid to risk asking for help from peers and instructors who assume they are doing well. In response to this type of academic challenge, Buckridge and Guest (2007) referenced the active learning-centered classroom.

The learning-centered classroom approach to learning is slowly appearing in the literature and is associated with SCT because of its collaborative and interactive features. The learning-centered classroom approach is based on the idea that the learners and instructor constitute the learning community where every person enters with academic and cultural capital and is therefore expected to participate in the learning exchange. Here, the teacher’s principal role is to plan culturally responsive lessons, facilitate the learning, scaffold the learners as necessary, and encourage or demand 100 percent participation. The following statements by Moeller and Catalano (2015) aptly describe the scene in a regular teacher-centered/student-centered classroom where zones of proximal distance are often in effect: “The interaction between an expert (teacher) and novice (learner) in a problem-solving task (scaffolding) in which the expert’s role was to provide the novice with instructional support then became the model for communicative tasks in the foreign language classrooms” (330). Learning-centered classrooms create opportunities for learning through whole group or small group collaborations, as well as problem solving and project developments. As learners interact and the content is delivered, learners learn to appreciate the cultures, personalities, strengths, and challenges of each other and build a strong learning community.

Studies suggest that instructors are faced with their inability to accurately understand the complex nature of their ELLs’ cultural (sometimes multicultural) backgrounds. Trice (2003) pointed to the lack of information and awareness on the part of faculty to fully comprehend the challenges faced by ELLs in the classroom. Faculty who are usually experts in their fields find themselves at a loss when their ELLs struggle to engage effectively in the teaching-learning process. To use an analogy from communication studies, there seems to be a lot of “noise” or “distortion” between what the sender (instructor) says and what the receiver

(ELL) actually hears. While it is important to have subject-matter expertise and subject-specific pedagogical understanding, studies suggest that the most successful instructors are those who are “attentive to the complexities of social, economic, and cultural dynamics” (Mishkind, 2016, p. 1) of their students. The authors recommend that further study be done to determine the effect of different instructional variables and measures on students’ learning patterns over a longer time period. The findings support the position that culture, education, and learning are interconnected, but also show that although culture impacts international students’ approaches to learning, those approaches may be inconsistent with the learning approaches in their new learning environment.

Some challenges are intimidating and frustrating to faculty who feel ill-equipped to suitably serve the academic needs of their students. In response to some of these issues, some educational administrators have resorted to ad hoc professional development focused on cultural sensitivity and good instructional practices for instructors, rather than develop an effective strategic plan that will have a more sustainable impact. Harrison and Shi (2016) indicate that instructors, who have expert knowledge of the content they are teaching, know how to deliver that content within established norms. However, “little attention [is] given to how that content is received outside of the norms” (p. 418). Thus, their lack of awareness of the reasons for an ELL’s comprehension (or lack thereof) of the content results in an unsatisfactory instructional process.

Washburn and Hargis (2017) contend that “The faculty of institutions that are engaged in the increased recruitment of international students may be unprepared for the significant resources required to effectively engage international students in the learning process” (p.3). Regardless of the differing perspectives among instructors and across institutions, it is becoming apparent that those who desire to retain their IS and to attract others, are looking for effective research-based strategies that they can adapt to their population. The next and final section outlines several research-based practical instructional strategies, tools, and suggestions for consideration as faculty develop and deliver culturally sensitive instruction in a diverse classroom.

Recommendations

While the need to provide a safe space in the classroom is important for all students, it is particularly valuable for the ELL who is studying in a higher educational program. From their study of the sociological theory applied to Chinese second language learners, Dongyu, Fan, and Wanyi (2013) observed a change in the learning preference of Chinese students and a growing acceptance of learner-centered classrooms within the Chinese student community, where they are more open to participating in classroom activities, collaborating with their peers, and “prefer the way of learning based on teacher/student discussion and negotiation” (p. 171). This is one indication of a change in attitudes and expectations of international ELLs. The following is a brief list of research-based tips and recommendations to help the instructor who wants to ensure culturally sensitive andragogical practices in their classroom and meet these changing expectations:

- Create a safe, welcoming classroom environment for students. Be genuine and encourage students to engage and invest in their learning (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-González, 2008).
- Learn a little about students’ countries and cultures (Pappamihel, 2002).
- Communicate classroom protocols early (Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Provide lecture notes or PowerPoints to students ahead of time, and link main points of the lecture to other connective concepts to enable ELLs to familiarize themselves with content and to facilitate course engagement. (Harrison & Shi, 2016; Pappamihel, 2002; Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Provide note taking guides to students (Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Integrate visual aids, interactive content, adaptive technology, simulations, and virtual reality technologies to enhance teaching and learning (Dahlstrom, de Boor, Grunwald, & Vockley, 2011).
- Highlight key questions or issues in written and verbal forms

(Biggs, 2003; Ryan, 2005).

- Create concept maps and connect them to related content (Pinantoan, 2015).
- Define unfamiliar words and concepts and allow time for clarification (Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Use neutral language, avoid slang, and address political and religious topics with respect (Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Encourage cultural exchanges in class giving learners opportunities to address relevant topics from their cultural perspectives and connect learning to their experiences (Pappamihel, 2002; Pinantoan, 2015).
- Be conscious of your non-verbal communication, and apologize quickly if you offend someone (Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Validate students' cultures by including examples in course instructions from a global perspective, and asking them how issues would be addressed from their experiences (Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Write key concepts and vocabulary on the board to ensure correct spelling and reduce misunderstandings and allow students to restate assignment instructions.
- Encourage ELLs to work with domestic students (Pinantoan, 2015; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).
- Provide extra time in formative and summative assessments to allow for processing between languages.
- Summarize discussions and use valid assessments.
- Model professional behavior and use the academic language you expect students to use.
- Be the living curriculum.

Conclusion

Although the foregoing is not a complete treatise on a topic that has so many more facets and layers that could be explored, it is the hope of the authors that some of the information herein will ignite

conversations among faculty and administrators in higher education institutions with international ELLs on their campuses and inspire them to begin to implement at least incremental changes in the way they serve the international students. Harrison and Shi (2016) re-emphasize the current realities of ELLs in American higher education institutions and renew the call for andragogical changes in our culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms:

The graduate level university classroom is a dynamic space embedded with culturally influenced actions and speech. Without conscious attention by the instructor to the ways that language is used and received, many ELLs struggle to attain academic standing to the level of their native English-speaking peers. (p.426)

The authors concur with the already expressed assertions in the literature that international ELLs in American colleges can thrive and succeed if they receive the requisite help from instructors who are prepared with the strategies and dispositions to help them adjust to the new academic environment and manage the cultural differences they experience on campus (Harrison & Shi, 2016; Washburn & Hargis, 2017).

The authors have been able to practice several of the strategies with their international students and watched them flourish. When international students, particularly ELLs, leave the safety and structure of their worlds and cultures and come to the U.S., they help us create a loving simulation community where we can practice, learn, and grow. The international English language learners in our institutions need us to respond to their unique needs.

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REVIEWS

Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition. By David Dockery and Christopher Morgan, eds. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. 576 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1-4335-5653-1 (HARDCOVER) \$50

C*hristian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition* reminds evangelicals in higher education of their past and potential future. To loosely apply an old adage to its description, “It is preaching to the choir” and prospective choir members. This work is a collection of 27 essays authored by current thought leaders in the field of Christian higher education. The editors and contributors serve in a variety of positions in several prominent Christian universities—having committed their vocational calling to promote God’s academy and having dedicated themselves to living for Christ and discipling others in their Christian walk and vocational callings. The purpose of this collection of essays is to inform and strengthen those serving in the Christian higher education community and to better prepare future leaders for service to the Church and society. To this end, David Dockery, Christopher Morgan, and the 25 other contributors have done their work well. *Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition* is a serious text for those seriously considering Christian service in the Church or the Christian academy.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part establishes definitions and lays the Scriptural and historical foundation for mission and calling for Christian higher education. The second examines the integration of faith in the teaching and learning process, both historically and in current specific content areas. The third explores the current state and potential future of Christian higher education’s influence on the Christian scholarship, the Church, and the world, and it explores how Christian educators can make a lasting difference through

Christian higher education.

Dockery sets the tone and direction of the text in Chapter 1. He points out that for Christian intellectualism to impact today's society through academia, Christian universities must remain true to their foundational faith and mission. He reminds the reader that simply hiring younger faculty in the pursuit of "relevance" will not make Christian universities more effective in accomplishing their mission. It is imperative to prepare younger faculty in many ways, including a Scriptural foundation and knowledge of the general mission of Christian higher education, the history of the Christian academy, established and new discussions of faith and philosophy, the integration of faith and learning, the nature of the learner, the nature of the teacher, Scripturally-based subject area concepts and teaching strategies, leadership skills, demographic issues, and many more. Understanding these facets is necessary for leading faculty members in Christian universities to shape an effective professorate who will serve the academy and the Church and also make a difference in society. *Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition* addresses each of these critical components with an unapologetic depth and breadth of scholarship.

Taylor Worley goes on to make a point in his essay that justifies the depth and breadth of the text, which contains nearly 550 pages. Worley reminds us that society has changed dramatically in recent years. Truths that were long held as common knowledge and widely accepted within Christendom have become quaint relics of the past, or worse, they have simply been forgotten. For over two millennia, those preparing the next generation for Christian service had a firm foundation of doctrinal truth to build upon, but that is much less so today. In many ways, future faculty for Christian universities are entering the field without the full armor of God. Many claim a faith and profession about which they may know very little.

Nathan Finn reminds us in his essay of the great Christian traditions so well summarized by C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*. This collection of essays provides a primer of what has been considered for centuries as background knowledge for the profession; it could almost be called "*Mere Christianity* for Christian Higher Education."

The second part of the book examines the meaning and practice of integrating faith with the teaching and learning process. Morgan and others provide a well-developed framework for the concepts of integrating faith in learning and teaching. They do not do this by crafting a new theoretical framework, but by reminding the reader of the depth of thought that has already gone into these topics. These authors first open the Scriptures to see what God has told us about the nature of teaching and learning; then, they summarize centuries of thought on the topic.

The reader will hear Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas as these pillars of the Christian academy used Scripture to craft conceptual frameworks for the nature of the learner, the teacher, and truth. The reader is taken through medieval scholasticism and the foundation of early American universities, where religious and academic pursuits were blended to create the Christian higher education model. Moreover, the reader is a party to further refinements in the Christian higher education model with reflections on Finney at Oberlin College and Blanchard at Wheaton College. The authors then examine the philosophical and societal challenges to Christian intellectualism. The pragmatism and secularism common to educational systems of the early and mid-20th century took their toll by starving and corrupting Christian academic thought; however, the essays remind the reader that the 20th century closed with hope for Christian higher education. The reader is reminded that Nolls and Marsden call for a return to the founding mission for Christian universities and the Scriptural, historical view of the nature of teaching and learning. The authors of this section close the historical review by bringing the reader to the present day, highlighting the work and thought of Duane Litfin and others who see faith and learning as influencing each other and placing a focus on where the two intersect.

Once the foundational Scriptural and historical definitions are set, the remainder of the second part of the text explores the philosophical questions and practical application of the integration of faith in learning and teaching in several disciplines of study. These essays show the relationship between Scripture and discipline-specific concepts. The essays raise the question of the nature of mathematics, science, philosophy,

and more. They ask, is mathematics part of the nature of God or part of His created order? How do God's creations interact with His natural laws? Returning to Tertullian, "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?" The authors pose the question of Christian metaphysical, axiological, and epistemological beliefs. Once a firm footing is established philosophically, the essays discuss and suggest practical teaching strategies that are in line with a robust practice of integrating faith in teaching and learning.

Building upon the foundation for faith, teaching, and learning established in the second part of the text, the third part of the text explores the implications of faith, teaching, and learning for the Christian university, the Church, and the world. S. Steve Kang opens this third part by pointing out a major concern within the Christian academy. Generally speaking, Kang believes that Christian higher education is failing to raise up Christian disciples. Teaching how to think from a Christian perspective but failing to teach the practical outworking of the Christian life is rendering the Christian campus impotent. He recommends that Christian academia revive teaching the Christian life by reviving the Catechesis, in order to intentionally, formally, and proactively teach, mentor, and disciple those who are new to the Christian learning community.

Kang's contribution is very well developed and justified; however, this brings us to our only negative criticism of the text. The structure of this third part of the text would have been better served with Kang's thoughts coming toward the end of the section rather than the beginning. Kang's essay is a very good response, but a response to some of the authors that follow after him. He is addressing a problem that, as structured, has not yet been fully developed. The essays that follow Kang's build the problem and make a solid case for the Catechesis. Other than this one issue, *Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition* is an outstanding work that will strengthen the Christian academy, serve to better prepare Christian leaders for the Church and the world, and most importantly, help produce disciples who not only think Christianly, but also live Christianly.

To complete this work, Worley, building on Bonhoeffer, reminds us that God is the author and director of both our individual vocational

calling as well as the general mission for Christian higher education. As such, Christian educators can be effective in their individual vocational calling in Christian higher education only when they are intentional about serving God's broader mission for Christian higher education. *Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition* shows future Christian higher education faculty how to accomplish this intent, and reminds the seasoned faculty member of the dynamic faith tradition and rich history of the Christian academy. Again, this is a serious text for those who are serious about Christian service and ready to take a missional stand in and for Christian higher education.

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Campus Life: In Search of Community. By Drew Moser and Todd Ream, eds. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019. 208 pp. ISBN 13: 978-8308-5259-8 (PAPERBACK) \$20

In a new and expanded version, the editors of *Campus Life: In Search of Community* sought insight from various Christian authors and leaders about the subject of authentic community. Based on the current climate and polarizing political state, the need for relationship amid teaching and learning is a heightened priority, especially among our college campuses. A resurgence of *Campus Life* is meant as a guide for campus leaders, those working in Christian higher education, and all who aim for deeper community among faculty, staff, and students.

Campus Life is organized in two parts and includes a discussion guide for leaders to engage in conversations surrounding community. Part One entails new contributions from pairs of authors working in academic and student development at prominent Christian colleges. Part Two houses the original work from Ernest Boyer and a special report from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, published in 1990. More specifically, both Part One and Part Two are segmented into six chapters (i.e., themes) each with identical titles. Here, the authors and contributors reintroduce the insights/themes established in the original edition of *Campus Life* (1990) while simultaneously creating relevance for today's culture and classroom.

The first theme in both parts of *Campus Life* is "a purposeful community." Both the original and expanded versions include the aspects of a well-crafted mission statement and profound vision for any university. For Christian colleges, these mission and vision statements concern head and heart. However, this is not enough to fit the needs of today's learners. Those in purposeful community acknowledge the heritage of the past while also preparing for future generations through interdisciplinary solutions to today's most significant needs, such as immigration and sexuality.

Like Jesus, who is both fully God and fully man, Christian institutions of higher learning seek both academics and Christian faith

simultaneously. The paradox lies in being able to explore academic freedom while maintaining institutional beliefs and theology fully. This paradox leads to the second theme, “an open community,” which includes freedom of expression, freedom of belief, and diverse opinions. All higher education institutions constrain freedom because of implied values and ideological biases, but the challenge for Christian colleges is leveraging core, privileged, and neutral beliefs. An open community pursues truth and communicates clear and consistent ideas while valuing open dialogue and diverse perspectives.

The third and perhaps most important theme is “a just community.” The authors invite the reader to go beyond awareness or pursuit of diversity and social justice to embrace a more profound and authentic responsibility toward change. Requiring humility, honesty, self-reflection, and responsiveness, Christian colleges must exemplify their faith statements in tangible ways where diversity and uniqueness are valued and revered. The sign of a just community is one where administration, faculty, staff, and students participate in making a difference in the lives of others, including the marginalized and hurting people locally and globally.

A less popular theme is “a disciplined community.” The disciplined community entails individual responsibility amidst well-organized governance that guides student behavior inside and outside the classroom. The original report called for a civic code to address the most significant concerns, as identified by college presidents. Those concerns included substance abuse and drinking, student apathy, campus security and crime, inadequate facilities, and intercultural relations. These are visible extensions of the classroom and deserve the reader’s attention. The original text affirms the role of Christian institutions in providing a standard of living outside the classroom, and the expanded version includes discussions for how Christian colleges can inspire discipline beyond the individual to encompass the common good.

“A caring community” is one where relationship and well-being are centralized. This fifth theme is a crucial component of learning and involves healthy identity development through friendships. The easiest method for finding a caring community is to look for communal spaces on campus such as chapel, housing, classes, and other spaces

for co-curricular involvement. In these spaces, students begin to gain autonomy while also realizing their dependence on others.

“A celebrative community” is the sixth and final theme of *Campus Life*, and this theme is still a necessary part of any institution. The authors reiterate the importance of celebrating university successes, history, and traditions; however, the expanded version reminds the reader of current trends in higher education that seemingly distract from this ideal. For example, changing demographics in most institutions affect how colleges can and should acknowledge their past accomplishments. For this reason, the authors suggest connecting with new students from diverse backgrounds in methods that are culturally appropriate and sensitive. In this, the college is more inclusive for all while still acknowledging the past.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the Forward by David Brooks. This eloquent essay on the need for Christian Higher Education and the value of whole-person education is both raw and revealing. In his words, secular colleges and universities “are not places that integrate the mind, the heart, and the spirit. These places nurture an overdeveloped self and an underdeveloped soul” (as cited in Moser & Ream, 2019, p. x). Brooks applauds the efforts of Christian colleges and universities and how they nurture commitment, discipline, and community.

We have many broad and polarizing issues in higher education. Mental health, equity, immigration, climate change, and sexual assault are some of the issues facing students on campuses across the United States. What is offered is a framework to engage administration, faculty, and students in conversations surrounding community and what makes their institution distinctive. Christian colleges are uniquely qualified to address the issues of today because of their heartfelt commitment to others and their integration of conviction, emotion, and intelligence.

Overall, the book is an excellent resource for leaders at all levels of Christian higher education institutions. A great strength of *Campus Life* is the discussion guide featured in the back of the book. The questions create space for campus leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue surrounding their university, what makes it unique, and how they are

accomplishing the six themes in *Campus Life*. Another strength is the practical advice and action steps for implementing a sense of community in today's culture.

One cannot read this book without self-reflection and taking action. The ultimate aim of this book is a call to action. As the Epistle of James states, we must be doers and not hearers only. Being purposeful, open, just, disciplined, caring, and celebrative involves not only mission and vision and an others-oriented sense of purpose but also a willingness to engage in dialogue, debate, and deed. I highly recommend this resource for all stakeholders involved in building community within Christian higher education.

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