

“It’s Not About Me”

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Testimonials

“It’s Not About Me, Becoming an A+ Teacher” has radically changed my approach to teaching. After reading the material and going through the class, I will never look at teaching a Bible class the same. This book will help you become better equipped as a teacher, helping the pages of God’s Word to come alive for your students. I am excited to see my students leave with a smile of satisfaction that they gained something from my Bible class. If you want to take your teaching to the next level, this is the material for you! - Matthew Allen

A great class for any Bible teacher; helpful information to get great discussion in Bible classes; useful information for teaching the Bible to children and adults; some of the most effective ways to get the message to students. - Angie Boyer

I had always just lectured. This class opened my eyes to more effective ways to reach my students. - Brent Boyer

I really appreciated the class on becoming an A+ teacher. It helped me to think differently and to focus more on edifying all students and it's potentially different personalities. - Gary Edwards

I have taught Bible classes for over 30 years, and I would never go back to the “traditional” type of teaching. Each time I teach, I use several of the methods presented in “It’s Not About Me.” I believe I challenge my students to think outside the box. Going through a class book, question by question, may impart some knowledge for the short haul. But getting your students to participate and do hands-on work in class helps them retain and use that knowledge throughout their lives. - Alayne Hunt

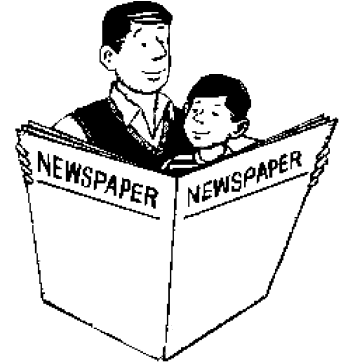
Very timely! For years we have thought the proper way to teach is to lecture. This book stresses the importance of helping your students truly learn by using the methodologies presented in this book. - Nicole Sardinas

Teaching Methods

Lesson 2

In the last chapter, we began by looking at our teaching style in this country. We compared how our educational system paralleled the Industrial Age and the systems that were put in place that we still follow today, centuries later.

Most of us have learned to teach just as we have been taught. We have learned for the most part by watching others. I taught Bible classes for years like I had seen others teach them. Most of us would like to deny that we parent much like we have been parented. But it's natural that we imitate what we see people in authority do when we are in that same position. The older I get, the more I must admit I see myself becoming more like my parents. Think about the phrases we use that sound like something our parents would have said. "Eat all your food. There are people starving in China!" "If you're going to do a job, do it right the first time." "Make sure you have clean underwear on in case you are in an accident." Do any of these phrases sound familiar? Where did we learn them? From our parents, correct? We also learned to teach our Bible classes by watching others.

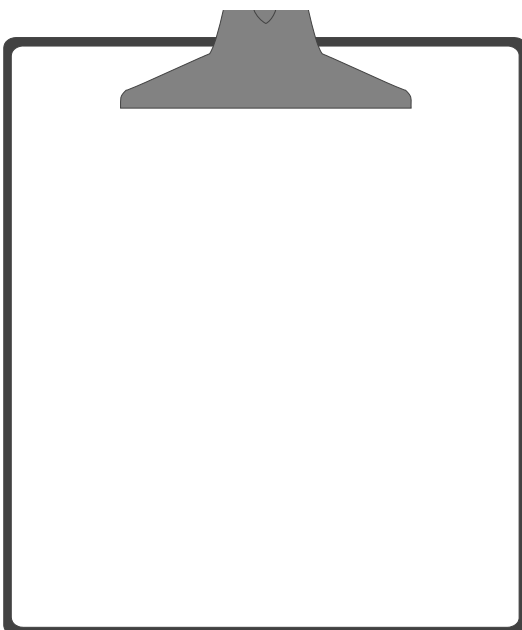


Most of us have not had any training as teachers. So what are we going to rely on when it's our turn to teach? We mimic what we have seen others do. Consider these thoughts:

- What if I could teach you ways to get your message across that would stay with your students longer than normal teaching methods?
- What if I could teach you the best motivational methods for your Bible classes?
- What if I could show you how your teaching style encourages or discourages learning?
- What if I could tell you the do's and don'ts of teaching?

These are but a few of the benefits to you, the teacher, contained within this workbook. Hopefully this is information that will be important to you when you instruct your students in future Bible classes.

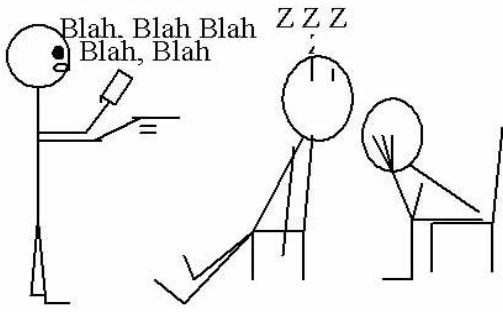
How Would You Teach It? Lecture vs. Facilitation Methods



Let's imagine for a moment if you were teaching a Bible lesson from a workbook. What are some of the methods you use or you have seen used?

Have you ever thought about what the learner might be thinking and feeling while you are up front teaching your Bible class? If someone else were teaching the lesson the way you are presenting it, what would your reaction be as a student? Would you be bored, or would you be stimulated to learn?

Is your reaction, **they are looking at me, they must be listening.** Are you sure about that? You yourself know how your mind wanders even though you are looking at the teacher. **Their head is down looking at their book, so they must be following the lesson.** Actually, their head could be down because they are about to fall asleep or their mind may be focused in a thousand different places other than on your class. Could their reaction be "Booooooring, how much longer before this class is over? Why



does he/she keep droning on and on?” Or do you see the teacher talking, but all you hear is “blah, blah, blah, blah.” I, for one, will admit to all of these, how about you?

Now let’s imagine that the students are in tune to what you are saying and they are involved in their own learning. Their posture and comments are telling you that they are truly involved in the class and they show excitement about the discussion. When class is over, they might gather around you, thanking you for a great Bible class, maybe wanting to ask more questions or continue the discussion.

Now, which of these two classes would you rather be involved in? In which class were the students more engaged? In which class has the most learning taken place, and why?

Lecture Method

What is the most common form of instruction that Bible class teachers use? I believe that most of us would say the Lecture Method. We have sat through several lecture sessions in our lifetime in school and in Bible class. Do you really remember any of the information taught in those lectures? Let’s take a look at the strengths and weaknesses of this method of teaching.



If you choose to use the Lecture Method of training, just remember all the pressure is on you, the teacher. You will be supplying the vast majority of the information. This will be very demanding on you.

One of the problems with the Lecture Method is the students have very little input, and therefore the learning curve is very low. The information disseminated is lost very quickly. Let me give you an example. Tell me the subject of the preacher’s last sermon. OK, the sermon before that, which was just a few days ago? How much were you able to remember without someone else’s help? Probably not much. This is no reflection on the preacher, but with the vehicle he used to deliver the information. The Lecture Method is not the best vehicle to use to get information to stick in the minds of the students whether it is in Bible class or in public schools. Here lies an important learning point. **We remember very little of what we hear.**

Preachers need to take note of this point because lecturing is their primary form of teaching. They will need to look for other ways of reinforcing the message they are delivering. A fill-in-the-blanks outline should help their audience keep focused on the message. These men also should be very animated in voice inflection and facial expressions, while using broad hand gestures. They need to come out from behind the pulpit, moving about while preaching and learn to leave their notes for periods of time.



A preacher should ask himself if he would like to sit and listen to one of his own sermons? Straight faced, monotone, glued to the lectern, sometimes reading his lesson. How much learning is taking place? Where do you think the audience’s minds are if he preaches like this?

Preachers can also show pictures, whether it is from an overhead projector or by using a computer, projector, and screen. They can incorporate personal stories and go into details that will paint a picture in the minds of the listeners. These men should not

just preach to their listeners, but often let their audience know how much they love and care for them. They may SHOUT every once in a while, but also become quiet in their delivery where appropriate in the lesson. The human mind is looking for variety.

One of the benefits of the Lecture Method is the fact the teacher is in complete control because he is supplying most of the information. Some Bible class teachers just cannot give up that control even if it is proven to them that not a great deal of learning is going on in their class.

Facilitation Method

Another method of teaching is when the instructor becomes more of a Facilitator. What is a Facilitator? In Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, "facilitate" means: *to make easier*. As a Bible class teacher isn't that our job to make it easier for those who do not know the Word to understand it? This definition surprised me a little in its simplicity. I have facilitated meetings at my workplace and have been trained in facilitation skills.

*** WHAT FOLLOWS IS A KEY LEARNING POINT.**

As a Facilitator, I usually present the material that we are discussing, and then ask clarifying questions of others in the group about their thoughts concerning the current topic. My job as the Facilitator is to keep everyone on task but also ask questions that need to be asked about the subject. You will notice that I said **ask** questions, not provide the students with the answers. We want the students, not the teacher, to become the experts on the subject we are discussing. It is my mission in Bible class to get others to think for themselves instead of me hosing them with information.

One advantage to this style of teaching is that once class is in session, my job is much easier than that of the lecturer. I am requiring more from the students by giving them an opportunity to provide solutions, instead of me supplying all the answers for them. I am therefore putting the control of the class in the students' laps and making them responsible for their own learning. The end result is not about what I know about the Scriptures, but what they know.

We might note that this method will make a lot of teachers uncomfortable though, because they are afraid of losing control. There are those who like to hear themselves talk, basically to build up their own ego. They try to show everyone what vast amounts of knowledge they have about Bible subjects, while making it look as if the students have much less understanding of the topic. Therefore, this style of teacher might get uncomfortable if a student asks a question that he can't answer. Could you be like one of these Bible class teachers?



A downside of facilitating is the time spent in preparation before your Bible class. I spend more time preparing in the Facilitator role than I do as a lecturer. But at the same time an upside to this method is your work mainly takes place before you ever get to class. How can this be a negative and a positive at the same time? I see it as a positive because I can correct my mistakes before I ever get to class. Instead of making silly mistakes during my presentation in class, hopefully I will catch most of those mistakes by preparing more thoroughly before class begins. And once I am in class, I am mainly guiding the class and keeping it on track, providing little information. The extra amount of preparation time can be a downside for some of us; but you can get into a routine, and after several weeks it should begin to get easier and less time consuming in your preparation time. I will explain this in more detail in following lessons. Can you think of reasons that facilitation might be easier or harder for you?

I know many teachers that work extremely hard in preparing themselves for Bible class. They are to be commended for all the work that they put into studying. Be aware as you are doing all your study that you need to focus on preparing those good open-ended questions that you will ask during class. Many teachers prepare themselves to answer the questions that they believe their students might ask. A better way to prepare is to study the questions you wish to ask and while you are preparing the questions, you will already have formulated the answers.

Another point to consider is which do you think is more important – being heard as the Bible class teacher, or being heard as the student? Another way of asking that question is what means more to the student – what the student has to say, or what the teacher has to say? You as a teacher have many years of life experiences and personal study of the Word of God. But if you count the cumulative years all the students in your class have been Christians, those years will far exceed the number of years of a single teacher. Poll your class to see how many years of experience as a Christian they have accumulated.

- * Out of all the students in this class, add together all the years of experience they have as Christians. _____**
- * Years of experience of the teacher. _____**

From these findings, we can see that as teachers we need to learn to tap into all the knowledge of our students sitting in our Bible classes.

Conversation is not what we are looking for from the Facilitator. In a Bible class, it is important that the Facilitator ask good open-ended questions where students give their opinions. In doing so, we make the students responsible for their own learning. If a student has equity invested in a Bible class (and that investment can be as simple as giving an opinion about the topic being discussed), then the discussion becomes more important to the student. He has given something of himself to the class in the form of his thoughts.

It's like going out and buying your children a car when they turn 16, which means they did not invest a red cent toward purchasing the vehicle. They are much more apt to be extra careful and take better care of the car if they invested some or all of their own money to buy it. Trust me, I have experienced this one first hand with my children. I gave my kids my old cars when they were 16, without any money invested on their part, and they beat the fenders off those cars. Open the doors and junk would fall all over the pavement. But as those cars wore out and they began to buy their own vehicles, they kept those cars spotlessly clean. They would tell you to wipe your feet before you got into **their** car and the whole nine yards. Why? Because they had spent their hard earned money, that's why. They now had something invested in that car. The same is true with our learning. If we have something invested in a Bible class, it will be more important to us.



We need to quit spoon feeding the students and they will come to class better prepared. If I take off talking, how do I know that the students are in tune with what I am saying? I don't, correct? But if they know that I will be asking questions and will expect **all** of my students to come to class prepared and ready to respond at some point in time, naturally they won't want to be caught off guard and possibly be embarrassed because they were thinking about something else when I asked for their opinion.

Have you ever noticed that if the students remain quiet long enough after the teacher asks a question, the teacher will answer their own question for the class? I have seen this happen many times when all along I, as a student, knew the answer. But because I had not been held responsible, the teacher would go ahead and answer it for me. We will talk more in a later lesson about silence, the great fear for all teachers.

It is not the teacher vs. the students, but the teacher AND the students working together to reach the goal of achieving more knowledge of God's Word. This requires vision for you as a Facilitator, and a better understanding of the mind and how it works, then applying learning techniques to meet those students' learning needs.

Getting Your Students Involved

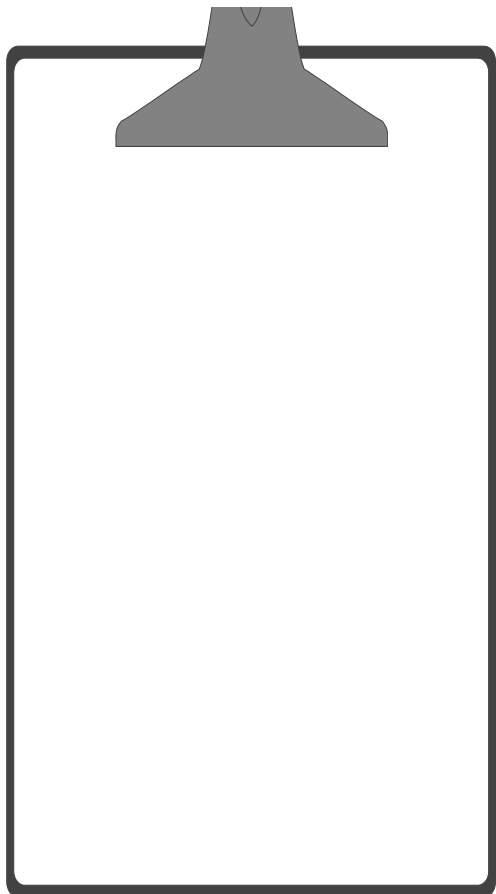
Here are some sobering statistics about how we learn as individuals: How Much Do We Remember?

10% of what we read
20% of what we hear
30% of what we see
50% of what we see and hear
70% of what we say
90% of what we say and do



We will discuss this more in subsequent lessons.

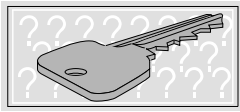
Another thought to consider is what kind of Bible class do you like to attend? Do you want to sit and hear someone talking for 25-50 minutes at a time, or would you prefer to be fully involved in a discussion about the Scriptures? I think most of us would answer by saying we would like to be fully involved in the discussion. Then why as teachers do we go on and on with the one person dialogue? If we do not keep the students' minds engaged, their brains have the ability to go in many directions at the same time, sometimes in directions completely away from the class discussion.



For example, one day I was busy at the stove doing some cooking at home, and I found myself going through two different trains of thought. One was about my daughter in Florida who my wife and I were going to visit over the Christmas holiday, and the other was about what we had planned for the coming weekend. All the while I was humming "Jingle Bells" and watching the squirrels out the kitchen window playing on the feeder, with one ear tuned to the TV in the family room.

The mind has the tremendous ability of multi-tasking. So what do you think happens when a teacher lectures to students for an extended period of time? Write your thoughts to the side.

During the course of this workbook, I will be modeling some of the ideas that I am presenting to you. Let me give you examples. Thus far I have had you do some thinking on your own, i.e., question one at the end of lesson one. (*Discuss the ideas of our educational system being based as an Industrial Age model.*) This will require thought (by you the student), then preparing a response to my question, and also discussing your thoughts with your peers. To some of you this might not seem like a large step in facilitation, but for other teachers this is actually a large step. So at times I will move outside the role of author of this book and will explain Author to Students what I am demonstrating to you.



Key Learning Points

- ☑ We discussed and compared the Lecture Method versus the Facilitator Method of learning.
- ☑ We remember only a small percentage of what we hear.
- ☑ The cumulative experience of a classroom full of Christians is much greater than the experience of the teacher alone. As Facilitators we need to tap into all that experience.
- ☑ The teacher and students working together to achieve more knowledge of God's Word.
- ☑ The brain's ability to multi-task and what will happen in the mind using the Lecture Method for moderate to long periods of time.



Let it Out!

1. How did you develop your Bible teaching style? Who was the person or persons that you modeled your teaching style after?

2. Have you had any formal training on teaching techniques? When, where, and who?

3. How much influence do you believe the teacher has for setting the direction, energy, and tone for the class?

4. What are the obstacles for you moving more toward the Facilitator Method of teaching? What can you do to move in the direction of using the Facilitator Method? Do you want to move in this direction?

5. If we remember **90% of what we say and do** and **10% of what we read**, what are the implications for the methods we use in our Bible class?

6. How often does your mind wander when you are listening to a lecture? Discuss with your peers.