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Six Psychological Principles of Successful Teaching Applied to the Teaching of Religion in a Christian Day School

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SIX PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHING APPLIED TO THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN A CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE THESIS

As the title indicates, this thesis represents an attempt to show how six principles of successful teaching have been and might be applied to the teaching of religion in the Christian day school. For the formulation and explanation of the principles the writer is following the principles set forth by James L. Mursell in his book, Successful Teaching.[1]

The application of these principles is based upon the series of curricula for Lutheran schools prepared under the direction of the Curriculum Committee of the Board for Parish Education of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod,[2] the General Course of Study for Lutheran Elementary Schools,[3] and the Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism.[4]

The report is confined to showing how these principles have actually been applied in these books and to show-

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[1]James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946).

[2]For complete listing see bibliography.

[3]Wm. A. Kramer, editor, General Course of Study for Lutheran Elementary Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943).

[4]H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946).

ing further applications directly suggested by following their lead in integrating religion with all activities in the Christian day school.

CHAPTER II

SIX PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES - THE BASIS OF ORGANIZING LEARNING FOR MEANING AND PURPOSE

"There is a very striking and glowing agreement among the best psychologists about the conditions of good learning."[1] As a bridge between the psychological knowledge about the conditions of learning and the practical teaching job Mursell in his book, Successful Teaching, offers a set of six principles.

> The more he looked at teaching and learning, the clearer it became that from the psychological standpoint certain crucial aspects attach to them. The learner's mind must work in the right kind of context if he is to learn well. He must set up the right kind of focus. The right kind of social relationships will help him enormously. To some extent he must work in his own individual way. Each particular job of learning must be part of a sequence of developing power and insight. The right kind of evaluation is essential, for the learner needs to know how he is getting along and other people need to know it too. These six principles - context, focalization, socialization, individualization, sequence, and evaluation - comprise the author's bridge between psychology and the classroom.[2]

These principles then according to Mursell, are the six practical aspects of the problem of organizing learning for maximum meaningfulness and so for maximum effective-

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. vii.

[2] Ibid., p. viii.

ness. Successful teaching is that which brings about effective learning; its criterion for success is - results!

By what kind of results, then, should the success of teaching be judged? There are two types of results of a very different sort. Some results cannot be considered of any importance, either because they do not last or because they can be produced only on the one right occasion.

> Such results cannot possibly be taken as the criterion for good teaching, and when it is oriented chiefly towards them, which all too often happens in fact and deed if not in word, then it is pointed toward failure. Results of this kind, which do not enter into the personality of the learner, or shape his mental development, or affect his thinking, or influence his action, may properly be called spurious.[3]

In contrast to such spurious results there are those which can be used to measure the success of teaching. These are results of a very different sort.

> These appear when a child learns his mother tongue, when a student on a foot ball squad learns the meaning of team loyalty, when mathematics is taught so that pupils grasp it as a method of thinking and analysis with endless implications and applications, when history is presented so as to convey a sense of the sweep and current bearings of past events. . . . Such results last. They may not be retained with all their accompanying detail exactly as they were first acquired, but they establish lines of mental growth, and although they may be assimilated and transformed as deeper and wider understanding comes, they are never lost. And even the detail can easily be reconstituted and brushed up if desired. So, by the same token, they can be used in thought and action for the reason that they are not superficial or merely verbal but enter into the personality of the learner, influence his point of view and approach to things, and are richly meaningful for him.

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[3] Ibid., p. 3.

> These are the kind of results by which the success of teaching must be judged and, in contrast to the others, they may be called authentic.[4]

In the teaching of religion especially the distinction between authentic and spurious results is important. In this field authentic results may last not only in time but to all eternity. Spurious results, as will be shown later on, are not only unimportant, but may actually be dangerous.[5]

Another question, however, may arise concerning the results by which the success of teaching is to be judged. Should results be considered in terms of teaching the subject matter or in terms of developing pupils as persons? This alternative can be rejected if the pupil is considered as "a person who learns."[6] This emphasizes the importance both of subject matter and of pupil development.

As these six principles are examined, however, one more objection might be raised. The terms "motivation" or "purpose" do not appear. Mursell has omitted them because for him motivation does not represent a separate, recognizable aspect of teaching; it appears rather to be a result of all six principles. "When these are applied at a high level, good motivation is the end product."[7]

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Infra: p. 50

[6] Mursell, op. cit., p. 6.

[7] Ibid., p. ix.

It remains then to be shown how these six principles might be applied at that "high level" so that the teaching of religion can be organized for maximum meaningfulness, and so for maximum effectiveness.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTEXT AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

"Meaningful learning must proceed in a context exemplifying the meanings involved. This expresses, in its most general form, the basic principle of context."[1]

The word "context" used in connection with the organization of subject matter for successful teaching may require definition. Thorndyke's law of readiness in regard to teaching emphasizes that a pupil must readily see what he is supposed to be learning if the learning process is to proceed most efficiently. In accordance with this law of readiness, "context" includes all source materials, illustrations, direct and contrived experiences and situations used by the teacher to make the subject matter seem real, compelling, meaningful to the child. Context does not mean "busy work" if the term "busy work" is used to designate activities which are merely to keep the children occupied. To the extent therefore that the experiences, materials and situations set up by the teacher are really meaningful to the child, context helps the child to see what he is supposed to be learning, and helps him on to ever richer experiences.

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. 78.

What then are some of the characteristics of good context? In answer to this question four points should be brought out. Good context should be dynamic, concrete, simple, and copious. Good context should be one with which the learner dynamically and strongly interacts. It should engage his active will and purpose. A context which is concrete gives the learner something to work and experiment with, something that can command his will and energy.[2]

> The road to fruitful learning is well paved with concrete experience. Education's greatest weakness appears when pupils are made to memorize general rules and concepts when they have never had the experience to understand them.[3]

These experiences which form the context in which concepts are to be acquired should be simple, bringing forth only one point at a time, and they should be copious, so as to have a cumulative effect upon the pupil.

Good context, then, serves to awaken curiosity, arouse interest, generate a desire to learn. Which classroom situations, therefore, will result in better context?

To provide a means of somewhat measuring the context set up in various teaching situations Hurseil has constructed a hierarchy of applications of the principle of context to the teaching process.

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[2] Ibid., p. 8

[3] Edgar Dale, Audio Visual Methods in Teaching (New York: The Dryden Press, c. 1946), p. 35.

Principle of Context: Hierarchy

I Textbook only

II Textbook together with collateral or supplementary readings in general of somewhat similar type, academic in character and aiming at further exposition

III Nonacademic and current materials, such as magazine articles, newspaper clippings, advertising items, brochures, poems, and so forth. May be accompanied by either or both of the foregoing or not.

IV Graphic materials such as pictures, movies, maps, charts, tables, graphs, "visual aids" generally, also phonograph recordings. May be accompanied by any or all the foregoing

V Demonstrations, museum trips, excursions, presentations by visiting "experts," e.g. traffic policemen, fire wardens, etc., in general, chances to observe phenomena and events more or less in natural setting. May be accompanied by any or all of the foregoing

VI Personal, social, community undertakings, either in school or out. May be accompanied by any or all of the foregoing[4]

In his book, Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching, Edgar Dale presents a similar device which he calls a "cone of experience." This cone is a pictorial device used to summarize much of what has been found to be true of direct and indirect, concrete and abstract experience.

Dale says of his cone:

As you study the cone, you recognize that each division represents a stage between the two extremes - between direct experience and pure abstraction. As you travel up the cone from its base, you move in the order of decreasing directness. Thus, a "contrived experience"

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[4]Mursell, op. cit., p. 98.

> is one stage more direct than "dramatic participation"; "dramatic participation" is one stage more direct than "field trips," and so on. Similarly, if you travel down the cone from its pinnacle, you move in the order of decreasing abstractness: "verbal symbols" are more abstract than "visual symbols"; and "visual symbols" are more abstract than "one-sense aids," and so on.[5]

If this hierarchy of applications were to be compared to the cone of experience some close correlations might be noted. Trying to apply the principle of context by using the text book only (the lowest on the scale of applications) corresponds to an attempt to teach using chiefly verbal and visual symbols. Further up the scale of applications "graphic materials" and "'visual aids' generally" correlate roughly with the middle section of Dale's cone. Finally the applications of the principle of context approach more and more the direct, concrete, purposeful experiences which form the base of the cone.

Neither of these two scales are, of course, intended to contain rigid classifications so that all teaching must fall into one or another of the different levels.

> It will often happen that a given instance of teaching cannot be exactly placed on the scale. In some respects its management of context may be superior, in others inferior.[6]

Nevertheless, the scales are useful for analyzing teaching situations so as to apply the principle of context at the highest possible level.

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[5]Dale, op. cit., p. 37.

[6]Mursell, op. cit., p. 99.

How, then, can this principle be carried out most successfully, and at the highest possible level in the teaching of religion? Some of the objections which might be raised to using the principles at the base of Dale's cone might also be raised concerning the upper levels in the hierarchy of applications for the principle of context.

For example, would not the "demonstrations, museum trips, excursions, personal, social, community undertakings, either in school or out," be too time-consuming? The same question may be asked of direct purposeful experiences as compared to verbal symbols: Is the extra amount of time needed compensated for by increased efficiency in learning?

Many of these applications would indeed be too time-consuming to be used in the teaching of religion. This is true only if religion is thought of as a separate subject to be carried on only in the specific hour of every school day. When religion is integrated, however, with all the activities of the Christian day school so that it becomes a vital part of the child's life, then religion and all other activities can interact with one another to provide concrete and copious context for each other. With such an approach religion will be taught six hours a day. This is the goal toward which leaders in Lutheran education are striving.

> What is more, the pursuit of the objectives of Christian education cannot be confined to the lesson in religion, for the Christian objectives will

automatically break through all teaching and activities during the day.[7]

Similarly Boettcher writes:

> "We have religious education during six hours of the school day." We say this of our Christian day schools. This is, in a measure, true even when few or no correlations with other subjects occur. But usually this is not as true as it could and should be. Teaching all subjects from the Christian viewpoint could and should mean much more than correcting some unbiblical ideas found in text books on science, geography, and history. We see no reason why the basic skills in arithmetic, in reading, in oral and written language could not be taught quite as effectively with materials taken from areas of living that are of special interest and importance to the Christian.[8]

How, then, can this goal of providing context for the teaching of religion "six hours of the school day" be carried out? There are at least two ways of organizing instruction to accomplish integration and interaction between religion and all activities in the Christian day school. The first would be by dividing the formal religious instruction into meaningful units and correlating the teaching of every subject with these units. The other way would be to organize the teaching of each subject by itself and apply religious principles as the need for them "naturally" arises.

On closer inspection, however, these two plans of organizing do not appear mutually exclusive. Organizing re-

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[7]Wm. A. Kramer, editor, Religion in Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1949), p. 10.

[8]H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. XXV f.

ligious instruction on the basis of meaningful units does not preclude the possibility of applying religious principles to all activities. Indeed, keeping Christian principles constantly before teacher and pupil may help suggest many correlations which otherwise might go unnoticed. If this interaction goes on continually the child would receive for example not, "religion and arithmetic," but arithmetic taught from a religious viewpoint.

By organizing religious instruction into meaningful units, then, the instructor will find it easier to supply dynamic, concrete, context. By having large amounts of assimilative material curiosity can be more easily aroused, and aroused curiosity and interest will lead to effective learning. Learning is a conscious process that goes on in the mind of the learner, not something which can be poured on him or added to him like a drug.

> Where the new attitude is one of comprehension or of understanding, the change is an inward affair, which can be achieved only by the pupil himself as he works over an adequate body of assimilated material focused upon the unit.[9]

Perhaps an example in which meaningful context is supplied could most easily be found in teaching the lower grades. In working with very young children, teaching by direct purposeful experience, setting up simple, concrete, copious context is most important. With such young children

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[9]Kramer, op. cit., p. 71.

the danger of verbalization is very great. The setting in which learning takes place has a great influence on the attitudes, habits, and skills which are developed in the mind of the child. LeBar, in her book, Patty goes to the Nursery Class, illustrates the principle of context. Her methods may differ in some respects, since she has in mind a nursery class rather than a Christian day school, but the principle remains the same.

LeBar has one general aim: To build up an attitude of love for God's house and for Jesus.

> The important purpose of Sunday School for your child of two or three is not in having her memorize Scripture words, songs or prayers. Together we might laboriously drill words into her memory, but most of them would not be understood, and therefore would have little, if any value. What are important are the attitudes of the child: that she learns to love to come to God's house, that she learns to love God's Book, and that she learns to love Jesus and the Heavenly Father. To build up these attitudes is our aim.[10]

The aims for her first unit are to impress on the child: Jesus loves me, Jesus loves all the children, I love Jesus who loves me. Certain phrases chosen throughout the unit show how context is built up to impress these truths:

> In one corner of the room a teacher will be ready to show two books about Jesus' love for the children. . . "Who loves Patty?" Assemble the best pictures you can find of the members of a family who love a little child. . . . The last page of the book

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[10] Mary E. LeBar, Patty goes to the Nursery Class (Chicago: Scripture Press, c. 1945), p. 31.

should show a lovely picture of Jesus "Who loves her best of all!". . . Dolls will be a help for new children to hold for comfort, for others to learn to share, and for still others to use to play the story of the children who went to see Jesus. . . . The period should be made so interesting that all children will join of their own choice. . . . Efforts to get them to conform must not undermine the primary aim of building a love for the things of God. . . . Use the nursery pictures. . . follow the story with a prayer such as "We Love You Jesus" and the song "My Best Friend" . . . the piano may play a light and lively tune as the children play they are going to see Jesus. They hop and skip and pick flowers to take to Him. . . . An ordinary cloth doll may be readily made into a puppet. . . she can indicate that she knows where there is a picture of Someone who loves a certain child and point out the picture of Jesus. . . . The group may also play the story more in detail. . . . They may decide where they live, get up and wash, dress, and get ready. Then they may all walk down the street picking flowers or hurrying along to see Jesus.[11]

As stated above the method may not be applicable in all cases, but the context illustrated is dynamic and concrete. It is also simple and copious.

In the Christian day school organization into religious units will provide a rich environment for learning with books, visual aids, field trips, and a variety of learning activities. Correlation of other activities with the religious unit would provide a series of related, purposeful, socially significant learner activities which "provide opportunity of growth in the direction of the objectives of education."[12]

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[11] LeBar, op. cit., p. 38-54 passim.

[12] Kramer, op. cit., p. 73.

Such correlations are suggested in the Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism, Unit XIV, which deals with God's government and preservation: Silent reading: "What is the central thought in Psalm 98? Describe the feelings of the writer of Psalm 100;" Language: "Elicit personal experiences of how any apparent misfortune turned out to be a good fortune. Report on readings; dramatize 1 Kings 17." Citizenship and Civics: "How the policeman and fireman serve our community." History: "An overview of Israel's History." "How the Roman Empire and the universal group language were aids to the Gospel." Geography: "World centers of food production. Provisions for safety of property and life (in whatever country is being studied);" Health: "'Saved by an Act of God'; 'Safety First Habits'; accident prevention." General Science: "How God through science has increased our food production, alleviated suffering, detected criminals. 'Laws of Nature are God's Will in Operation'." Art: "Study and reproduce 'The Hand of Blessing' (Synodical Catechism, page 98)." Arithmetic: "Taxes pay for Government services; Count your possessions. Add possessions of class mates. Crop, fire, wind, and hail insurance. Inquire, evaluate."[13]

Further opportunities for correlation by adding re-

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[13]Boettcher, op. cit., p. 150 ff.

ligious principles to various subjects as the opportunity arises are found in the curriculum series for Lutheran Schools.

For Christian citizenship, Gross makes the following suggestions among others:

> Recognition of God as the Good and Gracious Ruler of the Universe. Various foods consumed by a member of the class in one day are listed; the probable sources of the foods are located on a map . . . . motion pictures and slides . . . related to the supplying of food, clothing, and shelter, etc.[14]

In teaching art, Deffner and Diesing advise:

> The pupils discover why form and arrangement of various members of a human body add to their appearance and effectiveness. . . . the children point out God's wisdom and love in arranging colors and forms of flowers and other plants. They bring objects and pictures: dandelion seed, snap dragons, poinsettias, etc.[15]

Potzger suggests the following activities in teaching science:

> Children make visits to stores, markets, butcher shops, dairies, fish markets, fruit stores, etc. and report on the wealth of foodstuffs they have seen. They will also note the source of many foodstuffs. . . the children will make a survey and give a report on different ways in which water has aided man . . . . transportation . . . water power . . . drinking . . . growth of plants . . . ice . . . place for animal life, etc.[16]

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[14] Herbert H. Gross, Curriculum in Christian Citizenship for Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), p. 5 f. passim.

[15] Emil Deffner and Arthur H. Diesing, Curriculum in Art for Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), p. 6. passim.

[16] J. E. Potzger, Curriculum for the Teaching of Science in the Lutheran Elementary Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), p. 24 ff. passim.

Let the children, for example, visit an ice pond in the winter. Where are the fish? Why are they not killed? Bring out facts about the expansion of water in freezing and show how it is part of God's plan of government and preservation.

Through correlation and integration then of religion with all the activities in the Christian day school they can be made to provide a rich, meaningful context for each other. This would have certain administrative implications:

1. "The classroom should be planned and set up as an environment which facilitates a wide variety of activities, undertakings, and experiences."[17] The administrative organization should be kept flexible and serve the child.

> The organization must be flexible enough, for instance, to give parents a chance to partidipate in the school program, to allow school trips which cut across daily schedules, or to go out and plant the worn-out side of a hill with trees. The organization must be flexible enough to utilize the unexpected treats that often pop up and too often can't be used, such as Jane's brother who has just returned from a year in India.[18]

2. Another important consideration is the availability of material and equipment. A well organized school

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[17] Mursell, op. cit., p. 114.

[18] Organizing the Elementary School for Living and Learning, 1947 Yearbook, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development of the National Education Association (Washington, D. C.; c. 1947), p. 16.

should contain a wealth of books, samples, slides, specimens, pictures, maps, motion picture film and equipment, clippings from newspapers and magazines. Here again while the ideal may not always be attainable, what is sought after is the richest possible context for learning.

3. School community relationships play an important part in making the religious instruction functional - giving the children a chance to express what they have learned, and to put into practice their new attitudes, habits and skills.

By proper organization of learning, therefore, the principle of context can be applied to the teaching of religion to generate interest in the mind of the learner and a willingness and desire to learn the Truth which shall make him free.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLE OF FOCALIZATION AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

It may be well to begin by defining the word "focus" as used in connection with the organization of learning. Focus is that which gives direction and unity to one specific learning job. To have focus means to concentrate on one aim, goal or purpose. This purpose or aim must be that of the learner, not of the teacher. To avoid confusion, therefore, the aim or purpose of every lesson should be expressed in terms of the learner's, not the teacher's purpose. An example of purpose so expressed would be: "confidence in the loving protection of God," rather than: "to develope confidence in the loving protection of God."

Focus, then, by keeping the attention of the learner on one goal enables him to see form and pattern in one specific learning job. In much the same way the principle of sequence enables the child to see a pattern of growth in all activities together.

The principle of focus is stated by Mursell in the following words: "Meaningful and effective learning must be organized about a focus."[1] He further describes the

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. 120.

nature of an effective focus as follows:

> An effective focus for learning must have the characteristic of a good clue which gives the learner a sense of direction, and enables him to see at least dimly the relationship of one thing to another, and to recognize that the job before him has form and order.[2]

As was stated in the last chapter, the sources of will and purpose are in the context. Context generates the desire to learn. Focus mobilizes purpose. It shapes learning towards those insights which are characteristic of authentic results.

> Dynamically considered, the learning process is like a river. The waters trickle and seep from a thousand small springs and muskegs and boglands. The little streams move and thrust, but at first they are feeble and easily stopped and absorbed. Gradually they coalesce, find direction, circumvent or overcome obstacles, and gather power. The true source of energy which leads to the effective and meaningful learning of an abstraction of a generalization is an emerging awareness that it is a tool by which the determining motive of the learner's living may better fulfill themselves.
>
> That is why a boy will learn to box better if he learns it to defeat a bully rather than in general. It is why he will learn typewriting better if he learns it to get out the school paper rather than in general.[3]

To continue in the same line of thought: That is why a boy will learn a Bible passage better if he learns it to prove a point or win an argument rather than in general. Focus, therefore, gives form and unity so that teaching

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[2] Ibid., p. 126.

[3] Ibid., p. 121.

does not simply "wander all over the map."[4] In order to provide a means of somewhat measuring the focus set up in various teaching situations reference is again made to a hierarchy of application of the principle of focus to the teaching process.

Principle of Focalization: Hierarchy

I Learner's task defined by page assignment in textbook, by exercise to be completed, etc. Simple, crude, uniform organization of learning, routine in character

II Focus established by announced topic, together with page or chapter references, etc. Lends itself to more extensive and varied learning patterns, but again chiefly an information-getting memorizing process

III Focus established by setting up broad concept to be comprehended or problem to be solved; may or may not have to do with current experience; makes for still more varied learning patterns, and tends to break away from routines and memorization

IV Focus established as a concept to be understood, a problem to be solved, a skill to be acquired in order successfully to carry on some undertaking in progress[5]

In the higher levels of this hierarchy focus is established by setting up concepts to be understood, problems to be solved in order to carry on successfully some undertaking in progress. How well the organization of units could be made to fit into this pattern! But this is true only if the unit is organized in accordance with the prin-

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[4] Ibid., p. 120.

[5] Ibid., p. 136.

ciples set forth in the higher levels of the hierarchy. A unit which lacks focus is very loosely held together and is likely to be ineffective as a means to organization of learning for meaningfulness. There is danger, therefore, in misunderstanding the nature of a true unit.

> It is important also to recognize that not everything labeled a unit is a real unit. The same material has been offered by publishers merely with the label changed, being called a "chapter", a "project", and finally a "unit" in recent years. This tendency of some publishers to capitalize on changes in education like fashions in education is naturally misleading. Merely changing the name of a chapter heading is not creating a unit.[6]

Therefore it is necessary not to organize learning in large units, or to work always from beginning to end, but to organize it so that the learner can see a pattern or plan, a series of interrelationships in what he is trying to learn. Focalization thus gives form and unity to learning.

> The unit must provide a series of related, purposeful, socially significant learner activities, which provide opportunities of growth in the direction of the objectives of education.[7]

Materials organized into a unit focus all features of the procedure on the acquisition of an understanding, appreciation, or ability. Unit organization thus is based on the principle of focus. The school must bring together appropriate and selected bodies of experience.

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[6] Wm. A. Kramer, editor, Religion in Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1949), p. 70

[7] Ibid., p. 73.

> Readings and other activities must be organized so that the child can make economical use of them. The unit organization is thus essentially an activity program. By "activity" is not meant construction work, dramatizations, and the like, although these too, have their place. The bulk of the activity is of an intellectual nature, including study, research, and experiences, all directed towards certain specified outcomes.[8]

If this principle of focus is kept in mind it will reduce the danger of the teacher introducing much irrelevant material and sidetracking into numerous bypaths.

The unit studied in the last chapter might also be used to illustrate the carrying out of the principle of focus. Boettcher states the aim of the unit in the following way:

> Seek to engender faith and implicit trust in the God who has revealed Himself in nature, conscience, and the Bible. Encourage learners to cast all their cares upon Him, seeing that He careth for them.[9]

Now notice how throughout the unit attention and activities are focused upon realizing this aim. Some of the Bible stories used are titled: "Jesus Will Not Let His People Starve," "In The Days of Depression We May Look For The Lord," "Even In Hard Times We May Share And Yet Not Want."

The Bible texts to be memorized encourage this same attitude of trust: "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you," "Commit thy way unto the Lord, Trust also

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[8] Ibid., p. 71.

[9] H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 145.

in Him, and He shall bring it to pass," "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

The children learn hymns which express the same thought:

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare
And feed me with a shepherd's care;
His presence shall my wants supply
And guard me with a watchful eye;
My noon day walks He shall attend
And all my midnight hours defend."

The instructional methods and materials emphasize the same confidence: "Look at this canary. He sings every day. We may be just as happy. God wants us to be . . ." A sparrow is used to illustrate a Bible passage (Math. 10: 29-30). A suggested recording is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."[10]

The correlations with other subjects can also be used to direct attention to this one point and so channel learning activities in terms of "concepts to be comprehended." The examples mentioned in the chapter on context all lead toward this unifying goal: An increasing awareness on the part of the child of God's government and preservation at work in his life.

By correlating other activities with the unit in religion the child is trained to see all activities of his life stemming from the life of God in him and directed toward God pleasing ends. Thus every activity becomes part

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[10] Ibid., p. 145 ff.

of a pattern. The child learns to see the true relationship between religion and life.

Boettcher points out:

> A recent analysis of arithmetic text books brought out the interesting fact that the vocabulary of a typical arithmetic text book is almost exclusively concerned with the questions, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Where withall shall we be clothed? (Matth. 6: 31.) Since man according to the Christian view of life, does not live by bread alone, why should not the Christian's values and interests be integrated with his arithmetic teaching and learning? . . . We who maintain Christian schools, why should we not be as intelligent as others and teach an appreciation of faith, hope, and charity, parish efficiency, stewardship of life, etc., while we incidentally also teach the basic skills of arithmetic? Good arithmetic teaching today calls for the development of desirable interests, attitudes, and ways of living.[11]

Or to put it another way:

> GOD'S CANDLE OR DEVIL'S BLOWTORCH: To the sane Christian and to the sane atheist alike, two plus two make four; but what of it? To learn the fact itself is only the first step in the educational process, if education means anything at all. There are at least two further steps to be taken. First, the child having learned the fact about two plus two, deserves to be shown something about the meaning of the fact; and if a Christian is teaching it he might with perfect propriety remind the learner that this mathematical commonplace would not be a commonplace except in a sensible world created and governed by a rational diety. And then there is the third step which must be taken, to complete the process of education; the learner needs to be shown what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done, with the fact he has mastered. If he is allowed to depart from the lesson with the idea that his knowledge of the true sum of two plus two gives him the power and the right to swindle the simpleton who thinks the sum

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[11] Ibid., p. XXVI.

is only three, he has not been completely educated.[12]

Care must be taken to carry out the principle of focus in all activities related to the lesson. For example, if visual aids are used the children must be prepared beforehand and there must be a follow-up to make sure that the purpose has not been lost sight of.

> Children are prepared for the use of the visual aids while definite purposes are projected. In addition to the above the teachers know that pupils must draw generalizations from experiences. Informal check-ups follow the showing which integrates with other instructional materials, leading to the planning of many and various activities.[13]

In all activities therefore,

> The great necessity must be, not to organize learning in large units or to work always from beginning to end, but to organize it so that the learner will see interrelationships, or the pattern, or the plan in what he is trying to learn.[14]

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[12] Carroll E. Simcox, "God's Candle or Devil's Blowtorch," The Living Church, CXIX (September 18, 1949), 9.

[13] Organizing the Elementary School for Living and Learning, 1947 Yearbook, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development of the National Education Association (Washington, D. C.: c. 1947), p. 35.

[14] Mursell, op. cit., p. 125.

CHAPTER V

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIALIZATION AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

> "The meaningfulness and effectiveness of learning depends to an important extent upon the social setting in which it is done. Here is the third basic psychological principle of successful teaching - the principle of socialization."[1]

This principle stresses the importance of organizing learning so that the children can work in groups. An individual will do many tasks better when he works together with others engaged in the same task.

> The mere presence of such a group tends to produce more speed when speed is wanted, more care if care is emphasized, more accuracy when accuracy is emphasized. This again, due to the presence of a group is known as a "social increment." It is greatest when all members of the group can readily see what the others are doing.[2]

The establishment of such a democratic or participant group situation requires deliberate, conscious, skillful organization. In organizing such a cooperative situation a hierarchy of applications can again furnish a guide.

Principle of Socialization: Hierarchy

I Social pattern characterized chiefly by submission: function of the group is to respond to questions and directions from the teacher; imposed discipline

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946) p. 158.

[2] Ibid., p. 160.

II Social pattern characterized typically by contribution: members of the group allowed and encouraged to volunteer suggestions, raise issues, etc. Discipline still imposed, but sympathetic

III Social pattern characterized chiefly by cooperation: Group function is to carry through common undertaking in which all have responsible share; self-generated discipline.[3]

As can be seen from the hierarchy socialization is greatest when the social pattern is characterized by cooperation. In setting up a situation in which there can be the greatest amount of cooperation between the members of the group an important factor is cooperative planning. This again requires skillful organization. The teacher of course must be honest and sincere. The pupils must know that their choices have weight. It may perhaps be feared that time spent in this way will be wasted and that the pupils will simply wander about aimlessly. It is, of course, true that the establishment of a cooperative group situation in the classroom calls for more than good intentions and a general amiability. It calls for organization. In this respect the success of the principle of socialization depends to a large extent on the successful application of the previous two principles.

The end result desired is meaningful learning. Meaningful learning occurs when the learner wants to learn. If forty learners want to learn, cooperation and responsibility

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[3] Ibid., p. 170.

become natural. All benefit from the discoveries of each other. Each individual can feel that he is contributing to the joint achievement of all.

Therefore if the interest of all the pupils has been aroused and through the establishment of a focus their activity has been directed toward a goal to be achieved, a task to be done, a skill to be gained, the cooperative planning will not wander aimlessly. The time will be well spent. The roll of the teacher is neither that of a dictator nor a member of the group on a level with all the other members, but he is an organizer to keep the group functioning at the highest possible level.

In the teaching of religion the organization of learning into meaningful units is well adapted for carrying out this principle of socialization. Perhaps one of the easiest methods to get people to work in groups is to form the groups on the basis of common interests. Since the unit is made up of a variety of activities groups may even tend to form naturally if allowed to do so. If a number of children are all interested in the same thing cooperation is more easily brought about. "Interesting group discussions and committee reports replace the class recitation."[4]

Three concepts stand out in the description of cooperation mentioned in the third level of the hierarchy: A com-

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[4]Wm. A. Kramer, editor, Religion in Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1949), p. 71.

mon undertaking; a responsible share; self generated discipline.

As its name implies a "unit" is, among other things, a common undertaking. All pupils can be given a responsible share if the teacher is a skillful organizer. Self generated discipline can only be a result of these two; shared interest, and shared responsibility.

In applying this principle to the unit on God's government and preservation what are some of the projects about which democratic, participant, cooperative groups could be formed? Here again the integration of religion with all the other activities is important. Children are led to see that no matter in what field their interests lie, their talents can be put to use in the kingdom of God. Boettcher mentions in his correlation with nature study, "Whence comes our food? Observe, evaluate, act. Whence come our clothes? Observe, evaluate, act."[5]

In this same connection among the suggested activities the following suggestions are offered:

> Children make visits to stores, markets, butcher shops, dairies, fish markets, fruit stores, etc., and report on the wealth of foodstuffs they have seen. They will also note the source of many foodstuffs.[6]

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[5] H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 151.

[6] J. E. Potzger, Curriculum for the Teaching of Science in the Lutheran Elementary Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), p. 24.

At this point the objection might be raised that many of the activities here described are no different from those which could be carried on in a public school. It is true that in and of themselves the activities could be carried on from a Christian viewpoint or on the other hand Christian principles could be ignored. It is important, therefore, that the Christian day school teacher never lose sight of this goal of teaching religion six hours of the school day. It is important to trace the source of every good and perfect gift back to the Heavenly Father from Whom it comes. Therefore the children are led to see beyond the food market, the grain fields, and the fruit orchards, the One Who causes the tree to bring forth its fruit in its season. If such integration is neglected the principle of socialization may not necessarily suffer, but other principles will be lost sight of, especially the principles of focus and sequence.

The principle of individualization enters in also as groups of children with varying abilities can be given tasks requiring varying talents. Other suggestions include: visits to other places such as a clothing store, saw mills, lumber yards, flour mills, etc. There are other activities such as gathering grain samples, gathering ads and illustrations, making scrap books from specimens of clothing material, visiting state and county fairs, and dramatizing events such as the first Thanksgiving Day. "Geography, history, reading, will give information about

how animals of other lands help man."[7]

By thus integrating religion with all other activities in the school day much more opportunity is available for projects in which the children can work together in groups. In this way the teaching of religion can be organized to take the best possible advantage of the "social increment": the gain in efficiency due to the presence of a group, all members of which are engaged in a similar activity.

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[7] Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUALIZATION AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

> "In general, meaningful learning must proceed in terms of the learner's own purposes, aptitudes, abilities, and experimental procedures. This is the principle of individualization."[1]

In the application of this principle two kinds of differences are noted. These may be called quantitative or vertical differences, and qualitative or horizontal differences. Quantitative differences refer to differences of ability; these are measured by instruments such as intelligence tests. But just as important are the qualitative differences.

> People differ from one another in special aptitudes and interests, and in methods of working. Thus one person may be definitely intellectual in his tendencies, another definitely aesthetic, another definitely mechanical, and another definitely social.[2]

These differences refer not so much to abilities as to interests and special skills.

A hierarchy of application may again be found useful in appraising various teaching situations to see how the principle of individualization is applied:

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. 189.

[2] Ibid., p. 195.

Principle of Individualization: Hierarchy

I Uniform tasks on uniform schedule with individualization showing in differential performance

II Homogeneous grouping on two or more levels on I.Q., M.A., E.A. combined in some formula: differences in level between groups, differential performance within them

III Contract plans on two or more levels: allows some choice and so more flexible than the above

IV Individual instruction: Dalton and Winnetka plans as typical

V Large units with optional related activities and experiences

VI Individual undertakings stemming from and contributing to the joint undertaking of the group of learners[3]

The lower levels of this hierarchy describe teaching as it has been widely carried on and is perhaps still being organized in many schools today. The third level as Mursell points out often only seems to allow for the principle of individualization. Levels five and six then stress again the value of organizing learning into "large units with optional related activities and experiences."

If teaching in the Christian day school is organized into large meaningful units on the basis of the religious lessons all other activities can be drawn in under these units. This allows a wide range of activity.

By "activity" is not meant construction work, dramatizations, and the like, although these, too, have their place. The bulk of the activity is of an

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[3] Ibid., p. 204.

intellectual nature including study, research, and experiences, all directed toward certain specified outcomes.[4]

This wide range of activities allows for participation on the basis of a wide range of experiences and abilities. It allows for differentiated assignments and these various assignments can be differentiated on the basis of interests rather than merely on vertical differences.

For the present, at least, this allows for a certain amount of individual treatment without involving too radical a change in the organization of the school day.

In the 1947 Yearbook of the National Education Association the possibility of almost completely reorganizing the school day to allow for individual differences is discussed.

> When we talk about organizing the elementary school to serve the child, we mean that each child must receive the kind of treatment which he as an individual needs, regardless of what that treatment does to the traditional school day and customary school practices such as promotions, grading, and the like. We are thinking of the kind of organization which will permit some children to come to school at ten o'clock instead of nine, which will see to it that those children who need a two-hour rest period get two hours, and those who need one hour get one hour, and that those who need less are not required to take more because the school is organized that way.
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> Organization which serves the child will make sure that teachers have an opportunity to know and understand each child as a human being. This is impossible with the class loads which are common in the elementary schools of America today. It is impos-

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[4] Wm. A. Kramer, editor, Religion in the Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1949), p. 72.

> sible unless the teacher is given some help from visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses, and others in interpreting what she learns about the child.[5]

Organization into units, however, allows for individual treatment of the child and yet does not sacrifice the principle of socialization in the process. For on the one hand it can be said about the unit: "It provides opportunities for pupil initiative and creativeness" while at the same time it "provides a technique for dealing with various ability groups at the same time."[6]

If the unit is to provide for individual differences certain points must not be lost sight of. There must be adequate corrective teaching. In numerous instances the initial presentation may not have registered. The teacher must provide assistance for those children who have not acquired the learnings, for not all learn at the same rate.

The practice of giving differentiated assignments is very desirable. However, certain points should be noted. "These so-called differentiated assignments should emphasize differentiated objectives."[7] Groups of varying

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[5] Organizing the Elementary School for Living and Learning, 1947 Yearbook, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development of the National Education Association (Washington, D.C.: c. 1947), p. 16.

[6] Kramer, op. cit., p. 72.

[7] Arthur J. Jones, E. D. Grizzell and Wren Jones Grinstead, Principles of Unit Construction (New York and London: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1939), p. 85.

abilities also may require varying approaches. Often objectives and approaches are differentiated on the basis of "minimum essentials" which everyone in the group is expected to attain and special objectives at a higher level for the advanced students. In such cases everyone is required to attain the lower level before beginning work for the upper level.

> Nearly all differentiated "levels" or "assignments" require everyone to attain the lower level C before beginning work for the upper levels B and A. This would be desirable only when the C and B objectives are component and essential parts of the A objective. Often they are not. Not infrequently it is much better to have the advanced and bright pupils begin at once on the A objective. The C objective is too frequently the factual material or the basic skills upon which the B and the A objectives are based and has little or no meaning or significance apart from the B and A objectives. . . . What is often needed for the lower group is a radically different objective, a different approach. . . . The concept of "minimum essentials" has no useful significance except as it is related to that threshhold of control necessary to meet a life situation.[8]

In general advanced pupils can successfully undertake longer, more complex units; their ability to understand and appreciate relationships is greater; they can make greater use of principles and abstract ideas.[9]

Examples of differentiated objectives are to be found in Unit XIV of Boettcher's Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism:

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[8] Ibid., p. 86.

[9] Ibid.

1. "Train pupils to sing joyous songs of gratitude, confidence, and trust, 'Now Thank We All Our God.'"[10] This is the simplest of the three objectives Boettcher mentions.

2. "Train the children in habits of industry, honest work, thrift, saving."[11] This objective requires a certain amount of transfer.

3. "Train pupils to view history and science in the light of the important truth of God's government and preservation."[12] This objective assumes that the pupils have the ability to appreciate relationships.

It is, of course, desirable to have all the children reach as many of these objectives as possible. The objectives are differentiated, however, in such a way that the attainment of the third one does not depend upon the attainment of the first two. All three of the objectives are aspects of the central objective: appreciation of God's love and protection. Individual differences, therefore, are taken into account by this differentiation of objectives and still the importance of the central objective is not lost sight of at any level.

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[10] H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 145.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

Again, the principle of shared or cooperative planning could be used to discover interests and provide opportunities for pupil initiative and creativeness. In many respects, therefore, the religious unit is well adapted to carry out simultaneously the principles of socialization and individualization.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCIPLE OF SEQUENCE AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

> "The sequence of meaningful learnings must itself be meaningful, if authentic results are to be obtained. Here we have the principle of sequence."[1]

The teacher, therefore, is concerned not only with the effectiveness of each separate job of learning, but also with the effectiveness of a series of learnings arranged in time.

> He is teaching not only multiplication but also arithmetic, not only the theorem of Pythagoras but also geometry, not only the rise of slavery but also American history, not only Hamlet but also English literature.[2]

The same line of reasoning might very easily be applied to the teaching of religion. The teacher is concerned not only with teaching Bible history facts but with arousing an "enduring interest in Bible history and the desire and habit to read, study, and contemplate the Bible itself."[3]

He is teaching not only the fifth commandment, but love for God and fellow man; he is interested not only in

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. 228.

[2] Ibid., p. 227.

[3] Wm. A. Kramer, editor, General Course of Study for Lutheran Elementary Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 23.

memoriter learning of Bible passages, but in new habits, attitudes and skills.

This brings out another point. The sequence of learnings can be regarded as a process of growth. Growth however is a continuous process. The qualities in which growth occurs, therefore, must be those which carry over from one learning job to the next. Which are these?

> The qualities which really carry over into new studies or more advanced studies are interest, purpose, eagerness to work, good methods of work, and a broadening awareness of interrelationships.[4]

The teacher is trying to bring about certain changes in human beings, certain insights, outlooks, attitudes, and ways of action. These goals transcend any single subject or determinate activity, but subjects and activities contribute to their formation.

> For growth to take place it is not enough to have a number of sporatic experiences and learnings, however purposeful and compelling each of them may be. These experiences and learnings must contribute to the emergence of a pattern of intelligible behavior, or insight, or understanding - to the emergence of meaning.[5]

The most important requirement therefore of good sequence is that all learning should be within the scope of the learner's purpose. "When is a person teachable? Chiefly when he wants to learn."[6]

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[4]Mursell, op. cit., p. 243.

[5]Ibid., p. 234.

[6]Ibid., p. 232.

In the hierarchy of applications, therefore, it will be noted that the levels of application proceed from less meaningful to highly meaningful organization.

Principle of Sequence: Hierarchy

I Sequential blocks of content: (lessons; courses) Held together chiefly by requirements, prerequisites and logical order: Basic assumption, additive accumulation of knowledge and skills

II Attempts to knit learnings (lessons; courses) more closely together by introductions, previews, pretests, and the rearrangement of the order of material: Basic assumption, apperception

III Sequence organized in terms of readiness

IV Sequence organized in terms of lines of emerging meaning[7]

Note again the advantages of unit teaching in respect to the application of the principle of sequence. "A complete learning situation is developed rather than an accumulation of unrelated facts."[8]

> In insisting on the greater significance of understandings as compared with facts, the unit organization does not, of course, ignore facts. It simply insists that such factual knowledge is not learning itself, but merely material which may be used in learning.[9]

And if the units are arranged in accordance with the principle of focus they will be arranged also on the basis of meaning. Both the teacher and the pupil can and should

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[7] Ibid., p. 250.

[8] Wm. A. Kramer, editor, Religion in Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1949), p. 71.

[9] Ibid., p. 70.

have in mind a definite aim or goal.

> Visualizing the aim and outcome of each week's and each year's efforts is very important. Every conscientious teacher will want to be clear in his own mind as to what he hopes to accomplish in each unit. To have no definite aim is to teach aimlessly. Lack of specific aims and anticipated outcomes accounts for bookish, stereotyped, mechanical, uninteresting, and relatively ineffectual attempts at religious training.[10]

In other words religious instruction which lacks focus will also lack sequence, for "without purpose there is no growth. Apart from growth there cannot be good sequence. Without good sequence there cannot be good learning."[11]

How, then, is the principle of sequence applied in the unit on God's government and preservation? The sequence is applied in the first place by the setting in which the unit is placed. The units run in the following order: God and creation; Angels; Man; God's government and preservation.[12] It should not be difficult here to note "lines of emerging meaning" both in respect to knowledge and attitudes. From the general story of God's creation of the universe the pattern leads through a study of angels as protectors to the study of man as the object

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[10] H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. XII.

[11] Mursell, op. cit., p. 234.

[12] Boettcher, op. cit., p. 118 ff.

of God's love and protection, and finally down to an understanding of God's government and preservation for the sake of each individual child. One is reminded of the way in which Luther has the same approach in his explanation of the three Articles of the Apostle's Creed. Without wasting time he goes immediately to the personal point in each Article: "I believe that God has made me. . . I believe that Jesus Christ. . . is my Lord. . . I believe that . . . the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel." In attitudes the pupil is led from an appreciation of the power of God to a knowledge of the love of God in providing protection, and especially protection for him, to an attitude of confidence and trust in the continuing mercy of God.

Sequence may also be developed by noting the suggestions for correlating the units with seasons of the church year. The suggested time for teaching this unit is "Thanksgiving or New Year."[13] By this procedure not only is meaning added to this particular unit or concept but the pupils can be led to see how their religion fits into the pattern of their everyday life. The festivals of the church year take on new meaning as the pupils again are led to view them as part of a larger pattern.

Other patterns might also be followed in arranging the units throughout the school year. Arrangements for

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[13] Ibid., p. 144.

instance might be suggested by correlations with other subjects. If a unit is to be integrated with a unit on science, for example, such as the return of plant and animal activity in the springtime, better sequence might be preserved if the unit were taught at that particular time of the year. Again, the pupils can be taught on the basis of "lines of emerging meaning" and learn to see the interrelationship of religion with all the activities of their life.

As with all of the other principles, therefore, the principle of sequence is always applied at some level or other in the teaching of religion. Otherwise it would remain entirely abstract and unrelated to life. It remains for the teacher, therefore, as organizer to see that the principle is applied at its highest possible level.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF EVALUATION AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

"To be effective, learning must be organized in such a way that all concerned, and particularly the learner himself, achieve a valid and discriminating appraisal of all its aspects."[1] This is the principle of evaluation.

"Evaluation is the scrutiny of the job of learning for the sake of picking out its crucial features."[2] For the sake of appraisal of a teaching situation, applications of this principle can again be formed in a hierarchy:

Principle of Evaluation: Hierarchy

I Evaluation on results only: chiefly direct results

II Evaluation chiefly on results, emphasizing transferability and objectives: some attention paid to process

III Evaluation on total learning process, including results[3]

Teachers as a matter of course probably always apply the principle of evaluation at some level or other. But the danger is that evaluation might be considered apart from the teaching process. It may be used only to measure the

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. 267.

[2] Ibid., p. 262.

[3] Ibid., p. 281.

results of teaching. But the principle can also be stated this way: "The effectiveness and success of any job of learning is heightened by a valid and discriminating appraisal of all its aspects."[4] This restatement suggests that evaluation should be applied not only as a measure of the results of teaching, but actually as a part of the teaching process itself.

Learning, as was stated before, is a purposive, conscious process, something that the learner does for himself. Therefore, the better both the teacher and the learner understand what he is about and what the crucial aspects are of a given job of learning, the better the learning is likely to go.

> Evaluation is part and parcel of teaching. It is an integral element in the proper organization of learning. It is in no sense functionally separated from it. Testing, measuring, marking, making records and reports, which are the most familiar instruments of evaluation, and also others which are less familiar but in certain aspects more important, should all be considered and treated as factors in the business of bringing about better learning, and not as a system separate from that learning.[5]

Mursell illustrates his point with the following words:

> When a person is learning golf or tennis, and doing so well, he does not merely practice, but also analyzes and considers, studies his successes and failures and their causes, and gives himself what amounts to informal testing from time to time. And a good coach

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[4] Ibid., p. 263.

[5] Ibid., p. 264.

> will do what he can to make this process of self-analysis or self-evaluation more effective and intelligent.[6]

In using this principle of evaluation as a part of the teaching process certain points should be kept in mind.

1. It is more important for the learner himself to evaluate his work than for any other person to do so, because it is the learner himself who has to do the job of learning.

2. The learner should be made aware of the results he is achieving while the job is going on.

3. The results which the pupil is achieving must be results that he wants to attain if his awareness of them is to have a beneficial effect on the learning process. In summary then, "results must be meaningful in terms of the learner's purpose, if a knowledge of them is to have a beneficial effect."[7]

What kind of results then are the teacher and the pupil looking for?

> The crucial test of all learning is transferability, and particularly transferability to a functional situation. . . A result which will not transfer, and which can be delivered only in one single, special setting is spurious. A result which transfers to actual use is authentic.[8]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 269.

[8] Ibid., p. 271.

In this, perhaps, lies the key to the evaluation of the teaching of religion. Do the religious principles supposedly taught in the class room actually transfer to the everyday life of the child? In public schools spurious results, while they are undesirable, may be relatively harmless. But in the teaching of religion spurious results may actually be harmful to the child. "These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."[9] Lack of faith is unbelief; lack of life is death. In the teaching of religion there is no place for spurious results.

Applying the principle of evaluation to the teaching of religion, then, as part of the teaching process, consists in teacher and learner appraising where possible the amount of transfer between what is formally learned as "religion" and what is daily practiced as "living."

Evaluation which adequately meets these conditions aims toward understanding the pupil as a learner as completely as possible and toward enabling him to understand himself in the same way. This requires understanding him as a person for the pupil is "a person who learns" and must be so considered and so handled.

In the Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism

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[9]John 20:31.

reference is made again and again to the continual application of this principle. Again and again the instructor will find this suggestion: "Observe, evaluate, act."

The purpose of these words as explained in the preface of the manual is to prevent the teacher from breaking the relationship between knowing and doing. Or, to put it another way, between knowledge alone and the transfer of that knowledge to a functional situation.

> To become habituated in an agency of Christian instruction to knowing and not doing is nothing short of tragedy. No divorce is more fatal than that which we too often find between the knowledge and the practice of professing Christians. Let us keep knowing and doing, studies and activities, close together even at the elementary level.[10]

The emphasis so far has not been placed on evaluating results in terms of information acquired, or Bible passages memorized. Rather, understandings have been stressed. Facts, of course, are important, for without facts there can be no learning. But "factual knowledge is not learning itself, but merely material which may be used in learning."[11]

To express this in another way,

> . . . the way to understanding is not through information. On the contrary, the surest way to information is through understanding . . . a student who has a real grasp of a given field is also likely to be well-

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[10] H. J. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. XVII.

[11] Wm. A. Kramer, editor, Religion in Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1949), p. 70.

> informed about it and to remember his information for a long time. Facts stick well in a vital pattern of comprehension, but when they are grooved into the mind for their own sake they are written on the sand.[12]

Evaluating in terms of understanding is certainly not as easy as evaluating in terms of knowledge. Certain points might be listed therefore to help the teacher and pupil in evaluating outcomes. Here again the principles of focus and sequence are helpful. If every lesson has a definite aim understood and accepted by both teacher and learner evaluation is possible on the basis of whether the goal has been reached, the purpose achieved. If both teacher and learner are aware of the total pattern of which each lesson is but a part, evaluation is possible on the basis of whether or not it actually represents to the learner an integral part of that pattern. Finally, in respect to this same principle of sequence the principle of evaluation can be carried on over a longer period of time. This gives more opportunities for teacher and learner to observe whether the hoped for result of transferability to a functional situation is actually being attained.

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[12] Mursell, op. cit., p. 273.

CHAPTER IX

SYNTHESIS OF THE SIX PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHING APPLIED TO THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

Up to this point the various aspects of the organization of learning have been studied separately, defined and explained. The effectiveness of teaching - its success in producing authentic results - depends on context, focalization, socialization, individualization, sequence, and evaluation. But these aspects are all branches springing from the same trunk. "The effectiveness of learning depends upon its meaningfulness."[1] The six principles are the practical aspects of the problem of organizing learning for maximum meaningfulness and so for maximum effectiveness with the best and most authentic results. These principles, therefore, are very intimately interrelated. They merge into one another continually. They are simply different ways of looking at the same process - the process of organizing learning for maximum meaningfulness.

The Christian day school teacher, therefore, will want to apply not just one or the other of these principles to

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[1] James L. Mursell, Successful Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1946), p. 307.

a high degree but all of them at the same time and at the highest possible level. For it is evident that if attention is given to some of these principles while others are neglected the result will be a misleading appraisal of the teaching job, or an unbalanced and disappointing plan. Because of the interrelationship between the principles, each one depends for its successful application upon the application of the other five. For example, if the principle of context is ignored, so that the context of a given lesson is not concrete, dynamic, simple, and copious, the teacher will have difficulty in applying the principle of focus at a high level. In other words, if a child does not clearly understand exactly what he is supposed to be learning, he can have no clear idea of exactly why he is supposed to be learning that particular lesson.

Other principles will suffer also. Without a clear focus, groups would be organized aimlessly. In this case much of the value of having the children working in groups would be lost and the teacher could not expect "self generated discipline." The individual attention to the needs of the various pupils, demanded by the principle of individualization, would be increased. For the child who does not understand what he is about becomes increasingly dependent upon the teacher. Sequence becomes hard to establish if the focus is not clear. It is hard to form a pattern if the parts of that pattern themselves are not clearly defined. If a child

does not understand the purpose of each separate lesson it is hard for him to discover the lines of emerging meaning which are necessary for growth.

The principle of evaluation will also suffer from neglect of some of the other principles. If the organization of learning is such that it produces mainly spurious results, evaluation would have to be made chiefly on the basis of such results. On the other hand, the principle of evaluation could be used to discover whether or not the other principles were all being carried on at a high level. For when evaluation is considered as part of the job of teaching it includes an examination of each lesson by the teacher and the learner to find out what the crucial aspects of that lesson are. If such an examination is carried on early in the lesson it will enable the teacher to discover whether the children really understand what they are supposed to be learning and why they are supposed to be learning it.

It is evident, therefore, that faulty application or neglect of any one principle makes it difficult for the teacher to apply all the other principles at their highest possible level. The teacher as an organizer, therefore, attempts to apply all six principles at the same time. He is looking for authentic results - results which function in the life of a child, results which in the mind of the child make the "religion" he learns in the class room part of his every day life.

If the Christian day school teacher can succeed in producing such results he will be helping the parents of the children in his school in their God-given privilege of bringing up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."[2]

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[2]Ephesians 6:4.

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