

# Teaching Techniques

REVITALIZING METHODOLOGY

Edited by Jonathan N. Thigpen, Ph.D.



Evangelical Training Association

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# Preface

Over 500,000 copies of *Teaching Techniques* have been distributed since it was first published in 1935. It was written by Dr. Clarence H. Benson, professor at Moody Bible Institute and founder of Evangelical Training Association. God has used this book to help in the training of thousands of teachers in hundreds of local churches around the world.

In 1968, *Understanding Teaching*, by Dr. Kenneth O. Gangel, was published by ETA to replace *Teaching Techniques*. However, due to popular demand, *Teaching Techniques* was retained in the curriculum, although both books covered much of the same ground. The dawn of a new century encouraged ETA to completely redesign and rewrite these two courses, maintaining the core philosophy for a teaching ministry with the added focus on the training needs of twenty-first century Bible teachers.

In 1998, *Understanding Teaching: Effective Biblical Teaching for the 21st Century* was written by Gregory C. Carlson, Ph.D. It was designed to serve as the foundational ETA course in teacher training. In 2001, ETA is pleased to release the newly revised *Teaching Techniques: Revitalizing Methodology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Although it can be used as a stand-alone course, it builds upon *Understanding Teaching* and it is recommended these two courses be taught sequentially for maximum effectiveness.

This edition of *Teaching Techniques* focuses on the philosophical basis of methodology, insights from current research, an overview of classroom usage, and principles of selection for specific purposes and audiences. In a fast-paced and quickly changing culture, master teachers must understand the why of methodology in order to maximize its how.

*Teaching Techniques* is the result of the combined effort of several outstanding educators and practitioners.

**Dr. Jonathan N. Thigpen** served as General Editor and wrote chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 11. Dr. Thigpen has served as President of ETA since 1992. He received formal training at Free Will Baptist Bible College (B.A.), Temple Baptist Seminary (M.R.E.), and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Ph.D.). Before coming to ETA, Dr. Thigpen ministered as a pastor, college professor, and denominational publishing executive. He and his wife, Yvonne, have one daughter and reside in Wheaton.

**Dr. Gregory C. Carlson** wrote on Lecture (Chapter 5). He has served as professor of Christian Education at Grace University in Omaha since 1987, where he has also been Dean of Graduate Studies since 1996. He studied at Grace University (B.A.), Talbot School of Theology/Biola University (M.A.), and the University of Nebraska (Ph.D.). He and his wife, Donna, have three sons and live in Gretna, Nebraska.

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**John C. LaRue, Jr.** wrote on the Internet and Christian Education (Chapter 12). He serves as Vice-President of the Christianity Online division of Christianity Today International (CTI), Carol Stream, Illinois. He received his formal training at Tyndale College (B.A.) and Wheaton College Graduate School (M.A.). Before joining CTI, John worked with David C. Cook Publications. He and his wife, Carol, have two sons and live in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

# Developing Your Philosophy of Teaching

Jonathan N. Thigpen

## 1

Perhaps you have heard the story about the college physics professor who came into class the first day and handed out this assignment: “For our next class, please write a two page essay defining the term universe and give three examples.” You can imagine the response of the students! Many Bible teachers are equally intimidated by the term “philosophy,” especially when it is used as part of the question: “What is your philosophy of teaching?” One reason for intimidation is that many lay Bible teachers have received little formal training in the areas of teaching and Bible. This does not mean they lack a philosophy of teaching. They simply are unable to clearly articulate one. A second reason for apprehension is a view that philosophy is only theoretical in nature and thus has little to do with the actual practice of teaching. The issue is—whether consciously aware of it or not—every teacher has a philosophy of teaching. The question then becomes: “On what is your philosophy of teaching based?” Philosophy precedes the practice of teaching. Likewise, techniques flow directly from one’s philosophy of teaching.

Although this course will primarily concentrate on the various techniques employed in the practice of teaching or learning the Bible, the beginning point is the philosophy of the teacher. Philosophy comes to us from the Greek language, and its root meaning is “love (*phileo*) of wisdom (*sophia*).” The term means more than this, however. A working definition of philosophy is: *a set of principles which move toward a goal*. A teacher’s philosophy consists of the things the teacher believes to be true about the universe, people, the goals of teaching, how people learn, and about how education should be practiced.

## Benefits of Developing a Biblical Philosophy of Teaching

Investing the time to formulate a biblically-based philosophy of teaching will yield several dividends for you, the teacher.

1. *It will help you to focus on the big picture issues.* Sometimes teachers can become so focused on such aspects as the arrangement of tables and chairs, having enough handwork supplies, or on finding the right piece of artwork for an overhead that they become more concerned about methodology than ultimate outcomes. Teaching the Bible is much more than mastering certain techniques. The teacher must know why he or she is teaching. This does not mean methodology is unimportant, but Bible teachers must understand *why* they are teaching before focusing on *how* to teach.

2. *It will help you to adapt to constantly changing conditions.* Teachers who have not been properly trained in the *why* of teaching tend to emulate the methods used by the teachers who taught them. This type of training may seem to work for a short time. However, over longer periods of time, when conditions change in the culture, in the students, in the subject, or in the teacher, if a teacher only understands the *how* of teaching without understanding the *why* of teaching, the results can be disastrous for all involved. On the other hand, the teacher who clearly understands the *why* of teaching can more easily make adjustments in the *how* of teaching as needs arise and times change.

3. *It will make it easier for you to implement new methodologies in the teaching process.* Teachers are often very conservative in their approach to adapting new teaching methods. Usually, a change-resistant teacher will say, "But these methods have worked for over 20 years," or when pressed, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" (referring to themselves). This attitude, however, hinders both the students and the teacher. When a teacher comes to an understanding of the relationship between the *how* and *why* of teaching, it will usually produce a readiness to experiment with new methodologies.

4. *It will help you to see the link between methodologies and learning outcomes.* When teachers understand their philosophies of teaching, they will see that methods have a direct impact on outcomes. This *Teaching Techniques* course takes the position that a variety of methodologies should be used in teaching the Bible, not because "variety is the spice of life" but because different methods produce different outcomes in different students. One way to think about this is to imagine going out to fish with a master fisherman. Does this sportsman take just one kind of rod, reel, fishing line, or bait? Of course not. The master fisherman has a variety of fishing equipment and bait that will or will not be used depending on the fish he is seeking



to catch, weather conditions, time of day, season, and the like. He will choose his methods based on the outcomes he desires, taking into account the current conditions. An inexperienced fisherman will most likely not have as much equipment as the master fisherman and will probably need to experiment until he makes a catch. Who do you think will catch the most fish? In teaching, the master teacher takes the same approach as the master fisherman.

5. *It will make it easier to reproduce yourself in the life of another teacher.* There is an old proverb that says, “Give a man a fish and you feed him today; teach a man to fish and you feed him for life.” If you do not have a clear understanding of your philosophy of teaching, you will pass on methods without meaning and techniques without purpose. However, if you are seeking to become a master teacher, who understands both the *why* and *how* of teaching, you can also become a master trainer of teachers. This course is designed not only to improve your teaching but to empower you to multiply yourself.

## The Frankena Model

Dr. William Frankena, a professor of education, has developed a model to be utilized in evaluating various philosophies of education.<sup>1</sup> A modified version of Frankena’s model provides a way for Bible teachers to ask themselves the right questions about the critical aspects of the educational process. Frankena’s model consists of five boxes which contain key questions and are sequential and interrelated (see Chart 1). Several Christian educators, most notably Carol and Jim Pluddemann, as well as Ron Habermas and Klaus Issler, have applied the Frankena model in developing a uniquely biblical philosophy of education.<sup>2</sup>

### Box A—Ultimate Goals

*What are the ultimate goals of the Christian educational process? What is the main point of teaching the Bible? Why do we devote time, effort, and energy to the educational processes within the church?*

The answers to these questions are not just nice to know but are vitally important. If we have the wrong answers to these Box A questions, the rest of the educational process will be corrupted. The Westminster Confession states it succinctly: “The chief goal of man is to glorify God and enjoy His presence forever.”<sup>3</sup> There are many Bible passages which support this proposition. (See Psalm 86; Isaiah 60:21; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; Revelation 4:11; 21:3-4.) If we agree that this is our ultimate goal in Christian education, then it will change the way we teach the Bible. We will teach not just so our students will know the content of the Bible but so

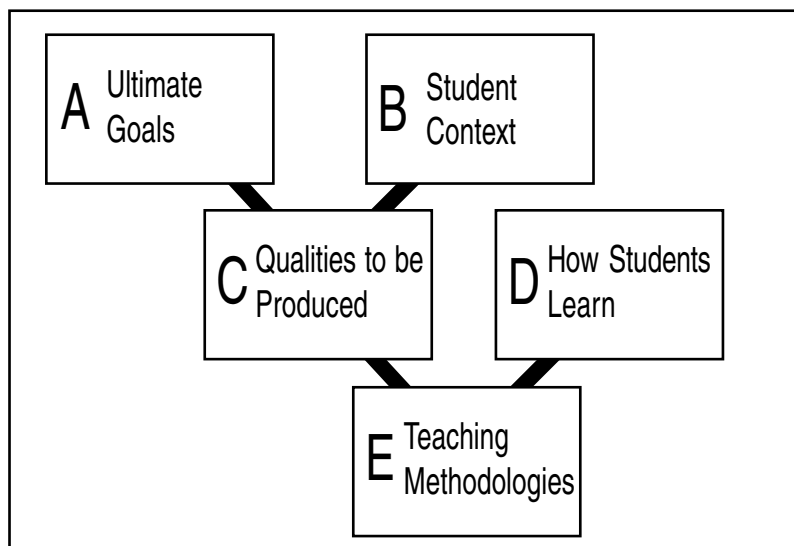


Chart 1 – The Frankena Model

they will come into a relationship with the Author of the Bible, the God of the universe. We will teach so our students will not just learn more about God but grow in their relationships with God. We will teach not only so our students are prepared to live lives glorifying to God on earth but lives which are also laying up treasure in heaven.

For those of us who are evangelical Christians, the ultimate goals of Christian education are the same regardless of where we live. These goals are timeless and universal. Despite our well-equipped classrooms, the quality of our audio-visual aids, the excitement of our learning centers, the size of our budgets, and the years of experience of our teachers—if we are not teaching the Bible so as to bring our students into vibrant relationships with the living God through His Son, Jesus Christ, we have failed.

This is why it is so important for you, as a Bible teacher, to understand your philosophy of teaching. Remember the definition of philosophy earlier in this chapter? It is *a set of principles which move toward a goal*. Once you know where you are headed (the goal in Box A), you can more easily figure out the best way to get there.

### Box B—Context in Which Your Students Live

*What are the settings in which your students live? What are the internal and external circumstances of each student's life? What is the age, socio-economic status, educational level, sex, race, religious background, and family situation of each student?*

As was mentioned earlier, Bible-believing Christians agree on

the answers to Box A and that these answers are unchanging. However, the answers to Box B are quite a different matter. While there are some truths about human beings which are universally true and do not change (such as we are all made in the image of God, we all stand as sinners before God, and we all need Christ as Savior), there are many aspects of human experience which are not shared by all. Some people are born in the city, others in rural areas. Some are born into wealth, others into poverty. Some are gifted intellectually, others struggle to learn.

Because every student shares the same basic need to be brought into relationship with God, our ultimate goals (Box A) are the same for all students. However, because students differ in many other ways, the specific qualities and skills desired for each student may be different. An example of this is the difference in teaching first graders and twelfth graders. Both classes have the same ultimate spiritual need, but because first graders and twelfth graders most often live in completely different contexts, the first grade Bible teacher may be teaching to produce honesty as a character trait while the twelfth grade teacher may be emphasizing the need for sexual purity.

To be an effective Bible teacher, you must make a commitment to spend time to get to know each student as thoroughly as possible. We are not just to “teach the Bible;” instead, we are to teach students the Bible so that they may know God and serve Him forever.

### **Box C—Qualities and Skills to be Produced**

*What are the specific qualities and skills to be produced in the lives of your students? What are the character traits to be developed?*

As illustrated by Chart 1, the answers to Box C flow out of the data gathered in Boxes A and B. Certainly there will be many items in Box C which are applicable for all Christians. For example, all Christians should manifest, in increasing ways, the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and should “make every effort” to add to their faith the seven important characteristics listed in 2 Peter 1:5–7. However, it is critical to understand these qualities are not ends in themselves but are the *means* to the end of achieving the goal of Box A. In other words, our desire as teachers of the Bible should not be to merely produce people who can mark off a check list of spiritual traits but rather people who know God. It is in knowing God and growing in our relationship with Him that we in turn allow the power of the Holy Spirit to be unleashed to effect lasting life change.

The answers to Box C are also important for two other reasons. First, the age of the student (Box B) will guide in the selection of appropriate and realistic qualities and skills to be achieved in the

Christian education process. There is not a set list of qualities when dealing with different age groups. Each age group presents a unique challenge in development. ETA's course *Understanding People* provides an excellent overview of human development from a biblical perspective. Also, ETA's *Teaching with Confidence* series focuses on the four major age groups (preschoolers, children, youth, and adults).

Second, the answers in Box C will be different depending on the cultural setting in which the Bible is taught. For example, Box C may look quite different when comparing a class of 11-year old students who have grown up in Christian homes with 11-year old students from non-Christian homes. It may also look very different when comparing 11-year old students from the United States with 11-year old students from a two-thirds world country. In a very real sense, unless you are teaching someone who is exactly like you, all teaching is cross-cultural. Having a biblically-based philosophy of teaching is critical because it will enable you to be a fruitful teacher in whatever context God places you.

### **Box D—How Students Learn**

*What are the key principles of pedagogy (the art or profession of teaching)? What can be discovered about how students learn from current educational research? What truths can be gleaned from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology that will help us teach the Bible more effectively?*

One of the purposes of this book is to expose you to recent research in the area of learning theory and how it applies to teaching the Bible. Obviously, in a book this compact, the objective is to merely whet your appetite for more personal research in this area. The books mentioned in the bibliography are good places to continue your study. Use of the Internet can be an excellent means to keep yourself informed of the latest developments in learning theory research. The *Instructional Resource Package (IRP)* available with this course also provides additional resources in this area.

This focus on modern research is not to imply that effective learning did not take place before the computer era—far from it. Great teachers have been around for centuries, and the greatest Teacher who has ever lived, our Savior Jesus Christ, taught in Palestine 2,000 years ago! What modern research has done and is doing is to help teachers better understand how learning actually takes place, as well as the environment and methodologies that work best. This does not mean Christians simply accept research findings at face value, but rather we view them through the lens of Scripture, recognizing that “all truth is God’s truth.”<sup>4</sup>

Learning theories are concerned with how people learn and with

how to enhance the educational experience. One of the reasons the term “theory” is used is that there is still much of the teaching–learning experience that is not fully understood from a scientific viewpoint. Another reason for the term is that learning is so complex an activity that it is difficult to summarize into one set of all-encompassing principles applicable to all situations all the time. Hence, the phenomenon of many different “theories” attempting to describe the learning process. This does not negate the value of studying learning theory, but it suggests there is still much to be discovered.

One of the areas of learning theory which has had an impact on Christian education is learning styles. Chapter 3 of this text provides an overview of this subject and suggests ways an understanding of this subject can enhance teaching of the Bible to any age group.

### **Box E—Teaching Methodologies**

*What do the teacher and students actually do in the learning environment which will produce the qualities and skills of Box C and achieve the ultimate goals of Box A?*

Simply put, Box E deals with the actual practice of education as informed by Boxes C and D. Unfortunately, many Bible teachers, especially inexperienced ones, want to start at Box E. “Just tell me what to do and I will do it,” they may say, or, “Give me a teacher’s guide that provides a step-by-step lesson plan and I’ll do my best to follow it.” This problem is compounded by church leadership so desperate to fill classrooms with teachers that they start at Box E, anxious for any shortcuts available in the teacher training process. Both of these groups fail to see the danger of training people *how* to do something without first explaining the *why*. Teachers trained in this way can do more harm than good, assuming they do not eventually drop out of the process altogether. The training of Bible teachers is too important a task to be done in a hasty and slipshod manner.

One of the main values of the Frankena Model is its ability to help us visualize the interrelatedness of the five key aspects of educational philosophy represented by the five boxes. For example, the theories of learning in Box D are not taken from research without first integrating them with the insights gained from Boxes A, B, and C. Likewise, the practices of Christian education in Box E, are not determined until the answers to Boxes C and D are combined.

### **Let’s Get Practical**

Every teacher has a philosophy of education. The Frankena Model is simply a tool to help you discover and understand your own philosophy of teaching. The bulk of this course is dedicated to exploring the answers to Boxes D and E of the Frankena Model from a

biblical perspective. Answers for Boxes A and C will be discovered as one studies biblical interpretation, Bible survey, and basic Bible doctrines (ETA has 8 courses in this area; see the *IRP* for more information). As mentioned above, the questions from Box B can be answered with the help of ETA's *Understanding People* course and *Teaching with Confidence* (series of 4) courses. It is strongly recommended to use this course in conjunction with ETA's companion course, *Understanding Teaching*. (The courses are designed for *Understanding Teaching* to be studied first.) *Understanding Teaching* emphasizes the answers to Boxes A, B, and C of the Frankena Model with an overview of Boxes D and E. Conversely, *Teaching Techniques* provides an overview of Boxes A, B, and C with an emphasis on Boxes D and E. Together, these two courses provide 24 sessions which can help lay a solid foundation for any Bible teacher.

### For Further Discussion

1. The analogy of a master fisherman was used above to illustrate the relationship between philosophy and methodology. What additional analogies can help explain this concept?
2. Summarize your own philosophy of education by writing a two or three sentence answer to each of the boxes of the Frankena Model.
3. Are there any additional questions a teacher should ask about his or her philosophy of education that do not fall into one of Frankena's boxes? If so, what are they?
4. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "It is possible to be an effective Bible teacher without understanding your philosophy of teaching?"
5. What are three things you would like to learn about teaching the Bible during this course?

### Notes

1. William K. Frankena, *Philosophy of Education* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1965), 4-11.
2. See James and Carol Pluddemann, *Pilgrims in Progress: Growing Through Groups* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1990), and Ronald Habermas and Klaus Issler, *Teaching for Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992).
3. *Westminster Larger Catechism* (1648), Question 1. Found at the Internet site <http://www.swrb.com>.
4. Frank Gaebelein used this phrase to emphasize that all truth, whether it is discovered inside or outside of Scripture, is true because God has made it so. Hence, "all truth is God's truth." See his book, *Patterns of God's Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1954).

# Teaching Techniques

## STUDY GUIDE & EXAM BOOKLET AK '07 (4 UNITS)

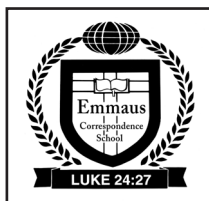
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# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

The goal of all education is to change behavior. This is especially true of Christian education. The teacher should desire to see their students bring their lives into line with the Word of God. Diligent study of this course with its exploration of both teacher-centered and student-centered methods will help you become a more effective teacher.

The textbook you will use for this course is from the Evangelical Training Association, *Teaching Techniques* (2005 Edition). Exams for the course have been developed by the Emmaus Correspondence School.

We trust this study will be challenging and helpful.

## Course Components

This course has two parts: the textbook and this exam booklet.

## How To Study

The textbook has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

## Exams

In this exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures.

After you have completed each chapter of the textbook, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. This exam contains the following types of questions:

### **MULTIPLE CHOICE**

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| A. blue  | C. yellow |
| B. green | D. orange |

    **B**    

### **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and apply the lessons from the text. You may use additional sheets of paper for your answers if needed. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

## How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the textbook where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

## Returning The Exam

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

## CHAPTER 1 EXAM

### DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

#### EXAM GRADE

***Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.***

*Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.*

1. In the practice of teaching the Bible, the beginning point is
  - A. the philosophy of the teacher
  - B. the selected curriculum
  - C. the techniques used to teach
  - D. the context in which teaching and learning take place \_\_\_\_\_
2. Many Bible teachers are intimidated by the term philosophy because
  - A. they lack a philosophy of teaching themselves
  - B. they believe it is unscriptural
  - C. they believe it is theoretical and not related to the practice of teaching
  - D. they do not understand the term philosophy of teaching \_\_\_\_\_
3. A working definition of philosophy is
  - A. what one thinks about a subject
  - B. a set of principles, which move toward a goal
  - C. the techniques of teaching
  - D. wisdom used to reach a goal \_\_\_\_\_
4. A teacher who understands the “why” as well as the “how” of teaching
  - A. recognizes that different teaching methods produce different results
  - B. can adapt to new methodologies easier when the need arises
  - C. is not concerned enough about teaching techniques
  - D. both a and b \_\_\_\_\_

- 5. The unchanging and ultimate goal of Christian teaching is to
  - A. impart biblical knowledge to the student
  - B. discipline the student's mind
  - C. bring the student into a vibrant relationship with God
  - D. produce people who can check-off a list of character traits\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 6. The kind of qualities and skills produced in students are going to differ according to
  - A. age and cultural setting
  - B. gender and family history
  - C. biblical knowledge and understanding
  - D. academic ability and socioeconomic level\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 7. With respect to modern research into how learning takes place, we should
  - A. ignore all the great teachers of the past
  - B. be suspicious of it
  - C. accept it unreservedly
  - D. examine it from a biblical perspective, recognizing all truth is God's truth\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 8. Many of today's inexperienced Sunday school teachers
  - A. have been trained well
  - B. just want to follow a lesson plan
  - C. don't have a philosophy of teaching
  - D. don't care about the goal of teaching\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

- 9. What are three things you would like to learn about teaching the Bible during this course?

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- 10. Summarize your own current philosophy of teaching.

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