

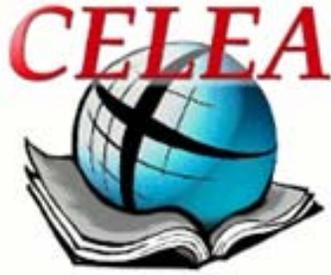
The logo for the International Journal of Christianity & English Language Teaching (IJC & ELT) features the letters 'IJC' in a large, blue, serif font above the letters '& ELT' in a large, orange, serif font. The letters are set against a background of a light gray grid of dots. A large, faint, gray watermark of the letters 'IJC & ELT' is visible behind the main text.

IJC & ELT

Volume 2
March 2015

International Journal of Christianity & English Language Teaching

A refereed, online journal on Christianity and ELT



The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is a free, open access publication from the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA, see <http://www.celea.net> or <http://celea.wildapricot.org/>), an international, non-profit association for those in English language teaching.



The *IJC&ELT* is also supported by the Department of Applied Linguistics and TESOL in the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University in La Mirada, California. Visit <http://cook.biola.edu/programs/linguistics-tesol/> for more information. The *IJC&ELT* gratefully acknowledges this support.

The *IJC&ELT* acronym logo and cover page title were designed by Daniel McClary (Dmccclary@lbc.edu), of Lancaster Bible College, on behalf of CELEA. This service to both CELEA and the *IJC&ELT* is much appreciated.



© 2015 CELEA and individual contributors. All rights reserved.

International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching
Volume 2 (March 2015)
edited by Michael Lessard-Clouston & Xuesong (Andy) Gao

The editors extend their appreciation to all the referees who volunteered their time and expertise in reading, interacting with, and evaluating the manuscripts they received. We are also grateful for graduate student editorial assistant Sheila Ewert's work on this issue.

Typeset in Times New Roman

ISSN 2334-1866 (online)

Reviews

Meaningful Action: Earl Stevick's Influence on Language Teaching

Jane Arnold and Tim Murphey (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
Pp. ix + 331, \$42.00 (paper), ISBN 9781107610439.

Reviewed by R. Michael Medley, Eastern Mennonite University

In an article celebrating the career and contributions of Earl W. Stevick (1923-2013), Kristjánsson (2014) remarked that “Earl...left his mark on the profession, not only because of his public contributions and seminal publications, but because of who he was and the way he connected with people on a personal level” (p. 6). Stevick’s personal and scholarly mark on the language teaching profession can be nowhere better measured than in this collection of essays edited by Jane Arnold and Tim Murphey. In this volume nineteen contributors, many among the most eminent voices in TESOL, have presented eighteen essays – including chapters by each of the editors – that explore important themes in Stevick’s work that have directly inspired or coincide with fruitful scholarly and pedagogical work in the field.

The title of the volume comes from a quotation that Stevick borrowed from the cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker’s 1974 Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1973). Stevick (1998) wrote, “each of us has an ultimate need to feel that he or she is *‘an object of primary value in a world of meaningful action’*” (p. 20, italics added to highlight the quote from Becker). For Stevick, “meaningful action” is a multi-layered concept that cannot be explored in the space of this review. The closest summation of the concept in Stevick’s (1998) words that I can find is this: “Our ‘world of meaningful action,’ then, draws on the power figures in our life, and on our peer groups, and on more or less tightly integrated sets of goals we have adopted for ourselves” (p. 22). Many of the chapters in this volume under review expound aspects of “meaningful action.”

The collection is divided into three parts: “Meaning-making inside and between the people in the classroom” (seven chapters), “Meaningful classroom activity” (six articles), and “Frameworks for meaningful language learning” (five chapters). Some chapters fit a bit artificially in their assigned category, but overall the organization is helpful. Carolyn Kristjánsson composed an epilogue to the volume that includes a biographical sketch of Stevick’s professional career; in addition, her chapter, “Inside, between, and beyond: Agency and identity in language learning,” leads off the entire collection.

A grand finale of tributes completes the volume in an Appendix, with encomiums from scholars and teachers who have been luminaries in the field of TESOL, many of whom knew Stevick personally, including some of the book's contributors, as well as Doug Brown, Julian Edge, and Tom Scovel. Since Stevick was still living when the book was published in Spring 2013, he was able to enjoy these words of appreciation for his life's work.

Summary

It is always a challenge to review a collection of essays, but an obvious organizing question for this review, given the subtitle of the book, is this: Which of Stevick's ideas do the contributors lift up as enduring and influential? Accordingly, in the paragraphs that follow, key themes from Stevick's work are set in ***bold italics***.

Anyone familiar with Stevick's work would not be surprised by the multiple mentions of his pithy distillation of what language learning is all about, namely, "***what goes on inside and between people in the classroom***." Before the 'social turn' in second language acquisition became prominent, Stevick's formulation recognized that language learning is both a social and a cognitive process. In his essay "The Learning Body," Scott Thornbury discusses the social turn in SLA theory and highlights by implication how clearly Stevick anticipated this trend with his way of describing language learning. Thornbury's emphasis on the fully embodied language learner stands squarely in the tradition of Stevick, who saw ***language learning as "a total human experience"*** (p. 307). As illustrated in David Nunan's chapter and the contributions of others, language teaching is more than teaching language: it is teaching the whole person, one who has "needs for security, predictability, group membership, and the feeling that what one is doing makes sense in terms of some overall and deeply satisfying life pattern" (Stevick, 1998, p. 50).

Both Murphey and Kristjánsson connect this most famous among Stevick's aphorisms with another important Stevick idea: "***the presence or absence of harmony***" as a key part of what goes on in the classroom (Kristjánsson, 2014, p. 7). Murphey (p. 184) depicts the harmonizing of learner independence and learners in community in a diagram in which he illustrates his idea of a zone of proximal adjusting (ZPA). A zone of proximal adapting suggests that teachers need to work on adjusting how they assess language learners' needs and tailor the help that they offer. Thus, the teacher's focus is on the learner, a value that is central to the work of Earl Stevick.

The first section of the book ends with three chapters, by Christopher Candlin and Jonathan Crichton, Rebecca Oxford, and David Nunan, which collectively provide an exclamation point for the section: ***Focus on the learner!*** These authors emphasize the importance of affording opportunities for and attending carefully to the stories that learners share. A similar emphasis can be seen in a chapter later in the collection by Madeline Erhman, one of Stevick's colleagues at the Foreign Service Institute. She invites readers to interact with a case study of a "typical student in trouble" (pp. 260-262). Candlin and Crichton develop the theme of "focus on the learner" by pointing out how Stevick emphasized "the language classroom as a context in which the interactional and intersubjective conditions for building and sustaining Trust are constantly in play and at stake" (p. 81). In their chapter, Candlin and Crichton explore what ***the centrality of Trust*** means for the classroom as a discursive community and for curricular design.

Crichton and Candlin connect their discussion of Trust with Stevick's emphasis on ***depth of meaning in relation to the individual learner***, which he developed in both *Teaching Languages: A Way and Ways* (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1980) and *Memory, Meaning and Method* (Stevick, 1996). Kristjánsson also draws on this concept, connecting it with a systemic functional analysis of how learners use language to make several different kinds of meaning. Penny Ur, exploring depth of processing in relation to vocabulary learning in her chapter, recommends teachers should directly explain the meaning of new vocabulary items to learners and "then proceed to tasks which involve deep processing" (p. 140, original emphasis).

Stevick's focus on ***emotional factors***, closely connected with depth of meaning, becomes the main subject of Jane Arnold's chapter on issues of self and motivation. Herbert Puchta also deals with emotional factors in the context of his larger concern with Stevick's sophisticated understanding of ***the way that memory works***, its current relevance, and confirmation of Stevick's understandings by more recent studies. Using Stevick's workbench metaphor for working memory, in his chapter Adrian Underhill gives practical suggestions for teachers to help learners explore how their memory works.

Today when ***learner investment*** is discussed, applied linguists generally think first of Bonny Norton's (2000) important contributions to our understanding of identity and power in relation to language learning. In her chapter Kristjánsson, however, mentions that Stevick also uses the investment metaphor (e.g., Stevick, 1998, pp. 50-51). Stevick's concern with learner

investment relates directly to the opportunities that learners have to share **control and initiative** with the teacher as part of meaningful action in the classroom (p. 25). Enriching Stevick's paradoxical claim that a teacher "may keep nearly 100 percent of the 'control' while at the same time the learner is exercising nearly 100 percent of the 'initiative'" (Stevick, 1998, pp. 31-32), in his chapter Leo van Lier adds to the discussion the related distinctions between "constraints and resources" and "structures and processes" (p. 241). He concludes that teacher expertise, material resources, and curricular design must all conspire to stimulate learner autonomy, lesson design, and interactional dynamics (p. 248).

Since some themes mentioned are treated in multiple essays, one might expect to become bored reading yet another chapter on a related topic. But the last third of the book keeps stimulating and surprising the reader. One of the surprises is provided by Diane Larson-Freeman in her discussion of Stevick's concept **technemic** (pp. 190-191), drawn from one of Stevick's (1959) very early papers. Larsen-Freeman explains that a *techneme* involves slight alterations of teaching techniques in ways that make a meaningful (emic) difference in the way they affect learners; she cites examples from Stevick's article and then goes on to provide a theoretical grounding for the concept. A footnote connecting Murphey's discussion of adaptation (ZPA, chapter 11) with *techneme* is one of the few places where contributors' ideas are explicitly cross-linked, something the editors could have worked at more consistently.

Helping learners develop **personal competence** is an important Stevick theme that Heidi Byrnes develops in her chapter, "Renting language in the ownership society: Reflections on language use and language learning in a multilingual world." Contributing one of the densest yet most rewarding chapters in the collection, Byrnes links Bakhtin and Halliday with Stevick's concern for meaning and personal competence (p. 223), substantially deepening Stevick's ideas.

Like Larsen-Freeman and Byrnes, Donald Freeman selects a unique idea from Stevick's work and develops a thought-provoking presentation in his chapter: **the piping problem** in language education. How is it, Stevick ponders, that we have to pay for what is free? If we can acquire languages for free, why must we "pay" by participating in an organized setting (p. 271)? Freeman's essay considers how teacher education is connected with student opportunities to learn in a relational mode.

Stevick's anecdote about the "piping problem" is one several riddles that are referenced in *Meaningful Action*. More than one contributor – among them, Alan Maley, Adrian Underhill,

and Mark Clarke – refers to *a riddle* of Stevick’s that poses the problem of how two logically contradictory methods of language instruction may both produce stunning results for diverse groups of learners taught by different teachers. It is Clarke, however, who makes the most original use of Stevick’s penchant for posing riddles. The overarching riddle that Clarke addresses is this: “Why do we resist change?” (p. 295). Clarke’s interactive approach – like the one used by Ehrman in chapter 16 and by Stevick in several of his own works – draws the reader in and stimulates new ways of thinking about frameworks for language instruction, including and transcending the individual classroom.

Evaluation

There are some essays in the collection which barely give Stevick a mention or cite any specific ideas from his oeuvre (e.g., those by Rebecca Oxford, Zoltán Dörnyei, and Ehrman), but what they share – about learner narratives, a principled communicative approach (PCA), and language learning consultants – corresponds with and amplifies what Oxford labels Stevick’s “humanistic, caring, and creative orientation” (p. 96).

The editors might have exercised more direction in working with the contributors to avoid excessive repetition of similar refrains and references to the same concepts and words again and again. As mentioned above, they could also have worked to help the authors create more explicit connections among their chapters. Fortunately, the volume has a very good index in a day when many books like this don’t have one at all: in this respect the editors may have been emulating the master himself, who evidently gave personal attention to the indices of his books (see for example the excellent indices in Stevick’s books). To look at the index of his (1998) *Working with Teaching Methods*, for example, is to find many of the themes mentioned in *Meaningful Action*, indicating clearly that the contributors to this volume are in sync with the values in language teaching that Earl Stevick sought to expound.

Christian readers will note that this collection is silent about Stevick’s Christian convictions, even though Stevick himself was not afraid of demonstrating his careful knowledge of Christian theology, as for example in his (1990) *Humanism and Language Teaching* (see Medley, 2014). Even in *Working with Teaching Methods*, Stevick (1998) did not shy away from addressing ultimate questions about human existence. Both of these books deal in their own way with spiritual issues in language teaching, and yet there is no essay in this

collection that broaches the question of spirituality in language teaching, a topic addressed openly in Smith and Osborn (2007) and many chapters in Wong and Canagarajah (2009).

In their introduction to the volume, the editors quote from Parker Palmer, another prominent educator who has not hidden his Christian convictions; the quote possibly gives a sly nod to Stevick's faith: "good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher ... Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects and their students so that the students can learn to weave a world for themselves" – "a meaningful world," the editors add (p. 4). Palmer not only characterizes the kind of teaching that Stevick promoted, but he also describes the kind of teacher Stevick was and (through his writings and his disciples) remains. His power to generate connections is instantiated by the scholars whose essays are gathered in this book, who testify to the identity and integrity of this teacher from which good teaching flows. Like the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11, Earl Stevick continues speaking to us: his labor in the Lord has not been in vain (I Cor. 15:58). *Meaningful Action* will provide inspiration and guidance in years to come for those who wish to continue exploring language learning as 'a total human experience'.

References

- Kristjánsson, C. (2014). Encounters with Earl Stevick: Personal reflections and lasting impressions. *CELEA News*, 6(2), 4-7.
- Medley, R. M. (2014). Earl Stevick's incarnational approach to teacher development: A personal reminiscence. *CELEA News*, 6(2), 8-9.
- Norton, B. (2000). Investment, acculturation, and language loss. In S. McKay & S. C. Wong (Eds.), *New immigrants in the United States: Readings for second language educators* (pp. 443-461). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith D. I, & Osborn, T. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Spirituality, social justice, and language learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Stevick, E. W. (1959). "Technemes" and the rhythm of class activity. *Language Learning*, 9(3-4), 45-51. doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1959.tb01227.x
- Stevick, E. W. (1990). *Humanism and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stevick, E. W. (1996). *Memory, meaning and method: A view of language teaching* (2nd ed.). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Stevick, E. W. (1998). *Working with teaching methods: What's at stake?* Pacific Grove, CA: Heinle and Heinle.
- Wong, M. S., & Canagarajah, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Christian and critical English language educators in dialogue: Pedagogical and ethical dilemmas*. New York: Routledge.

R. Michael Medley (medley@emu.edu) is Professor of English and chair of the Department of Language and Literature at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, U.S.A.,

where he supervises the undergraduate minor in TESOL and teaches in both the undergraduate and MA in Education programs.

Motivating Learners, Motivating Teachers: Building Vision in the Language Classroom

Zoltán Dörnyei and Magdalena Kubanyiova. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. x + 184, \$42.00 (paper), ISBN 9781107606647.

Reviewed by Eleanor J. Pease, Spring Arbor University

Zoltán Dörnyei and Magdalena Kubanyiova use the well-known Japanese proverb, “Vision without action is daydream; Action without vision is nightmare,” as an epigraph in one of the chapters of this excellent tool book devoted to guidelines for developing motivation in students and teachers alike. In their introduction, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova lay out a plan for vision *with action* by giving five issues presented in question form. Three of the key questions are: 1) Why write a book about vision in language education? 2) Why focus on both learners and teachers in the same book? and 3) What is the point of mixing the terms *vision* and *motivation*? These questions set the tone for the book as they systematically unfold the answers.

Dörnyei and Kubanyiova draw heavily on many scholarly resources in laying a firm foundation for the role of vision in motivating human behavior. There is a foundational thread that goes through the book: Dörnyei’s “L2 Motivational Self System.” The three constituents of this system are the ideal second language (L2) self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. They explain that the L2 Motivational Self System shows three primary sources of the motivation necessary to acquire a second language: 1) an internal desire to become fluent, 2) the learner’s environment and social pressures to master the L2, and 3) the actual language learning experience.

In an effort to emphasize the practical applications for every topic in the text, I will explain the format and basic outline, give two examples of applications, and describe the key “vision-building blocks,” which the authors present as a strategy buffet in the concluding chapter. The authors mark subtopic sections by number; that is, the chapter number followed by the subtopic section number. This is invaluable when using the book as a reference and helpful resource. In addition, there are shaded box inserts that give helps and clarification for major points made in each chapter. Some inserts are titled “Illustration” and marked by a small artist’s brush icon; these give real-life experiences or examples that support or clarify an important topic. The other inserts are titled “Toolbox” and marked by a small wrench icon; these give the

“how-to” for implementing specific points in the chapters and in some cases give step-by-step instructions for specific strategies.

Part I gives the theoretical overview; Part II deals with motivating language learners through vision; and in Part III the authors explain the importance of motivation and vision in the lives of teachers. A brief review does not do justice to a book packed with firmly grounded theories explained in practical and understandable terms, helpful explanations that flesh out key points, and instructions for implementation. Yet two notable and timely recommendations for guiding language learners into developing motivation through vision are: 1) visual and narrative tasks and 2) the power of virtual worlds.

The visual and narrative tasks strategy involves guiding learners into envisioning their L2 ideal selves. A simple prompt is having learners come up with five wishes that start with, “If I could speak English really well, I would” Following this, the learners look for images that represent those five wishes and cut out or copy and paste the images into a portfolio. Other suggestions for visual and narrative tasks are: 1) writing a vision journal, 2) conducting a ‘creative visual survey’, and 3) telling their stories creatively in a group setting.

The power of virtual worlds incorporates application of creating a virtual world by allowing “mental images of future selves . . . to act as powerful arenas for strengthening language learners’ L2 selves by making the constituent images more vivid, elaborate, and in some sense more ‘real’” (p. 78). This strategy involves interacting with others by creating personal avatars that depict the ideal self, starting as text-based material, and then moving into communication with other participants.

In the chapters focusing on teachers, the authors deal with recalling prior learning experiences, engaging with values, moral purposes, and teaching philosophies, and then using the same strategies that the authors explain in the “motivating language learners through vision” chapters. Values and philosophies deal with how we treat students in and out of the classroom, what we tell our students, decision-making, what is upsetting, what causes us to feel good about what we are doing, what we put into the curriculum, and what we leave out. These guide teachers into re-igniting the flame of their vision and finding their ideal teacher selves. The authors repeat their concept of vision and relate it to teaching: “We have emphasised throughout this book that the idea of vision implies a sensory experience generated through our imagination of what can be, and it is this image that ultimately moves us to action” (p. 136).

In addition to the easy-to-read formatting of the text and the two types of inserts that clarify and explain, the authors' conclusion includes a four-page outline of the book's key points in table form. Not surprisingly, the first section is titled "Focus on the Students" and the second section is "Focus on the Teacher." The authors give the main vision-building blocks that form their text and include a how-to explanation of each building block. Here is an example from the "Focus on the Students" section (reproduced from p. 157):

CREATING THE LANGUAGE LEARNER'S VISION (Chapter 2):	The logical first step in a visionary motivational programme is to help learners to create desired future selves, that is, construct visions of whom they could become as L2 users and what knowing an L2 could add to their lives.
--	---

Having an idea of goals and where to go in a teaching situation without a plan of action is a *daydream* and according to the old proverb, "Action without vision is nightmare." Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's handbook guides ESL/EFL educators into vision with action in a readable and practical style. This book could revolutionize the teaching of teacher educators and ESL/EFL instructors alike. It will prod you into careful reflection on your own vision and motivation as you develop strategies for facilitating imagery, envisioning, and motivation in your students. In this way, you will avoid both actionless daydreams and visionless nightmares.

Eleanor J. Pease (ejpease2005@yahoo.com) semi-retired in 2009, when she and her husband moved to a retirement community in Fort Myers, Florida, U.S.A. She recently concluded 19 years of teaching for Nyack College, and continues to teach online as an adjunct for Spring Arbor University in Michigan.

Learning for the Love of God: A Student's Guide to Academic Faithfulness

Donald Opitz and Derek Melleby. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2014.
Pp. xv + 127, \$14.99 (paper), ISBN 9781587433504.

Reviewed by Kazue Suzuki, Biola University

What does academic faithfulness look like in the life of a college student? This is a question authors Donald Opitz and Derek Melleby thoroughly tackle in *Learning for the Love of God: A Student's Guide to Academic Faithfulness*. This is a second edition following their first, titled *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*. While there are many resources for teachers that explore the intersection of faith and academics, this text is designed to

thoughtfully and practically communicate with graduating high school students or newly enrolled college students of the Christian faith. There are eight chapters centering on academic faithfulness, each ending with a list of questions to help readers to better process the content.

Summary

This book begins with a preface and introduction stating Opitz and Melleby's convictions and intentions for their work. Discipleship is a key term in these sections, and academic faithfulness is described as a significant aspect of it; all disciples of Christ, not a select few, are called to bring glory to Christ through our thinking and learning. Thus faith and learning are not, and should not be, mutually exclusive.

The first chapter titled "Wide-Eyed" presents the reality new college students face: the uncertainty and anticipation of the unknown. The two common expectations described here are 1) beer and circus and 2) grades and accolades. There is also a third category that Christians may fall into: all for one. While the first two expectations involve dissonance with the central purposes of academics or idolization, the third equates devotion to Jesus to a disregard for academics. Instead of falling into these different expectations, the authors present the alternative route of offering the "whole self" and being transformed by Jesus Christ in every area of life, including academics (p. 7).

In chapter two, titled "Babylon U?" (Babylon University), the authors compare the college experience to what Daniel might have experienced in Babylon. Due to the effects of sin, Christians are to be aware of deception even in higher education. To achieve this, believers must be transformed by the gospel instead of conforming to the pervasive culture of college, in the same way that Daniel contended for his faith in the Lord in the midst of Babylonian rule. Yet while resisting the enemy is important, the authors are careful to highlight the importance of being faithful in learning from the cultural context one is in with humility.

In chapter three, "Believing is Seeing," the authors posit that because believing leads to seeing, it is crucial to become reflective learners. This entails understanding one's worldview, or the "perceptual framework" through which one views the world (p. 25). In the process of deeply reflecting on one's beliefs, believers are to hold a biblical worldview and see everything else through it. A framework of the biblical story is also introduced, namely creation, fall, redemption, and consummation (C-F-R-C). Chapter four, "A Story-Framed Life," expands on how the Bible is a nonfiction story rather than a mere model. Furthermore, as believers, we are

who we are because of the stories we tell and the songs we sing, which connect to the Story. The authors highlight the importance of being nurtured by and living out the biblical story in the midst of other stories, such as modernity and postmodernity.

Chapter five, “Fish-Eyed Learning,” or panoramic learning, explores how to live out the biblical story instead of simply knowing about it. The chapter begins with the authors discussing the intersection of the Christian mind with character and action. Instead of being a completely separate component, the Christian mind is described as relational, and ultimately points to a relationship with the Creator. Christian praxis is explored by revisiting the C-F-R-C framework. For example, in terms of redemption, believers are called to take part in the redemptive work of Christ by taking hold of the good news of the kingdom and the ultimate restoration of creation. Although living out the biblical story does not require being a theologian, the authors challenge readers by suggesting that without an understanding of the major biblical themes, our minds cannot be transformed into Christ’s likeness.

In chapter six, “Four-ied Learning,” the authors discuss four *i*’s that correspond to the biblical framework: integration (creation), idolatry (fall), investment (redemption), and imagination (consummation). These four *i*’s are used to help learners connect the biblical story with learning. From making connections to the Creator to practicing living out “what will be in a world that is not yet,” the sense of hope and courage pervades this chapter (p. 66). The chapter ends with an interview with a student named Herbie who explains his journey towards academic faithfulness, where belief transforms into worldview and action.

Chapter seven, “Embodying the Outrageous Idea,” explores practical ways of embodying real change from the inside out. The first way is to connect up, which deals with one’s relationship with Christ. The second way is to connect out to other believers as well as those who are making an impact on society in various areas of discipline. The point about connecting with those whose beliefs and religions may differ from ours acts as a reminder to not simply huddle with other believers. Lastly, the authors explain the manner in which to connect up and out: being good listeners, seeing connections between the world and the Word, and being patient learners.

Chapter eight, “Chutes and Ladders,” begins with the reminder that there are always ups and downs in the Christian life, and academic faithfulness is not an easy task. The authors explore the concept of “double study,” which consists of not only studying the academic

content, but studying Scripture and Christian work as well (p. 86). Additionally, this chapter includes practical ways of living out academic faithfulness that are often discussed in English language teaching, including communicating to different audiences orally and in writing, and intrinsic motivation. This final chapter is followed by a conclusion which reinforces the fact that it is not college as an institution itself, but rather through intentional decisions and efforts that one can attain meaningful learning. Lastly, there are three appendixes. Appendix I, “Deeper,” lists helpful resources for further study in categories such as “The Biblical Story” and “Calling/Vocation.” Appendix II, “Liturgies for Learning,” and Appendix III, “Student Responses,” can be useful for encouraging reflective thinking.

Commentary

In reading each subsequent chapter, my response of “amen” increased. Although a part of me wished that I had read this book back when I was graduating high school, I believe that many of the key ideas concerning academic faithfulness pertain to Christian learners of various fields, including graduate students and teacher educators. The manner in which this book is written is casual in nature, but the core truths are profound and applicable for many. Specifically, I appreciated the discussion on interdisciplinary learning, the biblical perspective, and patience.

Critical thinking is often the pedagogy of many teachers, and I believe that interdisciplinary learning is a large part of it. I could not agree more that, as Christian students, deeply reflecting on the matter at hand should not end there, but lead to seeing things in relation to each other, and ultimately the Creator. This concept can be applicable for Christian educators as well; perhaps shaping lessons and curriculum in a way that encourages students to link different topics and fields together will lead to the wonder of the Creator.

This interdisciplinary approach cannot be separated from having a biblical perspective and worldview. I appreciated the explanation of the biblical framework and importance of knowing biblical truths. Although simply knowing is not the end in itself, “sanctification of our intellects” is a crucial component of whole transformation (Grudem, 2000, p. 756). Christian students and educators alike can benefit and be transformed by grasping the biblical perspective and live as disciples of Christ. I especially agree with the authors’ point about consummation, or ultimate restoration, and how this can and should be applied to academic faithfulness. This not only gives us a grander view of God’s plan for creation but adds depth to our stories and the

stories of others with whom we interact in our learning and teaching. As the authors expressed, learning “ought to be a way to love God and neighbor, a way to care for creation and develop healthy communities.” (p. 58).

Patience in learning, growing, and sharing the gospel was a theme I found sobering and beneficial both as a graduate student and as a teacher. The concept of being faithful in the work we are given and letting that be the main source for sharing the Christian faith is something Snow (2001) holds to as well, as he claims that “Rather than being incidental to witness or even evangelism, the quality of [Christian English teachers’] teaching work is the primary vehicle through which they share the love of God with their students, and also the strongest and clearest statement they make about what a Christian should be like” (p. 65). I believe that this holistic concept could be emphasized just as much as, if not more than, evangelizing with words – for both Christian students and educators in English language teaching.

Ultimately, academic faithfulness is no easy task, as the authors claim in the final chapter. This book is not necessarily a guidebook that will automatically lead readers to successfully achieve academic faithfulness, but an arrow pointing to essential factors that can be studied and applied further. I recommend it to all Christian students and teachers who seek to explore the intersection of faith and learning and encompass holistic change beginning with the mind.

References

- Grudem, W. (2000). *Systematic theology: An introduction to biblical doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Snow, D. (2001). *English teaching as Christian mission: An applied theology*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

Kazue Suzuki (kazue.suzuki@biola.edu) is completing her M.A. TESOL at Biola University and teaches English as a second language at Bethesda University in Anaheim, California, U.S.A.