

**Διδακτικόν: Rethinking Theological Education: the Preparation and Assessment
of Pastors in the Majority World of Oral Learners**

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It is a great joy to gather with Christians and scholars to consider ecclesiology, and specifically pastoral preparation and assessment in the Majority World. For years, my work consisted of the church, the pulpit, the seminary classroom, and the Christian college lecture hall. Generally speaking, we study, write, lecture, publish, and preach from the Word to communities who gather around the written Scriptures, who share access to centuries of developed literature and scholarship devoted to the study and proclamation of the Bible.

Over five hundred years ago, Gutenberg's movable type printing press changed the world. For thousands of years the written Word of God had been held in the hands of a priestly few. Since Sinai, the people of God held the Word in their hearts by memory and lived by gathering and listening—in tents, then synagogues, homes, and churches. The discovery that allowed duplication and distribution leveraged on the closed system a new liberty to study, translate, transmit, and transfer the Word of God to the masses like no other time in history.

Today, I find myself in different place. Far from the university or seminary classroom, I serve pastors among the poorest, hardest to reach people groups on earth: those who have no access to the written Scriptures. I serve the church and train pastors in countries and cultures who live without the gift of functional literacy. In this context, ecclesiology often exists without free exercise protections, where public worship is restricted to small, private meetings in huts, under trees, and in villages of the undeveloped world. Many of these brothers will never see a seminary or Bible college classroom. In a word, my work is oral. I work among oral cultures with leaders

who develop tools to train pastors and plant churches among peoples who have no access to the Bible. In these programs, our partners' communication preferences more closely align with the sons of Jacob in the Torah or the elders spread across Ephesus and Crete. In the world of oral learners, how may our communication and instruction be modified for the content to be heard, understood, and shared through communities and leaders who have no functional access to the printed page?

First: a true story. A few months ago, I had the privilege of worshipping and leading a new church plant in the fourth world among an oral culture. One of the most exciting and humbling aspects of my job includes serving communities like the one that met that day, under a tree (quite literally, a church plant). Listen to their story of deliverance when they heard the Word.

Hours away from the nearest village, this small tribe of unreached and unengaged people had been considered outcasts, separated by a tribal rift that alienated them from family and friends. Four months before, this tribe had never heard the name of Jesus. Four months before, they believed in one, great god, but they had no idea He had a Name. They prayed to the heavens and shared a common hope that some day, someone would come and tell them how God would deliver them from their suffering and pain. One day last summer, a young leader named Thuo* from a neighboring village became burdened. He knew the tribe next to him shared the same heart language. He knew they shared the same genealogy. He knew they came from the same father. He understood the reasons the tribe had been excommunicated. What he couldn't comprehend was why no one had made the short walk over to explain that things had changed.

Several years back, his tribe heard the life-changing story of the gospel through our orality program. They heard how Jesus came to lay down His life for those who were broken

and filled with shame. He heard the Word from God in his own language through an indigenous leader who shared health and humanitarian content alongside of the Great Story of God and how He served and gave His life to heal the nations. His tribe had been changed forever. Jesus transformed his community.

Then, one day Thuo awakened to realize that his neighbors had not been changed. Their children were dying from preventable disease. They had not seen. They had not heard. In a word, he saw they were lost, and he knew he had the Word that could set them free. When he arrived, he explained his desire for them to see and hear what God had done to heal his tribe. He patiently described the new health they had enjoyed from the news they had heard. Principles on herd management, disease prevention, and new health and hygiene practices changed life in their village. He told them stories of planting crops and harvesting grain. He showed the results of how this news had changed their lives.

Then, they heard stories from creation. He told them about God and the covenants. He told them about the prophets. And finally, they heard the story of the Promised One. Four months before, this oral tribe had no hope. Four months before, they sang and danced to a god with no name. Four months before, one brave soul walked across a border built on racism, hate, and scorn.

Today, they gather together under a tree to hear songs and share narratives of how He spoke and the stars and planets took their shape. They tell one another the stories of how God chose Adam and Noah and Abraham and Joseph and the fathers. They heard of how He chose Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and “the wife of Uriah.” Most of all, they tell their children of how God chose them. Today, they worship their Creator, and He knows them all by name. Four months earlier, Thuo was a neighbor who woke up with a burden and walked next door.

One brief note: missionaries and bible training resources have been distributed in the area for over 60 years. While the Bible still has not been translated into their heart language, missionaries have seen some seed bear fruit, and they have planted churches that preach from the national language text, all with little change in the culture of church that was familiar to them. They sing hymns from English translated into the state language, preach in suits, and speak of God from a Book—all foreign concepts to an oral people. The local missionaries had not considered the implications of communicating using literate, foreign methods among this oral culture. Their work saw little fruit. Their work bore few disciples, fewer pastors. Things began to change when the local leaders implemented oral methods.

This paper will share our journey and explore the contemporary challenges facing evangelical ministry in the Majority world, and especially evangelical theological education, in the context of oral learners who have no access to the written Scriptures in their mother tongue. Specifically, we will explore the world of orality and its implications for theological educators, giving specific focus to tools for assessment of oral preference learners. Formal study often depends upon the gift of literacy. In the Majority World, oral preference learners have leaned heavily on similar literate preparation methods for ministry. How have these methods affected preparation in ministry for those with variant literacy levels and preferences?

Informed by biblical stewardship, we seek the wise use of human, social, and financial resources in theological education. Consistent with Kingdom values, the discipline of assessment yields ongoing transformation at every level, including the instructor. These evaluation tools provide the data each partner seeks to confirm areas of progress and correct areas where more attention may be needed.

Like no other tool, the discipline of monitoring and assessment of oral preference learners serves as one of the most effective tools for preparation in ministry. As we understand the world oral cultures, we continue to reform and refine our methods of assessment. During our time, we will discuss recommended course corrections for continual instructional improvement.

Rather, I want to us to consider the world of oral cultures—the world into which the Scriptures were delivered, and I would ask you to understand the task of training qualified pastors from oral cultures who will shepherd among flocks who have no functional access to the Word in their heart language. Finally, from our time together we will consider whether the condition of the church among these distant cultures may shape the course of our vocation and what application we may draw from our time together.

Define the Challenge

The mission of God has spread to more people than any other time in history. With innumerable resources, strategies, and technological development, the expanse of the message of Christ has nearly limitless scope. Yet, to date there are 7,102 living languages spoken in the world and nearly 2,000 language groups have no resource for Scripture translation. Of these language groups, only 531 have access to the entire Bible in their language. If the Word of God is the ordained means of the communication and application of the gospel to every listener, of training pastors, planting churches, then too many have limited or no access to the grace of God revealed in his Word.

The limits of access of the Word are perhaps more complex than mere physical access. Among those who have access to the Scriptures, many remain limited in their level of understanding its meaning and implications. Dramatic differences in discourse preferences between source and receptor significantly affect comprehension. From the early days of the

Gutenberg press, the printed page changed the ways and means of education, preparation, and communication for those impacted by its advance. The spread of the press gradually transformed societies and culture for centuries. Hiebert, an expert in cultural anthropology explains, “Literacy has molded our thinking, producing patterns of thought that seems perfectly natural to us, but which are strange to those in non-literate societies.”¹

Many cultures, however, experienced little or no transformation ushered by the print-centered progress that the gifts of literacy and modernity birthed. In spite of the advances brought by the book in the West, many continue to transmit knowledge primarily through aural or visual media. Literacy profoundly affects societies, moving learners from concrete thought forms to more abstract scales. Outside of the influence of books, oral communities share knowledge, preserve tradition, and transmit media through primarily oral means. The growth and proliferation of books has transformed our culture, changing thought patterns, communication forms, and the means of knowledge transmission over generations and centuries.

While the printed page transformed the systems that laid the foundations for the Western thought and progress, it never removed our basic, natural inclination for a good story, song, drama, and other forms of oral communication. In short, humanity has remained a predominantly oral people.

At the end of over a half millennium of the printing press, less than a third of the world functions within the print-centered preference of the educated West. Today, hundreds of millions live among cultures defined as “primary oral peoples,” groups who have no written language (orthography). Many mistakenly identify these communities as distant and removed from civilization, but some primary oral communities exist among the planet’s most advanced nations.

Beyond primary oral peoples, many global people groups have access to written language but the majority of their populations use other means to learn. “Secondary oral peoples” may be defined as those who live among cultures with access to literacy but acquire knowledge by non-literate means, either by choice or ability.ⁱⁱ As mentioned above, secondary orality influences the most progressive populations and as technology spreads communication into bursts of text, thoughts, emojis, oral preferences transforms the mind’s ability to conceive, construct, store, and communicate complex literate thoughts. Together, primary and secondary oral peoples total over 5.7 billion learners challenged with the burden of reading and understanding the written Word of God. If we fail to understand their means of knowledge transmission and comprehension, then we may fail to connect to their community of listeners with the Word of God.

Secondary oral people prefer learning through non-literate activity. As the reading of significant literary texts declines in the West, secondary orality rises. Among highly literate communities (like a theological education consultation), many are shocked to hear that the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) administered by the US Department of Education in the 1990s discovered that 48-51% of adults in the US scored at the lowest two literacy testing levels. Similarly, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) from 1994-1998 tested adults in twenty advanced Western countries, including UK, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Denmark, Canada, and Switzerland, uncovered similar results.

Let this statistics unsettle you: 58% of the U. S. adult population never read another book after high school. Beyond that, 42% of U. S. university graduates never read another book.ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. adults spend on average over seven hours a day engaging in some form visual/oral (non-literary) media and less than 17 minutes reading of any form. How may that transform our teaching and training methods?

Bridges to Oral Christian Communication

From the time of the Reformation, Christian communication models have developed through literate means. In fact, Christians have led the great literacy movements as a result of the desire for people to read the Bible for themselves. Missionaries and theological educators use the methods they have learned, practiced, and mastered. But communication preferences for the Majority World may remain oral and distant from the well-developed methods of the learned professor or lecturer. While training for us may include highly literate forms, understanding orality may change the way we deliver the message.

The oral communication model necessarily involves the receptor-oriented act of teaching through worldview-sensitive means that avoid creating or requiring dependency on the instructor and literate methods. Concrete thought patterns are often considered too simple or undeveloped for highly literate communicators. Instead of concrete thoughts, highly literate peoples may deduce concepts and principles through complex literate discourse development. As a result, highly literate laborers may prefer models of communication derived from those abstract constructs. What barriers may prevent effective communication for oral learners?

First, listeners with oral preferences learn through concrete thought patterns that correspond to situational and experiential models. Models of these oral preference patterns are seen throughout the Scriptures in the devices employed by authors of narrative, wisdom, poetry, and other genres. Torah, Prophets, Writings, Gospel, and much of the Epistles contain oral-preference content. Instead of conceptual and principial models of the highly literate, the Story of the text unfolds and the example preserved in the Scriptures may serve as a formative example for our modern mission.

Second, oral listeners prefer the use of speech tools that serve to make discourse more memorable. Among the most basic of memory tools among primary and secondary orals is the use of memory tools. Memorable words expand beyond the unit to include the use of employing cadence, rhythmic patterns, repetition, alliteration, assonance, and other literary elements. For millennia, God's communicators have used devices that aid in memory for their audiences to carry with them as they depart. Beyond the simple work of memorable words, oral peoples prefer epithetic expressions, thematic compilations, and other formulaic expressions that are grouped or patterned for retention and recall.

Third, organizational methods differ among oral and highly literate peoples. While literates often classify objects by the nature of the object in taxonomic categories, orals prefer the object's relationship to the experiential, to the whole. While abstract concepts drive the categories of the literate, concrete relationship drives the organization of the oral.^{iv}

Fourth, the worldview of oral peoples is inherently tangible. When considering the worldview of the highly literate thinker, complex abstractions define and categorize thoughts beyond the "real world," but the oral thinker conceives of a unified world where all problems are defined and solved through personal and collective experience. Examples of these experiential, non-analytical models include the use of folk narrative, folkart, poetry, myth, dirge, historiography, legend, proverb, riddle, praise song, and drama. These forms allow for one's worldview to be formed through history, past and present, historical and fictional.

Finally, the epistemic basis for oral peoples is biased toward the events of this world and their experience in it. Rather than communicating within the abstract concepts of syllogism and other constructs, the oral learner communicates knowledge through related experience and

historical models of truth acquisition. Orals are not illogical or pre-logical, but rather root their logic in experience, history, and other material forms that may be transmitted as experience.

Orality and Effective Communication

I would like to move and address our process of preparing oral learners to serve the church as pastors. In all of these tasks, I hope to address the challenges of our work with oral cultures, moving the dialogue forward for the concrete benefit of oral learners and any potential role one may fill in the future of serving the Majority World church.

It is important to discuss a few matters before proceeding further. First, I resist binary notions of literacy and orality. Binary discussions of these communication preferences can be unfortunate and counterproductive. To be sure, literacy is a gift. Researchers and scholars are beginning to understand the complexity of the interface between orality and literacy, especially in advancing world contexts.

Second, I am a hermeneutical realist. Communication is not neutral. Translation is not neutral. Hermeneutics is not neutral. Theology is not neutral. Teaching is not neutral. One's worldview shapes every aspect of human understanding. Each individual interprets meaning in light of the "horizons of expectation" that have been shaped by the communities to which the individual belongs (Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 65).

Thus, the interests of the interpretive community shape all interpretation. Religion, family life, education, traditions, economics, and social structures all inform interpretive ethos. Just as cultures and languages may shape the translation of the Word of God, Bible translations can contour the way a people within a culture live out the faith. Ministers, missionaries, and theological educators are no exception. Equally, oral learners are shaped by oral culture in every aspect of their existence.

Preparing Pastors in Oral Cultures through Christological Service

Theological education serves the church. As a manifestation of the body of Christ, theological education should reveal God's character and attributes. As God, Jesus lived as a man among humanity (incarnation). The Logos revealed himself to the cosmos through the person of a local man. He embraced local culture, spoke the local language, and lived with audience understanding in mind. Theological education is incarnational. Just as Jesus revealed himself in human flesh, theological education for the church should dwell among the locals, proclaiming truth through local culture, custom, language, and principle. Theological education should be contextual. The Logos revealed himself in a specific linguistic and cultural context, as a first century Jewish man in Roman Palestine. Theological education best serves the church when it includes incarnate and contextually appropriate communication and instructional methods.

Orality Leadership Development Program

From this receptor culture reality, please allow me to present the model of leader development among oral cultures I currently implement around the world in non-formal, oral contexts. Moved by an understanding of God's accommodation in revelation, it is my hope that global leaders and scholars in this context would strive to build programs shaped by local socio-political, economic, cultural, and linguistic preferences.

Program Scope: Our current oral culture pastor training program begins as a three-cycle (approximately 3.5 years) program that seeks to develop and train oral leaders in each language group. From that genesis, we pray for the program to facilitate daily work of evangelism, discipleship, and new church plants over the 3.5-year time frame.

The program starts with an indigenous leadership team (ILT) of experienced leaders who will be responsible for initiating the training program. The ILT will identify the initial existing pastors (ExPs) to begin the program.

Content Development: Through oral culture programs, we serve communities in local partnerships that provide indigenous pastors and leaders an orality-based platform for existing church leadership development. In each cycle of our program, we ask our indigenous leaders to consider the biblical, theological, and ministry needs of the pastors who emerge through their listening groups.

In each of the three cycles of the program, the leadership team seeks to follow the flow of the biblical canon, while addressing the major domains identified in local, regional, national, and Western theological educational curricula. In addition to the biblical content that will train pastors, humanitarian issues in the community will be identified and addressed with community content (see below).

In Cycle 1, the program begins with the Pentateuch and Gospels. After weeks of discussing local worldview, orality, and cultural learning preferences, local leaders walk from creation through the major moves of God's Word in the Torah. They learn of creation, sin, curse, and covenant from Genesis-Deuteronomy. Local pastors are introduced to the Old Testament, and through locally recorded audio content, local pastors hear content and discuss theology from the Word of God.

As the pastors transition from the Torah to Gospels, the leaders create oral content from select Gospel stories as they focus on the life and ministry of Jesus as Son of God and fulfiller of God's covenant to all creation. Through their time, they learn of the New Testament and the

compilation of God's Word to the people of God, the church. They connect the content of God's creation and covenant with the One man who fulfills all of the promises made in God's Word.

In Cycle 1, they receive immediate application of their studies through weekly listening groups where they hear and discuss content from the Word of God. Each pastor applies that knowledge through daily sharing the Word of God (evangelism) within the tribe, village or local community. Also, every pastor is called to walk with a group of engaged listeners (discipleship) who may be identified as emerging pastors. Finally, each pastor practices the oral culture methods in the program within existing churches (proclamation) and in their family life (family ministry).

In Cycle 2, the program moves through the Prophets and the Epistles. In the Prophets, the pastors learn of the fulfillment of God's promise to give Israel the land of covenant. Pastors learn of the moral and spiritual decline of Israel's leaders, the storyline of God's faithfulness, repentance, and the rise of the remnant who follow the mission of God.

After the Prophets, the pastors hear of the history of the early church from Luke's account of the apostles, as God raises up the church. Here, pastors continue to integrate their faith with the accounts learned from the prophets and handed to them from the apostles in the Word of God (Deut 6, 1 Cor 15, 2 Tim 2). They hear a summary overview of each of the epistles, including some of the local context that demanded the need for epistles to the church.

In Cycle 3, the pastors continue to build content from the Word of God through the Writings and the through learning and singing from God's Songs, the wisdom of God from the Proverbs, and the story of Job as they hear how God tests and delivers His follower through suffering. They learn of God's plan through love and covenant, and they hear the story of how He delivers His followers through difficult times. Pastors listen and learn how God delivers from

division, the fall, and sin, into unity, restoration, and forgiveness. In the remaining books of the New Testament, the pastors continue to learn about God's work through His people.

From Moses, the Prophets, the Writings, the Gospels, the Epistles, and Revelation, the history of God's salvation and redemption is communicated to oral culture pastors who learn the structure, people, and themes from the whole counsel of Scriptures. Throughout the program, we focus on developing oral theology for oral peoples.

From this biblical content, pastors learn from their leaders and mentors the practice of proper interpretation and application. Additionally, through the structure of the program, the pastors hold one another accountable through their network. They challenge one another to personal spiritual disciplines and faithful ministry. As they walk, they address pastoral and church challenges from the Word through one another.

Community Development

The work of the gospel is holistic, transformative work. In every program, we recognize the spiritual and humanitarian needs in each local community. From the earliest discussions, the leaders of the pastor training program engage in dialog to discover and address these challenges at the local level. Since the fall, God has worked to redeem and rescue (whole gospel) every broken area of creation (whole earth) through the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth.

Toward this end, the ILT develops and distributes progressive content useful for the community. As a result, the pastors learn and model an incarnational missiology, making disciples who may be seen as resources of Truth and Light in the community.

As an oral strategies ministry, we listen to local expressions of need in receptor communities.

From clean water, sanitation, health challenges, disease prevention, herdsmanship, animal

husbandry, or another community need, we seek local partnerships that may generate real change through emerging pastors/church planters in every phase of our program.

Assessment and Oral Learners

Through oral cultures programs, I serve oral communities through local partnerships that provide indigenous leaders an orality-based platform for existing church leadership development, discipleship, outreach and evangelism, and planting new churches. In every program, we share with the local partners a common vision for incarnational shepherds who are biblically sound and are planting/serving oral-culture communities engaged in whole person ministry. The following considerations flow from observations and experiences from assessed programs.

Informed by biblical stewardship, we seek the wise use of resources—personal, social, and financial. Consistent with Kingdom values, the never-ending discipline of assessment in each of our oral learner programs yields ongoing transformation at every level.

Internal and third party assessment serves each partnership, measuring impact in three domains: cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes), and behavior (practices). Every program seeks life-changing transformation. Evaluations provide the data each partner seeks to confirm areas of progress and correct areas where more attention may be needed. Each third party assessment measures a program's impact in areas of ministry and humanitarian content.

Requiring on-going monitoring and third party assessment means someone from the outside analyzes each project executed at the local level. Before continuing subsequent phases of partnership, the third party assessor analyzes local data from indigenous interviews conducted with the oral learners and the communities in which they work and minister. Like no other tool, this discipline consistently serves as one of the most effective learning tools for ministry among oral preference cultures.

As we work among oral communities, we continue to reform and refine our methods of assessment. From earlier empirical models delivered from Western evaluators, we are journeying into new domains of oral methods of evaluation. Our evaluation methods have learned from the following evaluation resources: Participatory Narrative Inquiry, Anecdote Circles, Contribution Analysis, Performance Story Reporting, Grounded Theory, Outcome Mapping, Collaborative Outcomes Reporting, Participatory Action Research, Rapid Rural Appraisal, and Most Significant Change.

Both internal monitoring and third party assessment helps us improve ministry to oral learners. Like an external audit, assessment lends objectivity to partnership and its development. In this way, the partners implement mutual transparency and accountability. Both provide structure to program execution, offering on-going recommended course corrections for ongoing program improvement. As we continue to serve oral cultures, we continue to learn from the following structures in our programs. Each approach captures different data, and the instruments included below may be adapted or shaped, as each provides diverse feedback for program partners and key stakeholders.

1. Participatory Narrative Inquiry

1.1. Summary: Participatory Narrative Inquiry is an approach to helping groups of people gather and work with stories to make sense of complex situations for better decision making. PNI emphasizes raw stories of personal experience, a diversity of perspectives and experiences, the interpretation of stories by those who told them, catalytic pattern exploration, and narrative group sensemaking (Kurtz).

1.2. Website:

<http://www.storycoloredglasses.com/p/participatory-narrative-inquiry.html>

1.3. Assessment Example:

1.3.1. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2001.01719.x/abstract>

1.3.2. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2007.00510.x/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>

2. Anecdote Circles

2.1. Summary: An Anecdote Circle is a group of people (no more than ten) who share

common experiences. They might have performed the same role, worked on projects together, or formed part of a larger cohort within the organization. These people are peers of one another. An anecdote circle creates one important dynamic—through hearing the stories of colleagues, others remember their own stories. This creates a conducive environment for storytelling (Callahan).

2.2. Website:

http://dfaq.uct.ac.za/ngambi/Papers-reworking/Narrative_to_size_up_situation_SCallahan.pdf

2.3. Assessment Sample: [http://dfaq.uct.ac.za/ngambi/Papers-](http://dfaq.uct.ac.za/ngambi/Papers-reworking/Narrative_to_size_up_situation%20-%20SCallahan.pdf)

[reworking/Narrative_to_size_up_situation%20-%20SCallahan.pdf](http://dfaq.uct.ac.za/ngambi/Papers-reworking/Narrative_to_size_up_situation%20-%20SCallahan.pdf)

3. Contribution Analysis

3.1. Summary: Contribution Analysis is an approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in program assessment. It offers a step-by-step approach designed to help managers, researchers, and policymakers arrive at conclusions about the contribution their program has made (or is currently making) to particular outcomes. The essential value of contribution analysis is that it offers an approach designed to reduce uncertainty about the contribution the intervention is making to the observed results through an increased understanding of why the observed results have occurred (or not!) and the roles played by the intervention and other internal and external factors (Mayne).

3.2. Website:

http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/contribution_analysis; <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/175356/0116687.pdf>

3.3. Assessment Sample:

http://www.dww.cz/docs/attribution_through_contribution.pdf

4. Performance Story Reporting

4.1. Summary: Performance Story Reporting process provides a structured approach to outcomes evaluation and consists of a five part participatory process, and a six part report structure. The process steps used to develop the report are as follows: planning workshop, data Trawl, social inquiry process, outcomes panel, and evaluation summit workshop. During the planning workshop, stakeholders created a program logic model, which diagrammatically represents the hierarchy of the program's activities, outputs and outcomes and the links between them (O'Connor).

4.2. Website and Assessment Sample:

<http://www.conservationa.org.au/files/emuwren/Performance%20Story%20-%20MLRSEW%20and%20FPS%20RP.pdf>

5. Grounded Theory

5.1. Summary: Grounded Theory is a general research design in which the assessor creates from local data (quantitative or qualitative) a general theory of change, which arises from the local program data. The research design details strict data analysis protocols for the Grounded Theory process from participants who have experienced the program (Creswell).

5.2. Website: <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/59612/2/S05-05.pdf>

5.3. Assessment Sample:

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jMfVyU8ida4C&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=participatory+narrative+inquiry&ots=kSPRDkdMw9&sig=mgk175enb-M2rM74I9NifcblgPM#v=onepage&q=participatory%20narrative%20inquiry&f=false>

6. Outcome Mapping

6.1. Summary: A process-oriented methodology, Outcome Mapping uses graduated Progress Markers in order to determine how close program intervention came to achieving the desired outcome. These Progress Markers then form the basis for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation; they are developed in collaboration with Partners and collaboratively monitored.

6.2. Website: <http://outcomemapping.ca/resource/index.php?theme=3&action=search>
<http://www.dmeforpeace.org/discuss/dme-tip-when-use-outcome-mapping>;
http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_mapping

6.3. Assessment Sample:

<http://outcomemapping.ca/resource/index.php?theme=3&action=search>

7. Collaborative Outcomes Reporting

7.1. Summary: Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) is a participatory approach to impact evaluation based around a performance story that presents evidence of how a program has contributed to outcomes and impacts, that is then reviewed by both technical experts and program stakeholders, which may include community members (Mayne).

7.2. Website: <http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/cort>

7.3. Assessment Sample:

<http://contextinternationalcooperation.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/evaluationrevisitedconferencereport.pdf>

8. Participatory Action Research

8.1. Summary: Participatory Action Research (PAR) focuses on research and assessment that enables action at the local program level. A broad genre of assessment, PAR employs collective, self-reflective inquiry from local program participants who collect data and analyze data, thus determining appropriate corrective actions. The process utilizes an iterative reflective cycle of data collection, reflection, discussion, and community action—all at the local (indigenous) level (Jason).

8.2. Website and Assessment Sample: <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2003-88379-000/>

9. Rapid Rural Appraisal

9.1. Summary: Rapid Rural Appraisal is an empowerment survey methodology used in the developing world to formulate solutions and identify opportunities in existing program development. The assessment enables local participants to develop their own appraisal, analysis, and plans for program progress. Local participants discuss and develop context-appropriate program adjustment to reach mutually agreed upon outcomes and impact.

9.2. Website: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/w2352e/W2352E03.htm>

9.3. Assessment Sample:

<http://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/19896708163.html>

10. Most Significant Change

- 10.1. Summary: The most significant change (MSC) technique is a means of “monitoring without indicators,” a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of changes to be recorded and in analyzing the data collected. It is a form of assessment because it occurs throughout the program cycle and provides information to help people manage the program. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole. Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by ‘searching’ for project impact. Once changes have been captured, selected groups of people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes, and which they think is most significant of all. In large programs there may multiple levels at which SC stories are pooled and then selected. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact (Davies).
- 10.2. Website:
<http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>
- 10.3. Assessment Sample:
<http://mande.co.uk/special-issues/most-significant-change-msc/>

Assessment affirms oral cultures through Christ-centered accountability and the pursuit of more fruitful ministry. As a manifestation of the body of Christ, assessment in theological education should reveal God’s character and attributes through his body. Assessment serves the church when it includes incarnate and contextual strategies and methods that improve outcomes and impact in program communities. As we continue to serve oral cultures, may we follow Christ through pursuing the discipline of reflective, receptor-oriented assessment.

Let me share a final story: In Sudan, in the Darfur state, listen to a breakthrough in one of our programs. A leader says, “During our discussion time, there was an interesting debate on what language God speaks. Does He speak Arabic or English? Moslems emphasize Arabic and the Western missionaries always spoke God’s Word in English. After much discussion, I was

able to convince them that God speaks Fur, too.

After much discussion and debate, “One elder in amazement stood and in agreement says ‘I do not need this foreign language. From today on, I will talk to God in my language, in Fur.’

“This [revelation] marked the beginning of a breakthrough. After this interesting moment, we ended the discussion.... For the first time we had the session spoken in Fur. The story, dialogue, drama, and song were in Fur. We no longer needed Arabic.

“I wish you were there. These people for the first time heard a spiritual lesson in their own dialect. For the first time they sung a spiritual song in their own tongue. They discussed spiritual issues in their own language. For the first time they called to God in their own dialect, not in a foreign dialect. At the end they asked if they could pray to Wuo(God) in Fur. You could feel the liberation in them. When it came to retelling the story, they did it in Fur without interpretation.

“After these discussions, the church leaders gathered and agreed to change the language of their worship service (prayer, preaching, singing) from Arabic to Fur beginning next Sunday.”

Proposed Questions

In the spirit of local feedback and for our purposes in this consultation, I would like to offer some questions for your consideration:

1. What is your attitude toward literate and “non-literate” learners?
2. What is your knowledge of local learning preferences? What impact has this knowledge imposed on your design and delivery of curricula?
3. What impact may the practice of oral methods in instructional design have on learners and graduates?
4. Can one measure learner fulfillment and enjoyment in oral culture programs?
5. Can one confine group engagement with oral learners to typical teacher-pupil relations in participatory, inclusive model of oral culture ministry?
6. How does one measure and ensure the accuracy of oral culture content within a particular oral context?
7. Who defines the terms of authentic instructional contexts? Who measures and proposes course corrections?
8. How may one measure motivation and enthusiasm among oral learners?

9. In leadership development, what methods of formative feedback result in optimal local leader life change?
10. What role does instructor ethos play in leadership development?
11. What input should local partners have at the strategic and tactical level to be consistent with outcome-based approaches they are responsible for executing?
12. In what ways are you currently evaluating your instructional models?

As we serve our local partners, may we raise up humble shepherds who serve the brokenness of the unreached, unengaged cultures through oral methods. It is our prayer that every program contributes to the redemption of the whole community through the power of Christ and His care for all of creation.

Conclusion. Through the power of God's gospel, may we pursue together a shared common mission. For the thousands of languages without a single word from the Scriptures, for the 5.7 billion oral learners, for your families, students, friends, and for the world for whom Jesus came to live, speak, and died to save, may our communication and teaching look more like Him. May all of our service be conformed to His image, the Chief Servant, Shepherd, and King to every tribe, tongue, and nation, until He appears.

ⁱPaul Heibert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 134.

ⁱⁱFor an extended study of primary and secondary orality, its progress and effects, see Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (London: Routledge, 2002).

ⁱⁱⁱStatistics compiled by National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) study from statistics compiled in 2004. See <http://www.nea.gov/pub/readingatrisk.pdf> for more key findings.

^{iv}As an example, see A. R. Luria's famous use of the images for the hammer, saw, log, and hatchet among people groups in Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan. When the literate is asked to categorize the objects, the tools are selected and the wood remains. Oral peoples categorize the objects all together because the wood makes the "tools" useful. In other words, without the wood, there would be no use for tools. Because of their connection to personal experience, situational thinking, concrete terms, and experiential categories, no abstract concept of "tool" exclusive of the wood can be conceived.