PART II: DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 3

LEARNING STRATEGY

Theme and Learning Goals

Creation is constantly changing, and change is a part of creation's intelligent

design. Balance is maintained in nature by systems; systems pervade all of creation,

including human behavior and culture. Spirituality is not a static reality but a journey of

growth; conversion is a change, evangelism is a change, and learning is a change. Grace,

whether prevenient, justifying, or sanctifying, is a process of change; therefore, grace and

the gospel are always extraordinary, entering systems as foreign influences contrary to the

status quo. Change comes to a system first as new information, then as new decisions, and

finally as new behaviors. Obedience to the Great Commission requires understanding

systems and how to further change within systems of human culture; most planned change

initiatives fail.[1] Scientific, sociological study of systems, culture, and change, therefore, is

a valuable resource in forming an ecclesiology which seeks to reproduce the discipleship

system taught by Jesus in the New Testament. That discipleship system is designed with a

dual function. It overcomes resistance to change as it makes disciples in the manner

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[1]Peter M. Senge et al., *The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 5-6.

specified by the four requirements of the Great Commission.[2]

The gospel enters human social networks in four basic ways. Traditional church growth theory advocates a "person of peace" approach along networks of family and friends; two other forms of kinship are shared interests and geographical proximity.[3] A fourth approach, the diffusion of innovations, provides a scientific explanation for systemic change and explains how these social networking strategies function. The diffusion of innovations is concerned with "how to bring about change in a social structure and how to speed up the rate of adoption of that change."[4] The goal of this project is to provide simple, effective tools for the majority of individuals in the majority of churches in the ministry context to experience Jesus as Lord, become disciples and spread that experience through their relational networks as disciple makers. This chapter assumes a familiarity with concepts and terminology explained and referenced in the rest of the project in order to concisely present an implementation strategy.

Systems preserve current homeostasis. Systemic resistance to change is a primary barrier to the spread of the gospel.[5] Peter Senge's *Limits to Growth* systems archetype

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[2]Planned change is not normally a theme of dogmatic theology focused on unchanging, absolute truths. An evolving creation informing theology is a key concept, however, in process theology. Process theology, however, does not usually address issues of church growth theory and evangelism. Cf. John B. Cobb, Jr., *Process Theology*, http://www.processandfaith.org/resources/Cobb%20On%20Process% 20Theology.shtml (accessed June 13, 2007). Cf. John B. Cobb, Jr., *Wesley the Process Theologian*, www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1097 (accessed June 13, 2007).

[3]See pages 148-149 of this study guide for further discussion.

[4]Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995), 1. See pages 152-168 of this study guide for further discussion.

[5]Lyle E. Schaller, *The Interventionist* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 139-149. Systems prevent change and preserve homeostasis by excluding new people, new needs and new ideas in a homeostasis that does not make disciples. See pages 14-43 of this study guide for further discussion.

describes how systems limit church growth through the interaction of reinforcing and balancing processes.[6] Systems, by their nature, can only accept, support and promote changes that seem to have no chance of altering homeostasis. As all that is commonly known to be true supports homeostasis, a new paradigm of successful systemic change will be paradoxical, contrarian, and fiercely resisted. A second goal of this project is to prepare disciple-making tools which can operate without provoking systemic resistance to change.

"Innovators" and "Early Adopters" represent a "visionary minority" of 16% which functions as a reinforcing process trend for change; "Middle Adopters," "Late Adopters" and "Laggards" are a pragmatic majority functioning as a balancing process to preserve homeostasis and control 84% of the system's resources. Change can be halted at the transfer point between one diffusion category to another, and especially at "the chasm" that develops between the visionary minority and the pragmatic majority.[7] When the innovation crosses the chasm into the Middle Adopters, a period of rapid adoption known as the S-shaped diffusion curve "'takes off' at about 10-25% adoption, when interpersonal networks become activated so that a critical mass of adopters begins using an innovation."[8] This S-curve pattern is a signature characteristic of the successful adoption

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[6]Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 79-88, 95-104, 124-126, 227-232, 379-380, 389-390. All Senge systems archetypes are built from combinations of reinforcing and balancing processes. See pages 46-50, 100-102, 142-148, 152, 155, 159, 161-162, 170 of this study guide for further discussion..

[7]Geoffrey Moore, *Crossing the Chasm: Marketing and Selling High-Tech Products to Mainstream Customers*, Rev. ed. (New York: Collins, 2002), 5, 16-22, 55-59. Paul Wiefels, *The Chasm Companion: A Fieldbook to Crossing the Chasm and Inside the Tornado* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 34-41. These resources present a strategy for the market adoption of hi-tech or discontinuous innovations. Cf. Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 9-91. The gospel is a discontinuous innovation.

[8]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 12.

of an innovation.[9] Once a critical mass is achieved after crossing the chasm, large-scale,

rapid adoption of the innovation is inevitable. The great potential of applying the diffusion

of innovations to evangelism is for a genuine Lordship of Christ to spread rapidly from

less than 16% to more than 84% of a given people group, whether that people group is a

Sunday School class, a United Methodist Men's group, a local congregation, a small

town, a denomination, or an entire nation. This is the third goal.

Systems prevent change by ignoring the communication requirements of the

pragmatic majority. The chasm is a communication gap that develops between the

visionary minority and the pragmatic majority. Mass media channels can help create an

awareness of an innovation and primarily inform the visionary minority; adoption beyond

the chasm is relational, interpersonal and requires conversation.[10] It is helpful to imagine

the pragmatic majority as having a learning disability which prevents information from

entering their consciousness through the means most beloved of visionaries: speeches,

sermons, books, articles, the Internet and other forms of media. The visionary minority of

16% love abstract concepts, are interested in change and function as gatekeepers for new

information to enter the system; they continually monitor media and ideas in the world

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[9]Cf. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 313-324. Cf. Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 53-75. Cf. Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 119. The S-curve chain reaction along human networks is described in church growth as a "people movement" where people "become Christians as a wave of decisions for Christ sweeps through the group mind." Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe In Church Growth* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 2000), 117-119. For the same sociological event in epidemics and cultural fads, see Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2002).

[10]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 17-19, 23-37, 161-197, 281-334. Acceptance of an innovation is a process of communication that is "a two way process of convergence rather than as a one way, linear act in which one individual seeks to transfer a message to another in order to achieve certain effects." Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 6.

outside the system. The pragmatic majority are solely interested in the ongoing, smooth function of current homeostasis, have little interest in the outside world and are informed and influenced primarily by conversations with trusted peers and demonstrable positive benefits for adoption observed in peers. The chasm communication gap halts diffusion of an innovation beyond the visionary minority.

Systems prevent change by bottling up information within the visionary minority.[11] The visionary minority can become totally absorbed in their fascination for new ideas, research and analysis to the point of an addiction. A visionary playground can develop where the focus is endlessly communicating and enhancing the vision among themselves in a manner which will never reach anyone outside the visionary minority. Like a racetrack, the focus is on going faster and faster, around and around in circles.[12] Innovations do not automatically diffuse once they are accepted by the visionary minority. Often what seems to be a systemic change is only the trend within the visionary minority, which is soon abandoned in favor of the next new trend. Visionaries must become missionaries to the pragmatic majority for systemic change to occur.[13] The strategy must ensure the new ideas are brought home to the local church for adoption by the typical church member. The hunger for all things new in the visionary minority can be satisfied by shifting focus from

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[11]Chasm theory refers to this as the "early market." Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 17-33, 98-104.

[12]For an example of a visionary racetrack which ably informs the visionary minority of 16%, see the streaming video resource at Illinois Great Rivers Conference, *Ministry Revolution 24/7*, http://www.ministryrevolution.com (accessed May 12, 2007). Few local church members will access this resource; it cannot reach the pragmatic majority. The most famous Innovator racetrack is Xerox PARC.

[13]The chasm exists and homeostasis is preserved by the false assumption that once the visionary minority enthusiastically embrace a change, it will spread throughout the system. For an example, see Jon Berry and Ed Keller, *The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

new ideas to new people.

Systems prevent change by encouraging the visionary minority to bring information to the entire system at once. Innovations must diffuse through the framework from Innovators to Laggards in turn.[14] The innovation must quietly enter the Middle Adopters, or pragmatics, through a carefully prepared niche. Consensus for change is a contradiction in a diffusion of innovations understanding; seeking consensus prevents change.[15] Attempting to achieve consensus by publicizing the innovation among the pragmatic majority via media, preaching, presentation or debate guarantees failure by provoking resistance among those who are not ready to hear. In any vote, change will be defeated 84% to 16%. This is why any change presented in worship is fiercely resisted. Information about change must be brought to people only as they become interested.

Systems prevent change by tempting visionaries to apply pressure, thereby raising sufficient conflict and opposition in the balancing process to derail the visionary reinforcing process.[16] If pressure increases, resistance increases. Urgency and anxiety provoke resistance; standard visionary approaches to change deliberately provoke anxiety among the pragmatic majority and guarantee failure.[17] In order to succeed in systemic change, this strategy will need to avoid media dissemination except among the visionary minority and generate massive numbers of conversations among the pragmatic majority

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[14]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 14.

[15]The only concession necessary from the majority for systemic change to occur is freedom for a diversity that allows differentiation to exist (Acts 5:34-39).

[16]Cf. Senge, *Dance of Change*, 319-342, 346-349, 350-357.

[17]Examples: John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 35-49. Lyle Schaller, *The Change Agent* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 89-103.

without raising anxiety or disrupting the current homeostasis. This is not a small task.

Systems prevent change by discouraging effective contextualization of the innovation.[18] The innovation must be adapted each time to cross to a new adopter segment and must be forwarded by the enthusiastic endorsement of the previous segment. Significant positive and local benefits are necessary to win over the next segment; this requires the visionary minority to practice as well as proclaim an innovation. Only an innovation with significant, actual, immediate, positive benefits to the current homeostasis can succeed in crossing the chasm; one goal of contextualization is to demonstrate those benefits. Early Adopters must focus contextualization upon a specific niche within the pragmatic Middle Adopters. Once the value of the innovation has proved itself there, it can then spread outward beyond critical mass. When visionaries refuse to compromise their visions, they choose to fail.

This project focuses on teaching disciple-making Christianity and evangelistic tools to churched Innovators in a seminar setting.[19] Innovators self-select for seminars. The project strategy is based on the hypothesis that in any seminar setting, especially when new and "astonishing" ideas are advertised, the majority of participants will be Innovators. The pedagogical method, *Understanding by Design*, is particularly attuned to the needs of

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[18]Visionaries often resist any adaptation and simplification of their ideas, methods, and theology. Dogma, requirements and restrictions must ease as the innovation moves deeper into the pragmatic majority; if there is no adaptation to the next category, an innovation often fails to diffuse. The relaxation of strict theological concepts and requirements is an unavoidable requirement for full diffusion of an innovation. High expectation churches reach the visionary minority but will find it difficult to convert the pragmatic majority.

[19]While only 2.5% of pastors as a group are Innovators, in the local church pastors are likely to function as Innovators due to their greater professional knowledge and advocacy for positive change.

Innovators.[20] In order to interest Innovators, the study guide must challenge common beliefs, provoke Innovator curiosity and allow Innovators to intuitively "connect the dots" in order to realize new discoveries. Footnoted information and Internet resources will be used whenever possible in order to entice Innovators with links to massive amounts of information to explore. Innovators will frequently buy and read the books footnoted. Innovators will need to be continually redirected to the local church context to prevent a racetrack from developing.

Innovators are linked to Early Adopters back home who are interested in ideas that allow them to gain competitive leverage and advantage in a local context. Contextual adaptation to increase quality is the particular interest and talent of Early Adopters. The study guide has to be written as a complete and sufficient resource for Early Adopters to grasp the concepts through self-study in the local context; only a portion of the study guide will be presented in the seminars, but all information necessary for Early Adopters must be included in the study guide. In order to decrease costs and increase the availability of the material to the visionary minority, the study guide and other resources will be available for free download on the Internet.

The pragmatic majority requires what Moore calls a "whole product."[21] The Decision Seminar offers a holistic system of making disciples which is specifically designed for adoption in small churches. Innovators and Early Adopters love improvising solutions to problems with an innovation; Middle Adopters require a dependable "whole product"

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[20]Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1998).

[21]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 107-130. Paul Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 127-135, 218-225.

which can be used without adjustment, learning, training, specialized knowledge, or adaptation by a person of limited ability. Disciple-making tools presented in the third seminar for adoption must be simple enough to meet this criteria of easy use; contextualization will focus upon adapting the application for practical use rather than adapting the concepts for abstract discussion. Each small local church, in essence, serves as a niche to receive the innovation as it crosses the chasm within that local church; growth in any small church will draw the interest of Innovators from other churches to the material, and the cycle will repeat.

Implementation Strategy: Timeline, Structure, and Resources

In 2004 the Office of Congregational Development of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference was given the responsibility of responding to requests from twelve district superintendents for consulting on church growth and revitalization in over 120 individual churches within twelve months. Consulting is a time-consuming, individualized, highly interactive, on-site process. Information delivered via seminar would be cost effective and accommodate any number of churches. This project was designed to provide a basic common understanding of church growth to meet the basic needs of churches that would not be able to receive individual consulting. The project was approved by the person serving as executive director of the Office of Congregational Development at that time. An informed, shared vision of church growth understanding is a valid and still unmet need in these churches. This project has been carefully written to bring the best research in disciple-making and overcoming resistance to change to these local churches in harmony with United Methodist history, theology, and connectional polity as well as with the

vision, mission, and strategies of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference leadership.[22]

The Office of Congregational Development is still the best gateway for presenting this information to these ordinary churches. District superintendents and District Ministry Teams will be able to schedule presentations of this material in their districts. While all are welcome and all should benefit, the target population will be churches with less than one hundred in attendance. I will seek to fulfill the commitment made in 2004 to present this material for the benefit of local churches under the sponsorship of the Office of Congregational Development and one or more District Ministry Teams.

In addition to seeking "top down" sponsorship, this project will use aspects of "word of mouth" or "viral marketing" to develop "bottom up" encouragement among local church lay leaders to participate in the training. An effective viral marketing strategy has six characteristics: it gives away products or services, provides for effortless transfer to others, scales easily from small to very large, exploits common motivations and behaviors, utilizes existing communication networks and takes advantage of others' resources.[23] I intend to further dialogue through an Internet community of Innovators and Early Adopters focused on disciple-making and local church revitalization. Users will be able to download the entire project in sections, engage in dialogue, forward portions to others and contribute their own understandings as a part of an online community.[24] The

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[22]Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference, *Vision, Mission, and Strategies,* http://www.igrc.org/ conference/vision.html (accessed June 18, 2007).

[23]Ralph F. Wilson, *The Six Simple Principles of Viral Marketing,* http://www.wilsonweb.com/ wmt5/viral-principles.htm (accessed June 13, 2007).

[24]The URL is David Kueker, *Disciple Walk,* www.disciplewalk.com (accessed August 17, 2007). Early Adopter self-directed learning and Internet resourcing will also slow the spread of material beyond the visionary minority in the local church prior to contextualization and preparation to cross the chasm.

homophilous dialogue of the Internet community will stimulate local enthusiasm for implementing church growth concepts as well as providing free, ongoing access to evolving tools and information from the project. In this way the study guide will serve as a template for an ongoing reinvention of disciple-making strategies in local church settings and make a positive contribution for years to come. Internet access will eventually be the primary means by which persons encounter and interact with the study guide.

I intend to utilize feeder seminars as a means of sideways diffusion of the material. Portions of this material have been shared at cluster training events, Walk to Emmaus communities and presented as a part of training for Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking classes under the title "Small Group Secrets from the World's Largest Churches." As the material strongly supports the building of community within districts, it will be useful to any group within a district with the need to gather new members.

Timeline

By October 1, 2008, I intend to receive approval of the project by Fuller Theological Seminary and populate the Website with project resources. I will then begin building the "bottom up" online community by networking with colleagues. By December 1, 2007, I intend to have fully explained the project and gained the sponsorship of the Cabinet and the Office of Congregational Development.[25]

In 2008 I intend to present the project seminars as often as possible, as widely as possible, and for free whenever possible. As the year progresses, I will encourage

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[25]For chasm theory insights on partners and allies, see Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 136-162.

discussion and trials, support users through the Internet and create an online learning community. Throughout the year, I intend to continue to add material to the Website, including audio recordings of presentations. I intend to increase the value of the material by creatively responding to the concerns and suggestions of the Cabinet, the Office of Congregational Development and other denominational leaders as feedback becomes available.

While keeping the focus on local church disciple-making, I will begin to gather interested seminar participants together twice a year in district fellowships for continued support and training. I will continue to assist districts in developing district and/or cluster equipping tracks to increase disciple-making within a district faith community.

Template: Learning Design and Pedagogy

Change comes to a system first as information, then as a choice and finally as a behavior. *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe is a pedagogical method whose characteristics are ideally suited to the creative and artistic nature of Innovators and Early Adopters who begin a diffusion process. Learning systems that rely on dialogue, conferencing and self-directed learning are necessary when presentations do not work to share information for adoption beyond the visionary minority. Diffusion of an innovation is both a process of communication and a process of learning. The failure of most innovations to diffuse indicates that traditional approaches to learning focused on explanation through media or presentation are poor choices for permanent social and organizational change. A better understanding precedes new choices and the adoption of new behaviors. Learning that facilitates the diffusion of an innovation must facilitate

conversations, relationships and self-discovery.

The project strategy has three phases. Seminar attenders are by definition Innovators; only Innovators by definition will travel to seminars to learn new innovations. When Innovators return home they will link up with Early Adopters to discuss and refine the innovation for local usage. This group will self-select because only Innovators and Early Adopters are interested in new ideas. Through the homework exercises in the study guide, the Innovators and Early Adopters will adapt the lessons for local usage.[26] In this manner the disciple-making innovations will permeate the "early market" of the first two adopter framework categories within a local church, be customized for high performance in local usage, cross the chasm and begin the S-curve of rapid adoption in a local church setting.

Understanding by Design will interest the visionary minority because it is integrative, holistic and has the goal of developing integrity, character and a better human being as a result of learning. Empathy, self-knowledge and a change of primary perspective are goals of the learning process. Having students "encounter big ideas in ways that provoke and connect to student's interests (as questions, issues, or problems) increases the likelihood of student engagement and sustained inquiry."[27] A practical focus

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[26]Rather than propose one change after another or continuously innovate the innovation, Innovators and Early Adopters must discipline themselves to focus on the goal of crossing the chasm to gain full adoption. Adoption beyond the visionary minority requires a unified strategic effort by Early Adopters or the innovation will fail to gain critical mass. This is a significant strategic and behavioral change for the visionary minority. Leading an organization into one innovation after another is an unhealthy, "pacesetting" leadership style according to Daniel Goleman, Annie McKee, Richard E. Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 53-55, 71-75, 80-83.

[27]Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 11.

on real world benefits is essential to interest the pragmatic majority in learning.[28]

Understanding by Design identifies six behaviors as the six facets of a better understanding and calls for students to actively explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess.[29] The six facets allow for a holistic approach to diversity in people and equalize opportunities for subjective as well as objective learners. Three results of a better understanding are that students have a longer retention of the material, can adapt and apply the material profitably in changing situations to solve problems and are more empathetic human beings.[30]

The six facets can be organized into a two column matrix of three balancing pairs. The pairs promote balanced learning and cooperate developmentally as the student learns. Explanation and Interpretation lead to Perspective and Empathy, which in turn lead to Application and Self Knowledge.[31] Explanation, Perspective and Application can be characterized as rational, objective and "left brain." Interpretation, Empathy and Self-Knowledge can be characterized as more creative, imaginative, emotional, subjective and "right brain."

Wiggins and McTighe point out the key importance in learning of the less cognitive facets of perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge, which "often play a key role

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[28]Wiggins and McTighe quote Jerome Bruner's blunt comment: "For any subject taught in primary school, we might ask [is it] worth an adult's knowing, and whether having known it as a child makes a person a better adult." Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 11.

[29]Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 3, 44-62.

[30]Ibid., 38-43.

[31]Ibid., 170-171.

in revealing insight or its absence."[32] The diffusion of innovations also perceives the necessary importance of storytelling, empathy and self-knowledge in planned change; changed lives require changed hearts, and these facets have the requisite emotional impact. A better understanding will form emotions as well as inform the intellect.

The project consists of three one-day seminars separated by a month or more. This allows time for implementation of the teaching in the user's home context and bringing the resulting insights to the following seminar. This time for reflection and application is an essential part of the project; it is during this time that learners will experience a deeper application of the material and a better understanding according to the six facets.[33]

The study guide is based on Understanding by Design's five-step W.H.E.R.E. learning template implemented in three phases.[34] Each seminar will review "where we are going" (W) and "hook" the students (H) with a challenging and interesting two page introduction. The topic of the day will be "explored" through lecture and discussion; participants will be "equipped" to work on the specific homework exercises in their local context following each seminar (E). Back at their local church, Innovators will link up with Early Adopters to "rethink and revise" (R) the material as they work through the Homework Assignments and journal on the "Questions for a Better Understanding." The written work will fulfill the "exhibit and evaluate" stage (E) by exhibiting student growth

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[32]Ibid., 82.

[33]Learning will flow through the three pairs in sequence: *Explanation* and *Interpretation* will lead to a greater *Perspective* and *Empathy* which will enhance the quality of the final *Application* and *Self-Knowledge.* The W.H.E.R.E. learning template also works through the pairs in this order.

[34]Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 115-133, 190.

in self-understanding and local application of the entire seminar process.[35] Learning is

holistic and integrative; the W.H.E.R.E. template facilitates learning which draws students

into uncoverage at their own pace through all six facets of understanding without

cluttering the learning experience with irrelevant data and theory.

Understanding by Design meets the needs of Innovators for an interactive

involvement with the material through the strategy of "uncoverage."[36] The experience of

"connecting the dots" to discover the hidden pictures through uncoverage is uniquely

suited and highly appealing to Innovators and Early Adopters. Uncoverage is defined as

activity whereby the students discover knowledge through their own efforts. Learning via

presented knowledge, such as lectures that cover a textbook, is comparatively ineffective

and ephemeral.[37]

Uncoverage allows students freedom to learn through their strengths and at their

own level. Uncoverage teaches patience and social skills through cooperative learning;

uncoverage and conversation allow learners to practice teaching others. This is essential to

the horizontal spreading of information across each adoption category. Uncoverage

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[35]Those on the advanced ReVision track will *Exhibit and Evaluate* their understanding through ongoing interaction with a consultant who will also redirect them into additional *Rethinking and Revision* exercises in order to deepen their understanding of their demographic community.

[36]Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 98-114.

[37]Wiggins and McTighe point out the common problem that occurs when experts explain theory to novices; experts explain ideas from an omniscient point of view and in a logical sequence obvious to the expert but not at all accessible to the novice. Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 101-102. This lack of understanding is probably a key factor in the formation of the communication gap known as the chasm.
     Learning through uncoverage allows the experience of the uncertainty present in the original process of discovery. Uncoverage by the student's own inquiry and performance "is vital because all big ideas are subtle and unobvious. Without lessons to bring them to life, concepts such as manifest destiny or the water cycle remain empty phrases to be memorized, not understood." Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 100.

strengthens the social network of a church and develops caring bonds into learning

relationships. Study guide paragraphs will share information in a way that will stimulate

questions rather than provide answers. The study guide will include all information shared

in the seminars, plus additional information designed to tweak the curiosity of Innovators

and Early Adopters, thereby encouraging further conversation and uncoverage.[38] The

study guide supports conversations through provocative statements and the division into

paragraph length sound bite concepts.

Lectures promote conformity which is frequently rejected; uncoverage promotes

conversations which lead to adoption. Uncoverage through conversations immediately

contextualizes the innovation, thereby furthering diffusion while simultaneously building

up community. Uncoverage provides for exponentially multiplying conversations, the

primary requirement of innovation adoption beyond the chasm.[39] Conversation cannot be

hurried, manipulated, or externally controlled. Uncoverage promotes conversations which

lead to a better understanding and ultimately to adoption.

Uncoverage promotes exploration and experimentation with the ideas that make

up an innovation. Uncoverage promotes experiences that enhance the factors related to

innovation adoption, which are the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity,

trialability and observability of the innovation. Re-invention, a sixth factor, is

customization of the innovation by the adopter to optimize value for local needs; this

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[38]The study guide will be organized as seminars composed of numbered modules of numbered sections with paragraphs identified by letters; this will allow immediate reference to specific sections in discussion and facilitate conversations and email correspondence on the material. The abbreviation S1.M2.S1.A, for example, would refer to Seminar 1, Module 2, section 1, paragraph A.

[39]These six adoption factors create the excited conversations which underlie the Center for Parish Development Church Growth Principle. See pages 100-101, 166-168 in this study guide.

factor is particularly attractive to Early Adopters.[40]

Uncoverage allows students to learn at their own pace. This is necessary because the Early Adopters, who are not initially present at the seminar, will need to use the study guide as a self-teaching resource. In a diffusion of innovations approach, persons must be able to adopt at the speed that is comfortable to them. Uncoverage, therefore, facilitates learning without anxiety, a necessity in social change because the balancing process which rejects an innovation is triggered by anxiety. The emotional state of "flow" is one of high excitement and low anxiety; it is the most fruitful state for learning.[41] The visionary minority are excited by and explore new information in a state of flow; uncoverage allows uninhibited discovery. Anxiety inhibits learning and prevents change.

A key approach to promoting uncoverage instead of explanation is to have "questions that uncover nuance and connections to personal experience" for the student.[42] Good questions highlight big ideas and help the student uncover "linchpin" concepts which help a student grasp a subject's essential unity while ordering its diverse complexity.[43] Questions guide uncoverage and are key tools to generating the conversations that lead to change. Homework discussion questions and exercises in each seminar module guide local contextualization of the material through the steps of the W.H.E.R.E. learning template. They promote conversation and refinement in the six facets

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[40]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 204-251, 172-179.

[41]Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 107-126, 341-372.

[42]Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 109.

[43]Ibid., 113-114.

of a better understanding and the six factors that increase adoption of an innovation.

After the Diagnosis Seminar, participants can organize a formal Discovery Group to study their local context and apply an objective diagnostic tool. The basic tool will be the Natural Church Development test. The advanced tool will be the Percept *ReVision* test, which will be implemented with the ongoing guidance of a trained consultant or coach provided by the Office of Congregational Development.[44] After the Dialogue Seminar, participants using Percept's *ReVision* will engage their team in organizing multiple small groups for eight sessions of Bible study and dialogue. After the Decision Seminar, Discovery Groups have the option to develop a written strategy for growth and revitalization called a Discovery Report.[45]

Assessment

Assessment is a particular strength of Understanding by Design. Typical curriculum development begins with concepts, then develops learning activities and concludes with assessment methods. Teachers who use Understanding by Design are

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[44]Percept, *ReVision*, http://www.perceptgroup.com/Products/ReVision/REVISIONfront.aspx (accessed June 13, 2007).

[45]A formal Discovery Report is basically a business plan, consisting of an application strategy of ten to fifteen pages supported by a Factbook of several hundred pages accumulating the edited results of the learning exercises from the study guide and the results of the diagnostic testing. The Discovery Report format is based on William M. Luther, *How to Develop a Business Plan in Fifteen Days* (New York: Amacom, 1987). Consultants through the Office of Congregational Development are available to guide churches that choose to organize a formal Discovery Group and write a formal Discovery Report. The Discovery Report will be shared with the congregation, the Cabinet and the Office of Congregational Development. The Discovery Report will contain the information required by the Committee on Congregational Development to consider funding requests. The Discovery Report will be a clear compilation of information describing the current reality of the church and that church's best current understanding of the ministry to which it has been called by God. A Discovery Report is a snapshot of a church's current reality at the time of its preparation.

encouraged to "think like an assessor" and design their assessment methods first.[46] As

Understanding by Design relies on value in the real world to draw students into

engagement with the material, it is highly suited for voluntary education programs such as

those which take place in the church.

This project attempts to resolve real problems which create high anxiety in

churches; hope will also draw people into engaging with the material.[47] One form of

assessment, therefore, will be involvement which can be measured as the number of

seminars offered within the conference, the number of districts sponsoring seminars, the

number of churches participating and the total number of attenders. Engagement can also

be measured by the number of Website visits and downloads. Innovators at the seminar

will receive a printed handout for that seminar, but Early Adopters back at the local

church will download their copies from the Website. The specific files downloaded will

demonstrate exactly where interest is developing.

It is a rare opportunity for the visionary minority to encounter an interested

audience with whom they may share their creative visions. The written work will produce

insights and documentation that the visionary minority will be eager to share with

interested and informed persons and particularly with me as the author. This discussion

will be encouraged both through the online community and semi-annual district "Reunion"

gatherings of seminar participants. The process of doing the written work will ensure

contextualization within the local church. As participants document their application of the

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[46]Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 63-97.

[47]In some ways the S-curve of rapid adoption is a paradigm shift, where the pragmatic majority seizes upon the properly contextualized innovation as a means of reducing anxiety; when this happens, the balancing process itself implements the change throughout as a part of new homeostasis.

principles, the depth of their understanding will be demonstrated in their writing which can be uploaded and shared at the Website. The Office of Congregational Development can assign a consultant when a church demonstrates readiness for rapid advancement. All dialogue will provide data for ongoing assessment.

As counting creates accountability, I also hope and expect to see a measurable rise in all quantitative measurements reported annually to the conference by participating churches, including worship attendance, small group participation, baptisms and new members by profession of faith. This project is designed to enhance all of the eight quality characteristics of Natural Church Development; the Natural Church Development test, repeated annually, should provide an objective means of measuring improvement in participating churches.[48]

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[48]Schwarz, *Natural Church Development,* 15-48.