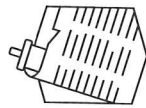


THE ASSESSMENT: FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES 5

Record your thoughts:

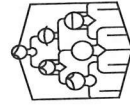


Study the Scriptures

The following passages are designed to help you begin to think seriously about the importance of quality assessment. The objective is not getting people through the booklets or even getting them filled out. The objective is getting believers, old and new, solidly established in the faith—getting them to a point at which they can think biblically, based upon the first principles of the faith.

On the need for quality assessment:

- 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9
- Titus 2
- 2 Timothy



Consult the Scholars

In the last session, we introduced the idea of the need for a whole new skill set. This skill set consists of six skills required to effectively make use of this educational method.

The Skill Set

1. Doing Biblical Theology
2. Reading an Article for Relevance
3. Leading Socratic Discussions

In session four, we examined the first four skills. In this session, we will examine skills five and six: qualitative assessment and constructing a life development folio/portfolio system.

Skill Five: Doing Qualitative Assessment

There are two kinds of assessment in education today—quantitative assessment and qualitative assessment. *Quantitative assessment* is assessment that focuses on very objective things such as courses completed, years in school, attendance, projects completed, and most testing instruments. *Qualitative assessment* focuses on the things not so readily assessed, such as levels of competency, character developed, and wisdom gained. Quantitative assessment is more a science and qualitative assessment an art. Most of what we really care about in Christian education falls into the category of qualitative assessment. We care about how well the first principles of the faith are internalized, not just whether the books are finished, or even good attendance and completed projects. We care about how well the principles are internalized and practiced.

It is difficult to carry out qualitative assessment. It must involve the person being assessed. And it must be done by someone who has been through the learning process with the person being assessed. It cannot just be reduced to a checklist. Yet we must have *some* criteria to work with. We have created a tool to assess development, which can be used both before and after going through *The First Principles Series*. It is entitled “Becoming Established: Assessment Guide from the Pauline Epistles,” and it is included in the appendix of this guide. Again, it is not filled with manmade assessment criteria. Rather it follows the biblical theology method by asking what outcomes did Paul expect in his early, middle, and later letters to the churches and, therefore, what was expected of the individuals in those churches. The guide is based upon the agenda of the letters that contain the kerygma and the didache.

How should you use this guide? It is important that this is seen as a qualitative assessment tool that requires a lot of interaction in order to evaluate how well established in the faith a person really is. A 3step process is recommended:

1. Pre-assessment. Have the person taking the series assess themselves before beginning the series. (Help them realize that they will not be able to assess themselves well on many of the questions, and some will not apply.)
2. Post-assessment. Both the student and the teacher should fill out assessment guides on the student.

3. One- to two-page narrative assessment. The teacher should review the comments on the right hand side of each page and write a one- to two-page assessment, in narrative form, of both the strong and weak points of the student's development in the faith.

An additional way to do qualitative assessment is to ask those completing *The First Principles* to write a one- to two-page summary of the first principles in their own words. These summaries can be evaluated by the church leaders and could become a prerequisite for membership or possibly a way for leaders to evaluate young adults' understanding of the faith.

Skill Six: Constructing a Life Development Folio/Portfolio

The purpose of the final skill is to guide the student into a lifelong learning process. The first principles are intended to lay a foundation for going on to maturity. Portfolios are collections of a student's work (artifacts) that show accomplishments and abilities. They are collections of assessments and attestations of others' testifying to levels of development. These can be gathered into a folio or notebook of some type. One of the best resources for understanding portfolios is *Experiential Learning: A New Approach*, edited by Lewis Jackson and Rosemary Caffarella. It is from the influential *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education Series* by Jossey Bass. In this work, the concept of folios and portfolios is presented. A *folio* is loose working papers collected in the process of building a portfolio. A *portfolio* is a more permanent form; it is often used as a presentation for assessment or for acquiring work.

The concept of a portfolio is becoming very significant in both education and business.

Portfolios in Education. Whether in elementary education or in graduate school, portfolios are being used to track development. They are becoming tools that enable qualitative assessment in educational programs.

Portfolios in Business. Portfolios are also becoming big in business. As we move into a technological society, we must take lifelong learning much more seriously. A simple degree and résumé will no longer serve a person for a lifetime.

Portfolios in Christian Education. Portfolios are an excellent tool for planning your education as a Christian. *The First Principles* are designed to be the first step in a lifelong learning process. Helping students plan how to build on the foundation laid in *The First Principles* is an essential part of the assessment process. We have designed a simple way to use completion of *The First Principles* as an opportunity to set up what we call a *life development portfolio*.

Helping a student set up a life development portfolio on the other side of completing *The First Principles* is the most effective assessment task. Here is a set of suggestions for what to have them include in their portfolio.

Items in a Post-First Principles Portfolio

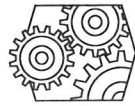
1. Their one- to two-page summary of the first principles.
2. An author's intention statement for books of the Bible studied in Series III: Acts, I Thessalonians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, and Titus (in the form taught in Series III, one- to two-pages each.)
3. "Becoming Established: Assessment Guide from the Pauline Epistles," assessed by the student himself and by the teacher. See p. 73.
4. A one- to two-page evaluation written by the teacher, based upon the guide "Becoming Established: Assessment Guide from the Pauline Epistles."
5. A plan for continuing to develop after completing *The First Principles Series*. This can be constructed from the last session of each of the thirteen booklets—"Reshaping Our Lives." These sections are filled with life development planning material: decisions, personal projects, and life habits. Also see the recommended books and courses for additional study that are listed in the "Lifelong Learning" section at the end of each booklet.

In addition to helping them set up their post-first principles portfolio, introduce them to how to continue in the BILD resources and training system, which includes the following:

1. *Life: Life Stewardship in Community*—a process for developing a customized life plan through an integrated, wisdom-based approach.
2. *BILD Leadership Series* courses (Basic Editions)—beginning with Acts: *Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church*, and *Pauline Epistles: Strategies for Establishing Churches*.
3. *Mastering the Scriptures Series* (yet to be published). This series, over 30 booklets, will be published in the learning style of *The First Principles*, following the interpretive method taught in Series III.

As you can see, guiding someone through *The First Principles Series* involves far more than just taking attendance and checking on completed projects. It involves qualitative assessment. It involves getting deeply into the lives of those you are leading through the study process. It involves helping them begin lifelong, serious, intentional learning that leads to spiritual maturity.

Record your thoughts:



Think Through the Issues

It is critical to master these two new skills needed for leading a group successfully through this process, as quickly as possible. Again, it can make the difference of whether this becomes just another Bible study or truly a life changing experience for all involved.

ISSUE: The importance of mastering these two new skills

Think Through the Issue Before Discussion:

1. What might be the results of not becoming involved in qualitative assessment of those under your leadership who are taking *The First Principles Series*?
2. What might happen to a person who does not pull their work together, as suggested in the postfirst principles portfolio system?
3. What will it take for you to get to the point where you will be able to use the "Becoming Established: Assessment Guide from the Pauline Epistles" with reasonable skill?

Record your initial thoughts on the issue before discussion:



Apply the Principles

Write out an initial assessment of your skills in the areas of qualitative assessment and constructing folios/portfolios. Which ones are you strong in and in which ones are you weak? Jot down thoughts about how to improve your skills so that your skill set sharpens.

Discuss the issue in your small group.

Record your initial thoughts on the issue after discussion: