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Multiplying Leaders for Multiplying Churches

Facilitator
Training

Workbook

010.101.02

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Introduction to Facilitating

What is it like to be told to accomplish a task when you know little or nothing about it? Imagine trying to teach a lesson on a book that you have never read or trying to build a woodshed when you have never used a mechanical tool. Needless to say, the experience would likely be stressful, embarrassing, fearful and—face it—perhaps a little humorous.

In Matthew 28 the disciples were given a monumental task. They were commissioned by Jesus to go into the world and **make disciples** of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." How do you think the disciples felt when they received that calling? They had been with Jesus for three years, observing him in action, learning from his teachings, ministering alongside him, and yet there had to have been some apprehension at the enormity of the task he was calling them to. Were they prepared? How would they go about the task? We do know from Luke 24:52 that after Jesus ascended, they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They had seen their master raised from the dead and then taken into heaven, and they had been entrusted to carry on in his absence. Their life held great purpose, for they had a mission to complete.

The beginning of Acts already has the disciples moving to fulfill that task. At Pentecost in Acts 2 we see the promised Holy Spirit coming upon them and Peter rising to explain what was happening from Scripture. Acts 2:37 says that "when [the people] heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" (NASB).

"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself'" (v. 38-39 NASB). That day alone, three thousand believers were added to their number.

That day was the inception of the apostles' movement to fulfill the plan that had been entrusted to them. It was only the beginning, for true

discipleship not only calls people to believe but teaches them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. As followers of Christ we are part of that movement. We too have been entrusted with the commission to **make disciples** of all nations. Do you feel prepared for that mission? Do you know how to go about that task?

It is our hope and prayer that as you examine how God uniquely designed each one of us, consider how Jesus went about making disciples, and discuss how to navigate the challenges that arise as you teach truths from Scripture, you will be more equipped for that task. Our desire is that you will facilitate learning that leads to transformed Christ followers, who will also set about the task to make disciples. Blessings on the journey ahead!

Objectives of the Facilitator Training Manual
When you have completed this manual, you will be able to

1. Integrate adult learning methods and styles into the learning experiences you lead.

2. Apply the methods Jesus used with his disciples to help them learn.

3. Write open questions that stimulate discussion and community learning.

4. Facilitate discussions in a way that maximizes trust, participation, and learning.

5. Develop effective lesson plans.

6. Use techniques for managing common facilitation problems and challenges.

7. Describe the value to the facilitator of evaluation, godly thinking, and servanthood.

8. Create a multiplication strategy for your specific context.

Understanding Icons

1.1 ✏

> **Assignment:** a question or study that focuses on course content. Written responses are required and are to be recorded in your notebook.

1A 💬

> **Personal Reflection:** an instruction to reflect on scriptural truths or character traits or both as they relate to your walk with God. The focus is on personal application. A written response may be requested.

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> **Adoration:** an encouragement to respond to what God is saying to you as you study, to thank him, and to praise him. Whenever you see this icon, pause in your study to respond to God.

Lesson 1:
Adult Learning

John had a high school education, but it was not a pleasant experience. Other students always seemed to catch onto the concepts more quickly than he did, and the class lectures seemed irrelevant to his life. After the tenth grade, he decided to drop out of school and got a job as a car mechanic because he enjoyed working with his hands. Along the way he finished his high school degree at night school. When he was in his early twenties, a friend started asking him some tough questions about life. John did not have good answers. Soon his friend began to talk about Jesus.

Gradually John came to believe that Jesus loved him and was offering him eternal life. After his decision to entrust his life to God, John's life began to change. One of the changes was a decision to get involved as a leader in his church's youth group. One day a friend encouraged John to join a solid and engaging Bible study. John was very hesitant to try it. Although he wanted to learn more about his faith, he knew he could never do the work required weekly to study the Bible. He knew he was not smart enough.

1.1

1. Why do you think John responded the way he did?

2. How would you help John overcome his anxiety about studying the Bible?

Lesson Outline
> Uniqueness of Adult Learners
> The Facilitator's View of Learning
> Learning Style Preference

Lesson Objectives
When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to

1. List the unique ways adults learn.

2. Describe the differences between teacher-directed learning and facilitator-guided learning.

3. Integrate all learning styles to enhance learning experiences.

Uniqueness of Adult Learners

A good teacher will always look at the learning process through the eyes of the learner. How does each individual uniquely see the world? What are his interests? What are the ways she learns best? One of the greatest hindrances for adults in experiencing stimulating, interesting, transformational education is generally not a lack of curiosity or interest on their part. Rather, it is in their teacher's understanding of his or her role. If teachers have an inadequate understanding of their role, adult learning can be difficult, tiresome, boring, and discouraging. On the other hand, when teachers have both a biblical understanding of how God made each learner uniquely and know how to draw out that God-given design, the learning experience can be deeply rewarding. Facilitation is a process that helps learners draw upon past experience to develop new meaning that promotes growth.

"You can't teach an old dog new tricks" is an adage implying that adults find it difficult, if not impossible, to learn. Empirical research debunks this folk theory about adult learning. As a matter of fact, we now know that unless debilitating illnesses render people unable to learn, they can continue to learn throughout their entire lives. According to Merriam and Caffarella, "adult intelligence appears relatively stable, at least until the sixth or seventh decade. . . . It has been difficult for educators and researchers alike to give up the stereotype that young equals sharp and older means dull."[1]

Studies that followed people throughout their life span demonstrate that anyone can learn at any age. If there is any decline, it is perhaps in the ability to take timed tests—tests that **must be completed** in a limited

amount of time. However, with maturity, adults show an increased ability to assess problems and make good judgments.

The reason that adults do not do as well in some kinds of testing is because the tests deal only with textbook facts. When tests use real life situations, adults fare at least as well as their younger cohorts.

Adult learners generally have four common characteristics:

The first characteristic is that most adults have multiple responsibilities and roles. Because of this, they are very careful to evaluate the kinds of learning they will do. An adult wants to make good use of his or her finite time. Since time is important, adults usually choose to learn only those things that they feel they really need.

The second characteristic is that they have collected many experiences. These experiences range from how they fared in school to how they have processed deep emotional and spiritual experiences, such as the death of a close relative. All these experiences form rich resources for adults in the learning context. Adults want to relate their past experiences to their present learning.

Third, adults have undergone several stages over their lifetimes—physically, psychologically, and socially—that cause them to look at their past experiences differently. New information they take in is filtered through those grids as well, so essentially adults have a large framework on every level for evaluating new information.

And, finally, adults often experience anxiety or ambivalence about a new educational experience. For many, several years may have passed since they were in school. They question their ability to learn and their ability to compete with younger learners. To assuage this anxiety, a teacher or facilitator has to reduce competition and increase cooperation in an adult-learning environment.

The combination of time limitations, a broad base of experiences, a personal framework for filtering information, and potential anxiety associated with new learning experiences underscore the importance of using dialogue in any adult learning experience. A teacher, or a facilitator of learning, can capitalize on these realities about adults by engaging adult learners in conversation that reveals their life experience on the subject at hand. This dialogue can help adults evaluate how they interpret information and also develop more effective ways of dealing with life.[2]

1.2

1. When you hear the word *education*, what words come to mind?

2. What have been your experiences in education?

3. How is education different for children than for adults?

1A

Consider your educational background in the church. What aspects of church ministry (like pulpit ministry, Sunday school, youth group, and small groups) have helped you in your journey to know God and to grow? What has been unhelpful?

The Facilitator's View of Learning

Why do we use the word *facilitator* instead of *teacher* when we talk about adult learning? Adults have a fairly good understanding of what they want to learn and why they want to learn it. The problem is that most teachers of adults treat them as if they were still children, only bigger in size. They line them up in rows at desks, stand in front of them, and lecture them. Why does this happen?

The primary culprit is tradition. Many of us have gone through at least some years of schooling where we were forced to sit at desks and were expected to learn large numbers of facts without having any idea why these facts were important. As is often true with traditions, we do to others what was done with us. Out of habit we recreate the kind of

learning experiences we had in school without realizing how ineffective it can be.

For those of us who learn well by hearing the information (auditory learners), it may seem natural to use the traditional method of teaching. However, for those who do not learn well that way, why do we choose to repeat our flawed learning experiences rather than do something different? The reason often lies in how we think about education.

Metaphors of Teaching
In order to make meaning of life, research shows that we often compare new information with information that is already known. In doing so, we form metaphors in our mind, which means "to understand and to experience one thing in terms of another." A technological person who is learning about the human brain, for example, may compare learning with how a computer downloads information. A chef learning about chemistry may draw upon his experience using recipes to understand how a completely new substance can be formed. Difficulty arises, however, when incorrect comparisons are made, resulting in faulty or unhelpful metaphors that do not correspond with truth. Often these faulty metaphors impact our actions and behaviors.

Teachers are no exception. Sometimes unknowingly, teachers' actions in a learning environment are based on metaphors they have believed about their own role in the educational process. If they have believed

faulty metaphors, their efforts will be undermined, as will the quality of the experience for them and for the learners.

> Consider two of the most common metaphors: education as filling a container and education as a manufacturing process. These two are closely related, though they use different symbolism. They are both faulty.

> One of the key problems in both of these concepts of education is their rooting in a *tabula rasa* [empty slate] view of childhood. Worse yet, this view of the learner as an empty slate to be written on by those who know is even applied to the teaching of adults. The result is high-cost kiddie-schools with larger chairs and less interesting teachers.

> The learner is more acted on than active. . . . This orientation demeans the image of God shared in each person and it encourages a passive receptivity, ultimately lacking in creativity and skills of evaluation.

> In the "manufacturing" metaphor the learner is assumed to have characteristics which the machinery must chip off and grind down. Irregularities and peculiarities in the learner—the "raw material"—are usually regarded as a nuisance. The system could be so much more efficient if everyone were exactly alike, it argues. This metaphor makes a teacher preoccupied with "the system" and its gadgetry. The learner is an object—something to be shaped and molded. . . .

> Rather than inviting learners into a shared relationship, they expect them to submit themselves to being "processed." The learners often interact and become more active in the whole experience than is possible in the filling metaphor, but the goals are usually firmly fixed. The goals (often stated as "behavioral objectives") are in the system, not in the learner's experiences or interaction with the learning system. [3]

Another metaphor is described this way:

> Education . . . becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. . . . This is the "banking" concept of education,

in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. . . . But in the last analysis, it is men [and women] themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from praxis [practice] men cannot be truly human. . . .

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. . . .

Education must begin with the solution of this teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students. . . . [4]

The following are typical attitudes and practices of the traditional educational model:

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;

(b) the teachers know everything and the students know nothing;

(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

(d) the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;

(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;

(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;

(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority. . . ;

(j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.[5]

In contrast to these metaphors, consider education as a life-walk to be shared. In this *travel* metaphor, learners become travelers who experience their educational journey differently based on their own unique experiences, which thus determine how and what they learn. Effort is put into an educational adventure that will result in a rich and rewarding journey for every individual.

1.3

1. What do you find to be true about the three metaphors presented above that some believe dominate education: (1) education as filling a container; (2) education as a manufacturing process, and (3) education as an act of depositing?

2. How do these metaphors harm the learning experience?

3. What metaphors do you think are the most common metaphors in your own culture for learning?

1B

If teacher-facilitators in your culture understood their task as a journey in which they accompany people for short periods of time, as they walk through life, how would learning experiences be different?

Another helpful metaphor for learning is gardening. Plants do not have to be told how to grow, and gardeners do not make them grow by pulling them up out of the ground! Plants grow by themselves as part of a natural process that God has instigated. The gardener does her job, certainly, but must be patient in waiting for the plants to grow into the desired harvest.

So, what is the purpose of the facilitator in this metaphor? God is the one who causes the seeds to grow into fruit-bearing plants; the facilitator is the gardener. The teacher-facilitator is responsible to make the environment hospitable for the learner, which will stimulate growth.
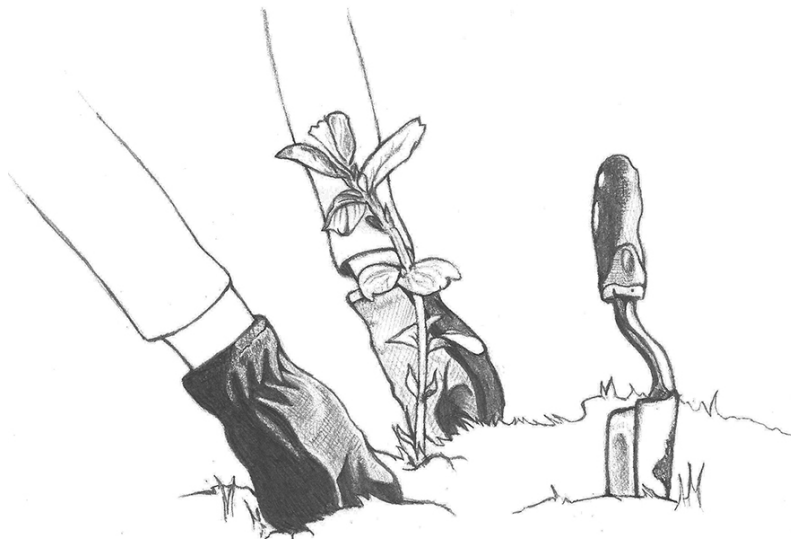
Other excellent metaphors are worth considering for facilitation in Christian education. One is the metaphor of *mission*, where every believer embarks with Jesus on a mission to redeem the world. Facilitation becomes a tool to help others grow in their understanding

of Christ, as the Holy Spirit does the work of transformation in their lives.

In summary, each person comes to the teaching/learning experience with some picture of the process of education. The metaphor(s) used will determine both the quality and shape of a learning experience. Rarely does a teacher or facilitator rely solely on one metaphor. Some metaphors for education, such as filling or manufacturing, do not adequately represent the needs of an adult learner. Other metaphors are more helpful—like journeying together, gardening, and mission. Choosing an appropriate metaphor that structures the way we think about facilitating and learning will take us a very long way toward creating the kinds of experiences that will move people toward spiritual maturity.

1.4

What new insights did you gain about teaching and learning from thinking about these metaphors?

1C

What metaphor(s) do you want to adopt as the way that you view your role as a teacher-facilitator? Explain why you have chosen those metaphors.

Facilitating Learning

Seeing teachers as facilitators of learning also takes into account the Hebrew view of education, where teaching and learning are different sides of the same concept. A good teacher makes learning easier, that is,

facilitates (to make easier"). As a facilitator of learning the role of the teacher is one of a helper, guide, and companion in the process. Teachers in adult education call the learners to join them as peers and equals, shifting the focus from what the teacher is able to say and do to what the learner is able to say and do—a major shift. Teacher and learner alike will draw upon their own experiences and expertise and, in the process, develop a deeper understanding of the subject at hand.

One of the objectives of the facilitator is to enable participants to think critically and reflectively. In order to accomplish this task, the teacher-facilitator must be ready to take on many different roles. The teacher-facilitator will sometimes be a trainer, counselor, model, resource person, guide, expositor, demonstrator, enlightener of values, taskmaster, and helper.[6] The facilitator must be flexible to adapt to the necessary role with each adult.

One of the most significant roles of the teacher-facilitator is to provide a safe place where discussion can take place. This will be considered more fully in Lesson 4. Those who have studied adult education consider the discussion method an irreplaceable part of adult learning.[7]

How a person thinks about teaching and learning may differ depending on the learning environment and the objectives for learning. As we all grow and go through different stages of development, so teacher-facilitators also mature in how they understand and practice their craft. When teachers begin to understand their role with learners as a journey together for a short time, they are free to explore and learn about a

subject of common interest. The teacher acts as a facilitator of learning, a guide along the path, a fellow learner and explorer of God's world.

Learning Style Preference

God bestows different kinds of intelligence, and he also instills in each person preferred ways of learning. The following paragraphs describe three different styles:

Visual Learners: These learners need to actually see the teacher-facilitator, the book or material, and the illustrations to fully understand the content of what is being discussed. The facilitator's body language carries necessary information for the visual learner to help comprehend the content. Visual learners like to sit where they can see clearly. They may think in terms of pictures. They often learn best from visual displays, including diagrams, illustrated textbooks, computer presentations, videos, flipcharts, and hand-outs.

Auditory Learners: These people learn best through discussions, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through the nuances of sound, like hearing the tone of voice, pitch, and rate of speech. Written information may not be comprehended until it is heard. Reading text aloud often significantly helps these learners.

Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners: These people learn through moving, doing, and touching things. Hands-on activities that explore the physical world work well for them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

While it is important to recognize and value individuals with different learning styles, brain research seems to indicate that teaching in a person's preferred learning style does not necessarily improve learning. Even more important than teaching in a person's preferred style is to use various multisensory activities in learning.[8]

1. **Visual Material.** Adding visual material substantially increases the chances of retention. This is because the brain's visual memory system has an enormous capacity for storage and remarkable availability for recall.[9]

2. **Verbal and Visual Information.** Verbal and visual processing allow participants to become more involved in

the learning process, and retention increases. This occurs because working memory has both verbal and visual components. Each selects, organizes, and processes its respective information before sending it to the frontal lobe for integration and interpretation. . . . In essence, the learner creates both a verbally based model and a visually based model of the new learning. These models are then integrated in the prefrontal cortex and connected to information already stored in the learner's memory. Such sensory-rich integration helps the learner find sense and meaning in the new learning, significantly increasing the chances it will be remembered.[10]

Other things can be considered, too: whether a learner is an internal or an external processor of information, which might affect his or her level of group participation. Internal processors are those individuals who carefully evaluate their position before they state it out loud. They seek to develop their conclusions well before expressing them to the group. External processors are those individuals who need to talk about their developing thoughts. They need to hear themselves speak to others to help them develop their ideas. Both types of people need to be appreciated.

All these examples show how fearfully and wonderfully made we are. These factors also have implications for how we teach.

1.5

1. What other kinds of learning styles are you familiar with?

2. How would you describe your own learning style, and what kind of learning experience would take it into account?

1D

> Can you think of an occasion when you observed others preferring to engage information through sight, hearing, or touch? What were some of your impressions from that time?

This lesson explores adult learning from the vantage point of both the learner and the facilitator. Adults come to any new learning experience with an idea of what they want to learn and why. Teachers, on the other hand, sometimes get in the way of adult learning because they treat adult learners like big children, sitting them in rows and lecturing to them (which is difficult for children as well). A more effective approach is for teachers to see themselves as facilitators of learning. This shift in perspective comes from adopting the right metaphors to think and speak about the adult learning experience.

> An important fact in this lesson is that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Contemplate for a moment how wonderful it is that we can learn in so many different ways and that we are capable of learning throughout our lives. Take time to praise God for the way he created you with your abilities and opportunities to learn.

ENDNOTES

[1] Sharan B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 158.

[2] Based on Stephen D. Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 30.

[3] Ted W. Ward, "Metaphors of Spiritual Reality: Part 3: Evaluating Metaphors of Education," *Bibliotheca Sacra 139:556* (October-December 1982): 294-6.

[4] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 58-59.

[5] Ibid., 59.

[6] Based on J. W. Apps, *Problems in Continuing Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), quoted in Brookfield, 128.

[7] A more complete overview of the discussion process is provided in later sessions.

[8] G. P. Krätzig and K. D. Arbuthnott, "Perceptual learning style and learning proficiency: A test of the hypothesis," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 98 (2006): 238-46, and P. Ginns, "Meta-analysis of the modality effect," *Learning and Instruction* 4 (2005): 313-31, quoted in David A. Sousa, *How the Brain Learns,* 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA. Corwin: A Sage company, 2011), 59-60.

[9] T. Kondle, T. F. Brady, G. A. Alvarez, and A. Oliva, "Scene memory is more detailed than you think: The role of categories in visual long-term memory," *Psychological Science* 21 (2010): 1551-6, quoted in Sousa, 100.

[10] Sousa, 100.