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A COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROCESS FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

TRAINING ASSUMPTIONS

1. Training by itself does not produce leaders. God directs and superintends the development of leaders through life experiences. Training is only a means. Training is usually associated with the technological side of education in which the content, skill, and attitude development is focused on an application in a specific context. In this sense, training produces skills that are repeatable in a given situation. Education is broader and prepares the person as a whole for unpredictable situations. Christian leaders are formed by God through a variety of experiences including various modes of education: formal, nonformal and informal.

While training alone does not produce a leader, it can enhance growth in a number of important directions of learning. This is called the value-added definition of quality. To the extent that the training adds value to the learner in terms of desired knowledge, desired characteristics, and desired skills, it can be described as offering transforming quality.

2. The biblical view of humankind and its maturation provides principles for training. Creational Developmentalism, a theory of learning that draws on the social sciences, affirms this biblical view of humanity. The Bible speaks of the nature of persons as created in the image of God and therefore with tremendous potential for good. While humankind has fallen and is therefore utterly bankrupt spiritually, God's story of redemption addresses the sinful nature with hope, since through Christ and the Cross God has set down a process of transforming people. This process is an incremental journey from birth until persons enter the presence of Christ (1 Cor. 13). Christian spiritual formation occurs across a series of phases where God uses all of life's processes to develop Christlikeness.

Development Theory supports the importance of personhood, human responsibility in development, and interactive nature of growth. Developmentalists see growth in stages, look for evidences that accompany transformations from stage to stage, and understand the process as being lifelong with milestones representing fundamental change. Committed to wholism, developmentalists see all aspects of life influencing and interacting with each other.

3. Learning principles apply universally and interculturally to the formation of church leaders. Developmentalists hold that persons in all cultures progress in their development in a similar manner. The experiences of learning may vary widely as will the specific curricular design, but the principle of transformation remains constant. Developmentalists have a particular view of human learning. They see learning as a matter of growing. On the other hand, the acquisitional view of learning sees learning as a matter of grasping and gaining. The assumption in the developmental view is that learning depends upon experience. The acquisitional view of learning, the apparent dominant paradigm in evangelical churches, depends on teaching. Figure 1 summarizes these comparisons.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW	THE ACQUISITIONAL VIEW
➢ Learning is a matter of growing	➢ Learning is a matter of grasping and gaining
➢ Learning depends on experience	➢ Learning depends on teaching
➢ Teaching is a matter of sharing	➢ Teaching is a matter of leading
EMPHASIS - BEING	EMPHASIS - KNOWING

FIGURE 1. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND ACQUISITIONAL VIEW OF LEARNING

Principles drawn from Scripture supporting the developmental view of learning include the following:

- *Learning is best when it is experienced.* Christ called the twelve disciples to be with him, sent them into ministry while being trained, and he equipped them completely for the task (Mk. 3:13-15)
- *Learning is a process.* Jesus taught in parables, anticipating the teaching implications of stage theories of cognitive development.
- *Learning can be evaluated.* Six principles, flowing out of Matthew 23:1-7 provide the evaluation criteria for educating in life: (1) the emphasis on knowing accompanied by the emphasis of doing; (2) people are to help in identifying their own needs and should participate in goal setting; (3) teachers show by precept and example the value of doing nothing for self-glorification; (4) traditions and symbols are to be evaluated against the criterion of servanthood; (5) access to resources are to be shared as peers; and, (6) the whole environment is to reflect the unity of true community.
- Learning is focused on growth. The Pauline model utilizes principles of effective teaching and mentoring intended to bring maturity to followers. In Ephesus (Acts 19) Paul teaches in real life, combines the concepts of ministry and reflection, and utilizes peers as teacher-learners. As a teacher-mentor, Paul demonstrated concern for content (Epistle to The Ephesians), facilitation of learner's needs (1 Timothy), and identification with learners in their learning pilgrimage (1 & 2 Timothy).

4. Norms defining Christian leadership are found in Scripture. Biblical standards for leaders give content and weight to the leadership profile and become the basis for the evaluative criteria. To be a Christian leader means displaying the qualities specified in the Scripture; it does not mean that leadership styles are expressed in a similar way in every setting or culture.

Developing effective, cross-cultural, peacebuilding leaders for the global and digital realities of the 21st Century

5. Christian leadership training is primarily focused toward those persons who view themselves as responsible for their lives. Therefore the assumptions of adult education are utilized in training. These assumptions are that as individuals mature:

➢ Their self-concept moves from one being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being
➢ They accumulate a growing reservoir of experiences that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning
➢ Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles
➢ Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness.

COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING DESIGN

Four forces in educational thinking are strongly influencing the shift toward competency-based learning:

➢ A new conception of the purpose of education from the transmission of knowledge to the producing of competent people
➢ A focus on learning instead of teaching
➢ The concept of lifelong learning as the organizing principle for all education
➢ A concern for developing new ways to deliver educational resources

3 LEARNING STRATEGIES ← **2 LEARNER NEEDS** ← **1 EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

| What knowledge, skills, and attitudes does the learner possess?

What are the strengths and weaknesses? | What "value-added" experiences will help develop the leader-trainee?

LEARNING CONTRACT
+
COACHING
+
MODULES | What competencies should a leader-trainee reflect? |

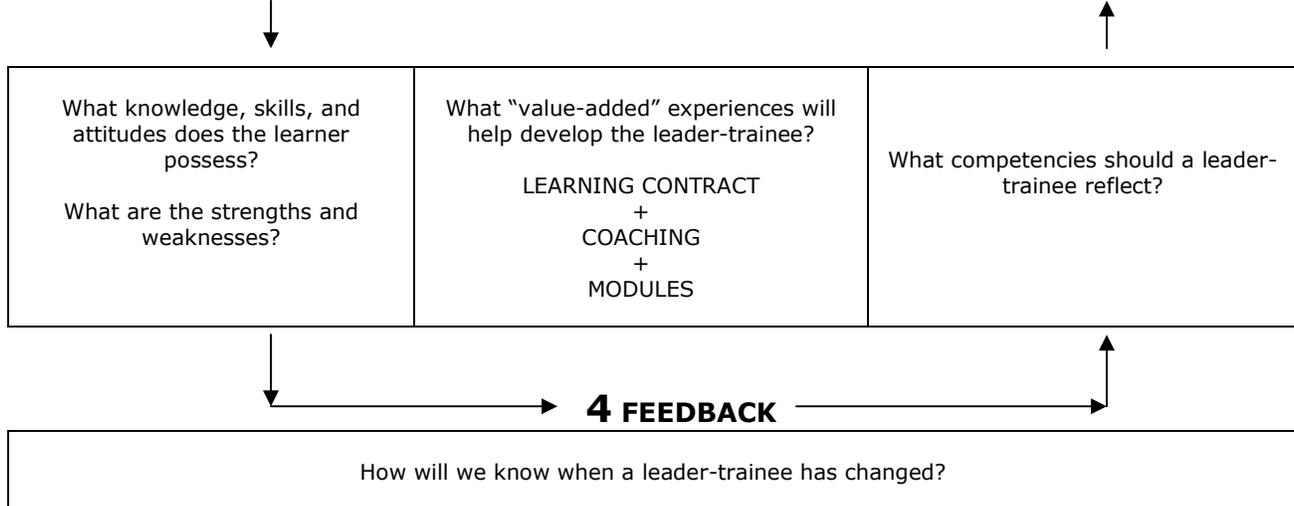**4 FEEDBACK**

How will we know when a leader-trainee has changed?

FIGURE 2. COMPETENCY-BASED LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROCESS

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