



RECLAIMING THE
CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

EDUCATION

A STUDENT'S

GUIDE

Ted Newell

Series Editor: David S. Dockery

“This brief guide to the history of education is a valuable resource for those who wish to think about what education is, what it should be, and what it possibly could be. History helps to cure our myopia and enlarge our vision. Newell does a great job of presenting a broad picture of what education has been in various cultural settings in the past. Anyone interested in thinking Christianly about education would benefit from this small but wide-ranging treatment.”

Craig A. Carter, Professor of Theology, Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, Ontario; author, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*

“In *Education*, Newell offers his readers a compact and readable history of Christians’ involvement in education. He traces both the continuities and the shifts from the time of Christ to the present. I recommend this volume for anyone wanting a clear and accessible telling of a complex story.”

Ken Badley, Professor by Special Appointment, Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, Ontario; author, *Educational Foundations in Canada and Faith and Learning*

“Get ready for a whirlwind tour through over twenty centuries of education in the Christian tradition! Newell highlights educational efforts, both formal and informal, and explores how changes in society impacted the growth, decline, and change in educational efforts by the church and society. In light of the past, Newell explores issues for the ‘next’ Christian education. A helpful orientation that will prompt needed reflection for our times.”

Kevin E. Lawson, Professor of Educational Leadership, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University; editor, *Infants and Children in the Church*; author, *Supervising and Supporting Ministry Staff and Associate Staff Ministry*

“How does one make sense of two millennia of education? Ted Newell does it effectively by exploring education as the process of *learning a culture*, guided by an animating story and vision of what really matters in life. Outlining five major historical paradigms, Newell provides a helpful map to guide readers through a complex terrain. In the process, he provides a compelling case for a renewed Christian education that challenges the flood of competing educational stories whose visions and values are not shaped by the gospel.”

Harry Fernhout, President Emeritus, The King’s University, Edmonton

“Ted Newell brings the reader on an exhilarating ride through history, tracing how the theory and practice of education has shaped, and been shaped, by both culture and Christian theology. He engages a wide breadth of literature as he seeks to make sense of the interplay and development of educational theory and practice with changing historical contexts. This small book introduces students to the world of education as it is experienced today and casts a vision of how Christians can and must be shaped by education in this post-Christian world. I highly recommend this book, not only for students, but for all Christians who work in the various fields of education. Newell offers a vision that is both realistic and hopeful with sound theological grounding and insightful cultural analysis.”

Perry G. Downs, Professor Emeritus of Educational Ministries, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

-SERIES ENDORSEMENTS-

“Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition promises to be a very important series of guides—aimed at students—intended both to recover and instruct regarding the Christian intellectual tradition.”

Robert B. Sloan, President, Houston Baptist University

“Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition is an exciting series that will freshly introduce readers to the riches of historic Christian thought and practice. As the modern secular academy struggles to reclaim a semblance of purpose, this series demonstrates why a deeply rooted Christian worldview offers an intellectual coherence so badly needed in our fragmented culture. Assembling a formidable cohort of respected evangelical scholars, the series promises to supply must-read orientations to the disciplines for the next generation of Christian students.”

Thomas Kidd, Department of History, Baylor University

“This new series is exactly what Christian higher education needs to shore up its intellectual foundations for the challenges of the coming decades. Whether students are studying in professedly Christian institutions or in more traditionally secular settings, these volumes will provide a firm basis from which to withstand the dismissive attitude toward biblical thinking that seems so pervasive in the academy today. These titles will make their way onto the required reading lists for Christian colleges and universities seeking to ensure a firm biblical perspective for students, regardless of discipline. Similarly, campus pastors on secular campuses will find this series to be an invaluable bibliography for guiding students who are struggling with coalescing their emerging intellectual curiosity with their developing faith.”

Carl E. Zylstra, President, Dordt College

EDUCATION



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EDUCATION A STUDENT'S GUIDE

Ted Newell

Education: A Student's Guide

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SERIES PREFACE

RECLAIMING THE CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

The Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition series is designed to provide an overview of the distinctive way the church has read the Bible, formulated doctrine, provided education, and engaged the culture. The contributors to this series all agree that personal faith and genuine Christian piety are essential for the life of Christ followers and for the church. These contributors also believe that helping others recognize the importance of serious thinking about God, Scripture, and the world needs a renewed emphasis at this time in order that the truth claims of the Christian faith can be passed along from one generation to the next. The study guides in this series will enable believers to see afresh how the Christian faith shapes how we live, how we think, how we write books, how we govern society, and how we relate to one another in our churches and social structures. The richness of the Christian intellectual tradition provides guidance for the complex challenges that believers face in this world.

This series is particularly designed for Christian students and others associated with college and university campuses, including faculty, staff, trustees, and other various constituents. The contributors to the series will explore how the Bible has been interpreted in the history of the church, as well as how theology has been formulated. They will ask: How does the Christian faith influence our understanding of culture, literature, philosophy, government, beauty, art, or work? How does the Christian intellectual tradition help us understand truth? How does the Christian intellectual tradition shape our approach to education? We believe that this series is not only timely but that it meets an important need, because the

secular culture in which we now find ourselves is, at best, indifferent to the Christian faith, and the Christian world—at least in its more popular forms—tends to be confused about the beliefs, heritage, and tradition associated with the Christian faith.

At the heart of this work is the challenge to prepare a generation of Christians to think Christianly, to engage the academy and the culture, and to serve church and society. We believe that both the breadth and the depth of the Christian intellectual tradition need to be reclaimed, revitalized, renewed, and revived for us to carry this work forward. These study guides seek to provide a framework to help introduce students to the great tradition of Christian thinking, seeking to highlight its importance for understanding the world, its significance for serving both church and society, and its application for Christian thinking and learning. The series is a starting point for exploring important ideas and issues such as truth, meaning, beauty, and justice.

We trust that the series will help introduce readers to the apostles, church fathers, Reformers, philosophers, theologians, historians, and a wide variety of other significant thinkers. In addition to well-known leaders such as Clement, Origen, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and Jonathan Edwards, readers will be pointed to William Wilberforce, G. K. Chesterton, T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers, C. S. Lewis, Johann Sebastian Bach, Isaac Newton, Johannes Kepler, George Washington Carver, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Michael Polanyi, Henry Luke Orombi, and many others. In doing so, we hope to introduce those who throughout history have demonstrated that it is indeed possible to be serious about the life of the mind while simultaneously being deeply committed Christians.

These efforts to strengthen serious Christian thinking and scholarship will not be limited to the study of theology, scriptural interpretation, or philosophy, even though these areas provide the framework for understanding the Christian faith for all other areas

of exploration. In order for us to reclaim and advance the Christian intellectual tradition, we must have some understanding of the tradition itself. The volumes in this series seek to explore this tradition and its application for our twenty-first-century world. Each volume contains a glossary, study questions, and a list of resources for further study, which we trust will provide helpful guidance for our readers.

I am deeply grateful to the series editorial committee: Timothy George, John Woodbridge, Michael Wilkins, Niel Nielson, Philip Ryken, and Hunter Baker. Each of these colleagues joins me in thanking our various contributors for their fine work. We all express our appreciation to Justin Taylor, Jill Carter, Allan Fisher, Lane Dennis, and the Crossway team for their enthusiastic support for this project. We offer the project with the hope that students will be helped, faculty and Christian leaders will be encouraged, institutions will be strengthened, churches will be built up, and, ultimately, that God will be glorified.

Soli Deo Gloria
David S. Dockery
Series Editor



THE POTENTIAL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

When disciplined learning tells the Christian story in a fresh way, history has shown that vibrant expressions of faith result:

- In the 800s, organized learning in a Europe united under Charlemagne brought a time of confidence when Christian culture flowered.
- The 1100s renewal of learning seen in figures like Anselm and Bernard of Clairvaux led to the first universities.
- The 1400s revival of humanistic learning in northern Europe and diffusion of books from the movable-type printing press raised interest in what Scripture really taught. The next generation saw a widespread renewal of faith in Christ.
- John Wesley, the mid-eighteenth-century evangelist to Britain and America, maintained the gains of the Great Awakening for at least another century through Bible learning carried out in small groups called “classes.”
- Denominations formed universities in the 1800s to train leaders for churches and society. University-based revivals brought urgency to the worldwide Christian movement.

Education can foster a wide renewal of the Christian story in our time and place. Initiatives in education can be a sign of Christian renewal, and feed it. Getting the story right changes people. Imaginations are fired. Believers reclaim a vision for evangelism, missions, church life, education, and family life.

This guide aims to introduce the academic field of education in a Christian perspective. It takes Christian education in the widest

perspective possible. It discusses all types of disciplined learning—schools, universities, seminaries, local churches, parachurch organizations, youth ministries, and families.

Education has a strong claim as the very first Christian intellectual tradition. The apostles Paul, John, Peter, and others wrote documents for local churches in Corinth or Rome and elsewhere where individuals engaged in a battle of knowledge. The New Testament effort might be summed up in 2 Corinthians 10:5: “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (NIV).

These chapters show how Christians accept a too-narrow understanding of education’s work. The modern world dramatically narrows the range in which historic Christian beliefs are public knowledge. This guide shows how to reclaim a Christian intellectual tradition in education.

SIGNS OF LIFE, PORTENTS OF THE FUTURE

But first, a question: Does the Christian intellectual tradition of education really need to be reclaimed?

On the surface, Christian thinking about education is much in evidence. If academic writing about education indicates a Christian intellectual tradition, then publishers issue hundreds of new books, journal articles, and curricula every month. It would be impossible to attend all Christian academic, professional, or family conferences about education that are convened all over the world every week of the year, to say nothing about the dozens of education courses in seminaries and Christian universities and innumerable websites and podcasts. Christian education displays vibrant vital signs.

Imagine an alien investigator. Even if it limited its investigation of education to conservative Protestant or evangelical families, churches, youth ministries, parachurch organizations, schools, universities, and seminaries in the early 2000s, it would find a day-school

movement of tens of thousands of schools on all continents, largely expanded since the 1960s, with dozens of curriculum publishers and two major associations.

It would find a homeschooling movement embracing nearly two million children in 2012 in the US (the largest homeschooling country) directed by books, curricula, and conferences.¹

It would find a classical education movement for day schools and homeschools, with more curricula, blogs, and conferences.

It would find conservative Protestant or evangelical universities with published rationales for existence, along with professional journals and conferences, in addition to similar intellectual activity for Catholic universities and other faith groups. The process of confirming employment at an evangelical university often elicits a specific statement of Christian beliefs from the professor. Administrators scrutinize thousands of their statements about Christianity and education. Hundreds more professors teach church education to seminary or undergraduate students.

On secular university campuses, our alien would find student groups such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Cru, and smaller groups—all teaching Christian beliefs to future leaders.

Neither would the alien find educational thinking absent in conservative churches. Sunday school materials plus mid-week and summer programming from Christian publishers would find a place in its survey. Parents would be seen absorbing programs from sources such as Focus on the Family and similar parachurch agencies. Church leaders would be noted as having the choice of offsite learning for leadership development conferences via worldwide satellite link.

Our alien might conclude that a Christian tradition of education is alive in thought and practice.

And yet . . .

¹Jeremy Redford, Danielle Battle, and Stacey Bielick, “Homeschooling in the United States: 2012,” November 2016, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED569947>.

Sociological surveys since the late 1990s reveal that as few as 40 percent of American young adults who grew up in evangelical churches still attend services regularly. The phenomenon of low adult adherence is apparent in Canada, Australia, and Europe—across Western societies.

Moreover, the faith that young adults confess is different than that of their parents and of the historic declarations of Christian faith such as the Apostles' Creed. Researcher Christian Smith memorably tagged the new faith as “Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism,” marked by five beliefs:

First, a God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth. Second, God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. Third, the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. Fourth, God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. Fifth, good people go to heaven when they die.²

Smith and fellow researchers emphasize that teens and young adults function with the restricted faith that their parents model. The life-world of teens and young adults is not its own world; it is largely copied from older adults. Parents are gatekeepers for influences that shape their children up to their teen years. However, these key educators are competing in an ecology with mass media, peers, formal education, the legal environment, and churches. The social ecology expresses long and deep social trends.³

² Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 154–55.

³ Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 118–71; David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith*, International ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011); James Penner, R. Harder, R. Hiemstra, E. Anderson, and B. Désorcy, “Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults Are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church,” Foundational Research Document Commissioned by EFC Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable (Ottawa, Canada: Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, 2012); Mark McCrindle, “A Demographic Snapshot of Christianity and Church Attenders in Australia” (Bella Vista, NSW, Australia: McCrindle Research, April 18, 2014); Vern L. Bengtson, Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

If education is the whole process of personal development, then the dismal news is that Christian education is in crisis. Despite the many evidences of intellectual activity that our alien surveyed, other factors are working against mature adherence to orthodox Christian faith. Reclaiming a Christian intellectual tradition in education is an urgent task.

DEFINING “EDUCATION”

Education can be defined as widely as “learning a culture.” The meaning of the Latin term *educare* is “to educe, to draw out latent possibilities.” While the metaphor focuses attention on individual development, education can encompass all learning that makes learners competent in a culture over a lifespan. The German word, *bildung*, means the wide-angle view of formation that educator John White simplifies as “upbringing.”⁴

The nation of Israel long had to live as God’s people in a pressurized environment where rewards came for conforming to the norm. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of most Jews in 587 BC, Jewish life took root outside Palestine—from Odessa and Samarkand in the east to Spain in the west. Jews adopted a more-or-less deliberate strategy to maintain Jewish distinctiveness. They developed an institution for their unique worship and education. First attested in Egypt, synagogues seem to have started as houses of learning, two centuries before Christ. By the first century before Christ, synagogues hosted Sabbath worship. Through distinctive worship and study, Jewish communities resisted surrounding dominant cultures and maintained their faith and way of life.⁵

Basic beliefs sustain all cultures. Big-scale stories explain the world, human origins, and human destiny. A culture or subculture may tell its animating narrative explicitly. The animating narrative

⁴ John White, *The Aims of Education Restated*, International Library of the Philosophy of Education, vol. 22 (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 5.

⁵ Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006), 99–118.

for Christians is, naturally, the Old and New Testaments. Sunday-by-Sunday, preaching explains and underlines the Christian animating narrative to its people. Over time, a culture's master narrative is its living tradition.

The apostles' metaphor for church life is *edification* (literally meaning "up-building"). It draws on the process of building a temple, course upon course of crafted stones. In the metaphor, the church is the new house of worship. This time, the house of God is a spiritual reality, and Spirit-formed persons are the crafted stones. Edification is not only for intellectual capacities. It imagines the lives of all individuals built into a collective faith expression that is true worship of God (Eph. 4:12, 16, 29; 1 Corinthians 14; 1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:5; cf. Ps. 28:5; Luke 6:48).

Not only is a big-scale story like the gospel told verbally. Four processes tell and retell the master narrative. These processes can be helpfully labeled as *Memory*, *Vision*, *Symbols*, and *Ethos*.⁶

- **Memory:** A community recalls and recasts its history or recent events in light of its master narrative.
- **Vision:** A community draws on its master narrative to lift up its Vision as a preferred future, a hope worth living for.
- **Symbols:** Symbols and rituals recapitulate the master narrative in which the society lives. Shared Symbols and rituals include and initiate new members of a community.
- **Ethos:** The animating narrative generates a way of life. An Ethos is a master narrative's right way of living.

A member of society is educated in the widest sense as she lives her society's tradition. By Memory, Vision, Symbols, and Ethos, she is led to participate in her culture.

Importantly, Memory, Vision, Symbols, and Ethos do not pass on a dead tradition. As leaders and teachers convey a society's experiences

⁶H. Fernhout, "Christian Schooling: Telling a World View Story," in *The Crumbling Walls of Certainty: Towards a Christian Critique of Postmodernity and Education*, ed. I. Lambert and S. Mitchell (Sydney, Australia: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1997), 75–96.

to the new generation, the young examine the history, question it, and push back. A tradition cannot be passively inherited. Cultural leaders, teachers, and parents adapt and reshape a society's Memory to make its cultural heritage fresh again. Memory shifts. The Vision may alter. Symbols and rituals acquire new coloring. The Ethos may shift. A living tradition prompts fresh expressions in art, politics, language, and every form of culture. Individuals may accept or reject the expressions and, with them, the animating narrative they embody. In short, the rising generation accepts and reshapes its tradition.

Renewed Christian education's content and disciplines can therefore play a major role in Christian renewal. Formal education is more than passing on propositions. Disciplined learning deliberately passes on key intellectual and moral knowledge, skills, and habits for the continued life of a society. Disciplined learning expresses Memory, Vision, Symbols, and Ethos in its content and processes.

STORY COMPETITION

Today, telling the Christian story over a flood of dissonant noise and activity takes determination. Church members who watch major sporting events or take in studio films absorb master narratives with values other than Christian ones. This means that compared to the flood of culturing inputs over the previous six days, a pastor's twenty-minute sermon struggles to form anyone in its image, even when accompanied by overhead slides or video segments.⁷

Animating narratives compete among civilizations. Decades ago, the political scientist Samuel Huntington raised the prospect of clashing civilizations. After the Cold War, Islam's story would compete with secular modern societies. When an Islamic group proposes a minaret to call its faithful to prayer in a Swiss canton, the competition of narratives is visible. Symbols clash.⁸

⁷Dwayne Huebner, "Can Theological Education Be Church Education?," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 47 (1993): 23–38; Michael Warren, "Religious Formation in the Context of Social Formation," in *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education: A Reader on the Aims, Principles and Philosophy of Christian Education*, ed. Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 1994), 202–14.

⁸Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–49.

Animating narratives compete inside civilizations too. Rival accounts of history, rival preferred futures, proposed new Symbols of a society, and alternative ethoses compete with each other. Influential philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre points out that a tradition is best understood as a long argument about its master story and identity.⁹ A culture is not usually monolithic; it includes dissonant voices in its stream. In the way that advertisement competes with advertisement and brand competes with brand, national political parties and interest groups tell rival stories of their nation's past, present, and future. Teachers in schools compete with undisciplined "teachers" who teach on small screens, twenty-four hours a day. Rival storytellers challenge Christian education in families, churches, schools, and universities.

Perhaps nowhere is story competition clearer than from long-term studies of how the media cultivates values. Communications researcher George Gerbner and researchers at the University of Pennsylvania tracked thousands of characters in network television shows over decades from the 1960s onward.¹⁰ Gerbner's studies demonstrated that heavy viewers tend to absorb mass-media attitudes about race, economic status, occupations, and gender. Heavy television and media viewers tended to adopt and follow the ideas from their main source of information. Viewers who were less influenced relied on a wider variety of information sources.

Mass-media stories cultivate a skewed way of seeing the world. This sounds less revolutionary than it is. Gerbner saw that new-world technologies pass on a worldview. Media repeats its stories like villages repeated folktales in premodern Europe, traditional African societies, and elsewhere.

Positively, schools can become sites of resistance or renewal exactly because they are not a society's only educators. Take, for

⁹Alasdair C. MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," in *Paradigms and Revolutions: Appraisals and Applications of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science*, ed. Gary Gutting (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 54–74.

¹⁰George Gerbner, "Telling Stories in the Information Age," in *Information and Behavior*, ed. Brent D. Ruben (New Brunswick, NJ and Oxford: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 3–12; *Against the Mainstream: The Selected Works of George Gerbner*, ed. M. Morgan (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

example, the value our society puts on competitiveness over cooperation. Many agencies inculcate competitiveness. Even if public schools were to reform the hidden curriculum of competition, families and institutions such as Scouting or organized sports would continue to teach competitive expectations, beliefs, and behaviors. On the other hand, schools could raise public awareness through specific programs to resist the hidden curriculum of competition.

Because host or majority cultures tell their story all the time in many ways, a subculture must find ways to keep its own story alive before adherents and initiates. Like the Jewish diaspora in Hellenistic culture, a subculture can learn to push back against stories that undermine its own narrative. To resist rivals, the Christian story must be sustained verbally. Equally, Christians must enact fresh ways of living their animating narrative.

WIDE-ANGLE EDUCATION AND FORMAL EDUCATION

Formal education or ordered learning is one component of the broad process of cultural reproduction. Formal education is not a similar task across cultures, because each varies with its choice of aims. Schooling's content imparts a culture's habits and disciplines through its procedures and rituals. *Curriculum* is a Latin term for a circular course, as in a racecourse. A repeated course includes predictable obstacles that learners must overcome.

Educators point out three forms of curriculum: (1) the stated or official written curriculum; (2) a null curriculum; and (3) a hidden curriculum. Through an educational system's disciplines, ordered learning passes on selected key aptitudes so a new generation maintains the sponsor generation's ways of life and belief.

WRITTEN CURRICULUM

The first curriculum is the *written* curriculum. It describes the formal content of schooling. In modern Western publicly funded

education, government departments of education or other similar sponsors list topics and outcomes for each grade and subject—for example, tenth grade mathematics at college preparatory level. Teachers teach and test prescribed topics. Textbooks, films, or computer programs also form part of the stated curriculum.

Choices of formal knowledge are political, because the official curriculum teaches a way of life, an Ethos. Not only education professionals but also elected officials, parents, the public, and special-interest groups influence the selection process. Knowledge in the official curriculum is privileged knowledge that reflects the outcome of a struggle for a culture's Memory and Vision. What one group of constituents values and wishes to have preserved and enhanced, another party may see as backward-tending and in need of elimination for a bright future. A written curriculum's approval symbolizes the victory of one interpretation of a culture.

NULL CURRICULUM

The second curriculum is the *null curriculum*. Curriculum making forces choices. Selections on content must be made. All knowledge cannot be packed into even twelve or thirteen years of formal schooling. Society deems some knowledge not important enough to merit inclusion. Yet silence in schools about a particular area of knowledge indicates the relative value that is placed upon that knowledge by the collective. Such silencing comes through a political process, from oversight, or from collective amnesia. The null curriculum is the content that is not covered.

A strong case can be made that the largest null curriculum in public schooling and universities today is religion. Where taught, religion is described from outside. Its concern for meaning in life is almost entirely ignored.¹¹

¹¹ Elliot W. Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall, 1994); Warren A. Nord, *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1995); W. A. Nord, *Does*

HIDDEN CURRICULUM

The third curriculum is the *hidden curriculum*. The term refers to the “unofficial rules, routines, and structures of schools through which students learn behaviors, values, beliefs, and attitudes.” Teachers and pupils come to school with expectations. An established social setting like a classroom has inherited norms. For example, teachers must receive respect. Students must defer to teacher authority and to teacher definitions of knowledge and what makes “success” in school. Students or pupils learn the norms from school administrators, other students, and most of all from their teachers who impose discipline and who possess power to assess classroom performance. “Hidden” does not imply an intention to hide or to deceive anyone; it only suggests that the procedures and intentions are mostly undocumented. The third curriculum is hidden because “elements . . . do not appear in schools’ written goals, formal lesson plans, or learning objectives.”¹² Close attention to the way that modern-era schools squeeze students into their mold shows that any schooling seeks a preferred outcome in students’ lives.

The education scholar Philip Jackson, publishing in the 1960s, showed that schools taught students to defer to higher authority. Later studies noticed that few students move from low socioeconomic schools to high social standing. The result is that mass education tends to reproduce the existing social structure. Studies in the 1980s and 1990s went on to emphasize that some student subcultures resist fitting into a majority mold. Students are not merely like clay, receiving shape from the system, but are active “agents” who work out responses to dominant ways. For example, rappers resist a system that does not suit them. However, the most recent wave sees schooling as an initiation ritual where repeated

God Make a Difference?: Taking Religion Seriously in Our Schools and Universities (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 87–107.

¹² Alan Skelton, “Studying Hidden Curricula: Developing a Perspective in the Light of Postmodern Insights,” *Curriculum Studies* 5, no. 2 (1997): 188.

procedures, rewards, and penalties—or reactions to them—serve to slot students into society’s structures.¹³

Education happens in a field of symbolic actions that go back for generations. Schooling is an enterprise with a history. Erasing and replacing deep-seated understandings is difficult. “Good education” comes less from any rational reconstruction than from our interpretation of experience—our history. What makes a “good education” is unlikely to be shifted by any top-down rationale. Efficiency-promoting proposals for education are likely to miss the way human beings come to know themselves.¹⁴

Peter McLaren, a researcher, sat in a ninth grade classroom in a Catholic school in Toronto, Canada, for months in the 1980s. He documented speech and behaviors of mainly immigrant Portuguese Catholic students and their teachers. He tabulated patterns like an anthropologist might study a Papua New Guinea language group to make a “thick interpretation.” McLaren showed that the school’s regular patterns of compliance reproduced students as future workers. The school achieved its disciplines by sheer repetition. Though the school sincerely presented the Catholic faith and accorded it formal authority, religion functioned to make students acquiesce to their worker fate. Teachers came to expect from students what their peers and administrators expected. They marginalized student experiences from the “street,” seeing them as threats. Mr. Keating (of the film *Dead Poets Society*) and mold-breaking teachers in real life are exceptions to the

¹³ Philip W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968); Jean Anyon, “Social Class and School Knowledge,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (1981): 3–42; Michael W. Apple and Philip Wexler, “Cultural Capital and Educational Transmissions: An Essay on Basil Bernstein, Class, Codes and Control: Vol. III—Towards a Theory of Educational Transmissions,” *Educational Theory* 28, no. 1 (1978): 34–43; Michael W. Apple and Nancy R. King, “What Do Schools Teach?,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 6, no. 4 (1977): 341; David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); Stuart Hall, “Encoding, Decoding,” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1999), 90–103; Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁴ Jackson, *Life in Classrooms*; Edward Farley, “The Tragic Dilemma of Church Education,” in *Caring for the Commonweal: Education for Religious and Public Life*, ed. Parker J. Palmer, Barbara G. Wheeler, and Robert W. Lynn (Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1990), 131.

conformity-producing norm. Hidden curriculum has extensive and subtle power.¹⁵

Hidden curriculum studies demonstrate how schooling imparts a preferred image of human beings. Feminist critics long ago noted that schools overlook women's lives, experiences, and activities. Schools form their ideal of future roles from occupations for which men have traditionally been suited. Moreover, when schools do not acknowledge the traits, dispositions, or skills traditionally associated with reproductive processes, they harm both sexes. Public schools reproduce modern-era people. The worldwide spread of modern Western schooling gives the impression of a "one best way," but modern-era public schools shape students to fit a pluralistic, democratic, capitalist, individualistic, and egalitarian culture.¹⁶

Hidden curriculum is schooling's cultivating process. Learning's disciplines—its procedures, rewards, and punishments—lead students to live a story. Educational procedures amount to rituals through which students project their futures as members of society. The hidden curriculum is what stays with a person when the formal lessons have been forgotten.

Education is an undertaking in a community whose aims is the disciplining of various modes of interpretation already occurring in the life of that community.¹⁷

This strange quote is from Edward Farley. He speaks of education as learning to interpret. Disciplined learning is about making meaning, about fitting new knowledge into patterns, about trying to see things whole.

¹⁵ Peter McLaren, *Schooling as a Ritual Performance: Toward a Political Economy of Educational Symbols and Gestures* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

¹⁶ Jane Roland Martin, "What Should We Do with a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?," in *Changing the Educational Landscape: Philosophy, Women, and Curriculum* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 154–69.

¹⁷ Edward Farley, "The Tragic Dilemma of Church Education," in *Caring for the Commonwealth: Education for Religious and Public Life*, ed. Parker J. Palmer, Barbara G. Wheeler, and Robert W. Lynn (Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1990), 131–2.

Written, null, and hidden curricula together aim for a distinctive formation. Across cultures, schooling's three curricula shape students for a preferred image or ideal. Disciplined learning is an integrated process of cultivating a desired kind of human being.

RECLAIMING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

This guide surveys education as a single field. Different vantage points on the field are possible. *Historical*, *philosophical*, or *social theory* lenses yield perspectives on the discipline of education.

When *philosophy* provides the lens, successive understandings of knowledge make textbook models of education. The models are entitled “realism,” “perennialism,” or “student-centered.” These labels appear tidy and accurate. Without more historical context, though, it is hard to understand why one philosophy fades, only to be replaced by another. In contrast, *anthropology* sees education as a function of cultural transmission. The lens of *psychology* underlines different learning theories. These underpin different ways individuals are taught. Each lens gives a helpful but partial picture.

Reclaiming a Christian intellectual tradition in education needs more than a restatement of philosophy or theology. The bigger picture is that a philosophy of education or a learning psychology makes sense within its cultural setting in a particular time.

Education is a practice. It tells a story by passing on a tradition. Agencies of education such as family, school, or mass media form an *ecology* of cultural transmission. *Paradigm thinking* has been especially helpful for fields where Christian beliefs are expressed as practices. Pioneering philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn brought paradigm thinking to the history of science; he leads us to see different education ecologies as alternative paradigms. The theologian Hans Küng used paradigms to make sense of eras in church history, missions scholar David Bosch explained paradigms of Christian mission, and the religious educator Mary Boys used paradigms to find the basic contours of Protestant and Catholic

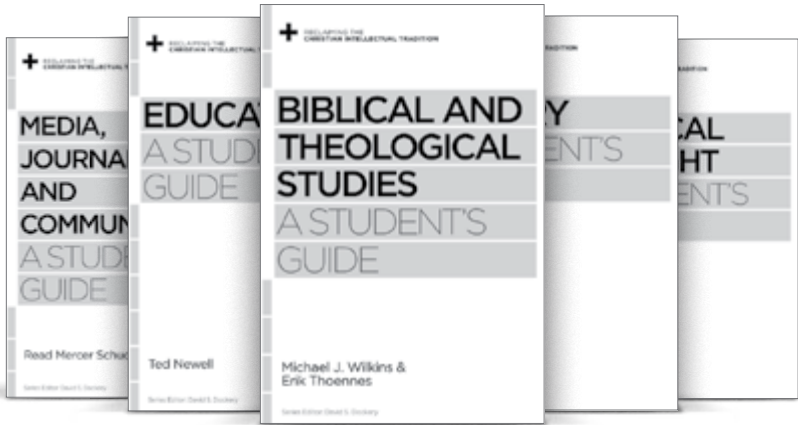
religious education. Theologian and philosopher Harry Fernhout's story model, with its elements of Memory, Vision, Symbols, and Ethos, sees education ecologies as paradigms.¹⁸

This guide profiles five distinct paradigms or traditions of formation to show how Christians thought about education in different eras throughout history. Christian education is an enterprise with two thousand years of history. Selected paradigms derive from Jesus's ministry, from the Greco-Roman city-state, from cloistered settings, from the era of Scientific Revolution, and from the subjectivist reply to science. Understanding ways of education in their historical context enables us to see how Christian educators can reclaim their task.

¹⁸Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition*, Fourth ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Hans Küng and David Tracy, *Paradigm Change in Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1989); David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, vol. 16, American Society of Missiology series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991); Mary C. Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989).



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The Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition series is designed for Christian students and those associated with college campuses, including faculty, staff, and trustees. These guidebooks address the common challenges in major academic disciplines by reclaiming the best of the Christian intellectual tradition—demonstrating that vibrant, world-changing Christianity assumes a commitment to the integration of faith and scholarship. With illustrations, reflection questions, and a list of resources for further study, this series is sure to be a timely tool in both Christian and secular universities, influencing the next generation of leaders in the church, the academy, and the world.

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