CHAPTER 4

Framing Information Literacy within the Disciplines of Theological Education

WILLIAM BADKE, TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATORS HAVE AGREED FOR DECADES THAT SIMPLY providing a knowledge-based education is inadequate in seminary instruction. Seminaries build scholars who are at the same time practitioners, embodying their knowledge so that they develop expertise and practical abilities to minister to others. While the actual focus of that ministry may vary widely, it is clear that the purpose of seminary is to produce knowledgeable practitioners.[1]

Those who see academic disciplines as embodiments of knowledge miss the point that they are in reality "communities of practice."[2] That is, disciplines are dynamic entities in which a history of interaction over key issues actually forms the content. This is expressed succinctly in the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education* concept, Scholarship as a Conversation.[3] The content of disciplines only exists and thrives in a vital community of disciplinarians who converse to shape it and define its purposes.

Theological educators thus face a potential dilemma: While there is much content to disseminate in courses, disciplines are about practice as much as they are about content. If the goal of theological education is the development of practitioners, then teaching disciplinary practice is essential to the instructional process.[4] Unfortunately, the first barrier for most students lies in the fact that they are not members of the disciplines they are studying. While they may learn enough facts to pass examinations, unless they are enculturated in disciplines, they can remain outsiders to the scholarly conversation that their professors understand well.

Enculturation involves enabling students to become participating citizens in disciplines. Lave and Wenger described such enculturation as "legitimate peripheral participation."[5] It is legitimate in that it has to be an authentic in-discipline experience, not just an imitation of disciplinary activities. It is peripheral, at least at first, because it does not engage the central discipline but works at the edges of it, gradually moving students closer to the center as time goes on. The best analogy is that of a recent immigrant who comes into a country, participates in various activities in common with citizens, and gradually becomes more centrally a citizen in thought and action.

We might ask why theological students even need to engage in enculturation. Most of them come from a faith community and thus understand at least some of the content and conventions of the disciplines they are studying. While this is true, there are inevitable barriers to full participation. It is one thing to have a lay grasp of the details of theological disciplines, but another to be involved in disciplines as practitioners. Theological education, in fact, contributes to development of barriers by setting up professors as experts and students as learners. When we add the peculiar cultures of communities found within disciplines and the rigorous methods practiced in disciplines, we find many students are alienated to a greater or lesser degree as they begin taking courses.

When it comes to information literacy, it is possible to teach students generic research methods, but these methods often fail to help them become full participants in disciplines. Thus, the concept of "situated information literacy" is better positioned to help students become disciplinarians. Situated information literacy argues that the goals of research differ from discipline to discipline and that the only truly viable approach to instruction is to do it within the context of disciplines.[6]

What is a Discipline?

While disciplines may well be described as "communities of practice,"[7] disciplinary culture needs to be viewed as complex and nuanced. Along with my colleague, Robert Farrell,[8] I have argued that disciplinary culture consists of three foundational elements: epistemology, metanarrative, and method.[9]

Epistemology involves the knowledge base of a discipline–how it developed, who the major players are (past and present) and what criteria make one piece of knowledge more authoritative than another. Its closest connection to the *Framework* is the concept, Authority is Constructed and Contextual.[10] Clearly, each discipline has a foundational knowledge that is formed and reshaped by the research done in the discipline. Understanding the nature of that knowledge and of the value placed on it by members of the discipline is a crucial first step in disciplinary understanding. Lambek, for example, has argued this about disciplines: “Each is a tradition of scholarship building upon certain evolving epistemological commitments and judgments.”[11] Thus epistemology sees the knowledge base as not only growing but finding its justification in the culture (metanarrative) and methods of the discipline. Disciplinarians take the primary role in assessing the authority of the discipline’s knowledge. This is not to say that the epistemology of any discipline is uniform. While there may be mainstream understandings, there are always participants who challenge what a discipline claims to know and the ways in which it evaluates its knowledge (thus affirming that authority is contextual).

Metanarrative, a culture’s understanding of the beliefs and norms that shape its story, is at the heart of what we mean by saying that a discipline is a “community of practice.”[12] The concept of metanarrative answers questions like: What motivates scholars in this discipline? How varied is their internal culture? Members of a discipline recognize one another and understand one another. They agree to an ethos that defines them as scholars of a subject area and provides them with a cultural sense of how they function as citizens of the discipline. No discipline, however, has a monolithic metanarrative. There may be a broad core understanding but, like any culture, there can be dramatic variants. Recent research has criticized the very notion of disciplinary metanarratives, though it is hard to imagine any discipline without a culture (as varied as it may be) that holds it together.[13] Grasping the nature of a disciplinary culture is key to becoming a member and player in the discipline.

The *Framework* describes metanarrative with Scholarship as a Conversation.[14] That is because scholarship is not an individual but an interactive function, scholar to scholar. Metanarrative also interacts extensively with epistemology (the information we value, based on the mandates of the culture we live in) and with method (which is determined by the cultural mandates of the discipline). We can separate the three modes of disciplines conceptually, but in practice they function together, each informing the other. As a trinity of factors, they enable an ongoing conversation in the discipline around best practices, findings and variant explanations.

Method is the means by which a discipline advances. It is crucial that the research within a discipline be done by means agreed to by disciplinary practitioners, or there is no way to determine the authority of research findings. Students who do research and write outside of recognized norms for the discipline will find themselves contradicted by their professors. This is not to say that there are not voices in every discipline who discount existing methods or suggest even radically new ones. But all methods have to stand up to the test of the academy–that is, to the disciplinary practitioners who pass judgment on what methods will survive and what will be rejected as illegitimate. Method is governed both by epistemology (what information we value and affirm) and by metanarrative (how research methods reflect the ethos and goals of the discipline).[15]

The growing movement of interdisciplinary studies in theological education may seem to contradict the disciplinary themes we have just described. Does an interdisciplinary approach not contradict the very notion of disciplinary cultures and method? No. When scholars from two or more disciplines work together, a new discipline emerges. These scholars come to share a new ethos (built around the values of interdisciplinarity and the disciplinary cultures they come from) and a set of methods they need to agree upon. As they do their work, they also establish a knowledge base. It seems impossible to do genuine scholarly work outside of the environment of disciplinary conventions, even if these have evolved in an interdisciplinary context.

Understanding the Disciplines of Theological Education

Armed with an understanding of the nature of disciplines and informed by relevant concepts in the *Framework,* it is possible to establish a means to understand each discipline and thus to function within its culture and discourse. This is the ultimate goal of any entry of novices into a discipline: to begin thinking, speaking, and researching like the citizens of the culture. Simmons has argued that librarians need to become “disciplinary discourse mediators:”

> *The librarian can teach the … student the ecology of the disciplinary environment, with the subject scholar delving more deeply into one specific discipline’s practices. This cooperative approach, involving both the librarian and the scholar in the initiation of … students into a particular discourse community, provides students both a view of the breadth as well as experience with the depth of disciplinary research.*[16]

Librarians need to help develop researchers who can formulate disciplinary-sensitive research questions/theses, locate the highest quality and most relevant resources, identify the scholarly conversations, engage with those conversations, and write like disciplinary citizens.

That may seem like a very tall order. Who are librarians to think that this is a possible, or even desirable, role for them? Is not the introduction of students into disciplines the work of professors? That would be the case if we were seeing consistent signs that students were being successfully enculturated. Yet professors themselves express dismay over the poor levels of student research and the limited quality of student discourse. Christine Wenderoth's interview study with seminary faculty reflects this dilemma: "So, faculty see that students can't do research (and so can't learn from each other the way they did in graduate school, supposedly). Yet, by their own admission, these same faculty are not teaching research to their students, sometimes feeling guilty about that, sometimes just angry."[17]

The seminary world does have two advantages over larger universities. First, seminary librarians, because of accreditation standards, are generally faculty rather than staff. Second, the relatively smaller size of seminaries means that it is possible for librarians to have more significant input into issues related to student disciplinary information literacy.

What follows is an attempt to build a model for disciplinary understanding and information literacy, using the most central seminary disciplines: biblical studies, theology, and pastoral studies. True, there are many more disciplines: counseling, apologetics, justice studies, and so on, but our analysis is not intended to be exhaustive, only to provide examples of ways in which librarians along with faculty can develop a consciousness of the tasks involved in student disciplinary enculturation. With our first discipline, biblical studies, we will do a fairly extensive analysis. Following disciplines will engage the same analytic questions more briefly.

Clearly, each discipline in theological education is complex and multi-faceted. Rather than focusing on a discipline's diversity, we will identify the core elements that define the discipline and then branch out into its varieties. We recognize that, for seminary disciplines, the worldviews of scholars can create significant divergences, yet there are still foundational values and methods that remain.

Biblical Studies as a Discipline

The field of biblical studies has a very long history, going back to intra-biblical interpretation of earlier biblical writings by later ones. Fortunately, we have many published histories of biblical scholarship that provide insight into how we got to today's version of the discipline.[18] In the following analysis, we will ask pointed questions around the three primary elements of biblical studies as a discipline–epistemology, metanarrative, and method–in an attempt to support students as they become enculturated.

Biblical Studies: Epistemology

Question #1—What is the most essential knowledge in the discipline?

For biblical scholars the text is utterly foundational. No biblical scholar, however unconventional, is flippant about the primacy of the biblical text. The text is more foundational to biblical scholars than method or even than metanarrative, both of which arise from the text. As Kenneth Hagen has argued: "If you want to talk about method, be realistic. We begin with the text, the Book. We begin with eyes, hands, minds, questions, issues, goals, and yes, deadlines. The task is study and interpretation. How to read the Book? The best way is to start by reading-slowly."[19]

Further, the text is best informed by the environment out of which it developed, so understanding that environment is crucial. Here, students will need to be introduced to writings of the Ancient Near East, texts of Judaism that are beyond the biblical canon, and all the ancient historical matter that has come down to us from biblical studies. For some scholars, the primary literature under consideration also encompasses the history of the reception of the biblical text through the Fathers, the Scholastics, the Reformers, and beyond.

Secondary sources have their place as well. More on this in answer to the next question.

Question #2—How did the knowledge base develop over time?

This may seem like a simple question requiring us to trace the history of biblical study and arrive at an understanding of the literature the discipline depends upon. The fact is, however, that the history of biblical study is varied and convoluted. Much of it has been shaped by various presuppositions about the text and various theological beliefs. While that is the case, we can explain knowledge base development in a way that, though simplistic, has enough truth in it to make it workable: The knowledge base developed as biblical practitioners over time sifted through all that had been written and then achieved some form of consensus as to what was important. Here we have the work of Church Fathers, Scholastics, Reformers, Biblical criticism pioneers, and modern scholars.

A two-fold caution needs to be raised here: The knowledge base of biblical studies is not uniform nor is it static. This is where epistemology, metanarrative, and method interact vigorously. While there are foundational elements in the biblical literature base, that base is also the product of a wide variety of belief systems (metanarrative) that have used divergent methods to create a landscape that is not nearly as uniform, nor as settled in its content, as a beginning student may think. This is where the idea from the *Framework* that Authority is Constructed and Contextual has particular value.[20] To argue that the accepted knowledge base of biblical studies simply developed by adding one writing after another to it is to miss the point that what survives has been negotiated in the scholarly community so that the authority of any piece of literature is based on having passed tests for authority.[21]

Biblical Studies: Metanarrative

Metanarrative gets at the heart of the culture, belief system, and goals of the discipline. To enter a field of study, understanding its metanarrative is essential to determining how to belong.

Question #1—What motivates biblical scholars?

Most seasoned biblical scholars would point to the biblical text as their motivational core: They want to understand the text in light of… but we must pause here, because this is where the complexity of biblical scholar metanarrative reveals itself. If we were to compare the metanarrative of biblical scholarship to language, we would have to say that there is a central language but several related languages and dialects. It is an often uncomfortable reality that the motivation of each biblical scholar arises out of that scholar's presuppositions, belief system, and vision for the purpose of the text.

The foundational motive of biblical scholarship is exegesis–the reading of meaning from the text. Before scholars can determine what should be done with biblical passages, they need to understand them. Thus, the biblical commentary, and numerous books/articles directly on the exegesis of the biblical text continue to abound. Were we just to look at these products, we might assume that biblical scholarship is simply discourse over understandings of the text. And there would be good reason to believe this, considering the number of references to biblical history, extra-biblical sources, and so on that fill biblical commentaries. Massey Shepherd, somewhat sarcastically, referred to the critical biblical commentary as, "A filing cabinet of possibly helpful clues to a reader."[22] Yet there is much more diversity in biblical studies than beginning students assume. Understanding the text is a foundational value, but that value is complex in its practice.

Question #2—How diverse is the biblical studies metanarrative?

Biblical studies has a quite wide metanarrative. While there are some scholars who doggedly exegete the text, probing its meaning to evoke the message communicated by its original author, most biblical scholarship also recognizes that biblical study is to a greater or lesser extent "critical." That is, there is an assumption that there are few easy answers in biblical scholarship, and the ways in which we view the text, our presuppositions if you will, largely govern the conclusions we make.[23]

If, for example, we consider the Old Testament text to have developed over time, so that many of its books have no single author but were compiled from several sources, or if we challenge the original dating of the books (seeing Deuteronomy as the product of the late pre-exilic era, etc.), this will reshape our face-value interpretations in fairly dramatic ways. For a student entering the world of biblical scholarship, the following simple example is helpful. It relates to the differences between two common books on biblical exegesis, both coming from the same publisher.

Gordon Fee's *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* focuses on interpreting the biblical text in its historical and cultural context. Fee argues that "exegesis is primarily concerned with intentionality: What did the author *intend* his original readers to understand?"[24] There is no significant reference to alternative methods of exegeting the text. For Fee, the metanarrative of the biblical scholar involves a consuming desire to discover what the presumed author meant in that author's historical-cultural context. Fee's presupposition is that the text needs to be taken more or less at face value, given that genres and the author's ways of understanding text in his day will shape our understanding.

John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holliday, using the same publisher as Fee, present a very different vision of exegesis in their book, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. While they see interpreting the meaning of the biblical text as foundational (the common metanarrative for biblical scholars), their presupposition is that most biblical books "appear to have developed over lesser and greater lengths of time and many persons probably contributed to their formation."[25] With the lack of a concept of a single author and the addition of a long history of text formation, the task of finding meaning takes a turn toward enlisting critical methods that do a broader analysis of the text. Thus, Hayes and Holliday devote most of their book to describing types of criticism that can be enlisted in exegesis–textual, historical, grammatical, literary, form, tradition, redaction, structuralist, and canonical. It is not that finding the meaning of the text is unimportant but that doing so is more complicated than it appears on face value.

The aspirations of biblical scholars vary as well. For some, academic study of the text is enough. For others the text is sacred Scripture so that exegesis naturally leads to application in preaching and teaching. For still others, texts must speak to common social issues like feminism, post-colonialism, social inequality, justice, and so on. In all cases, finding meaning in the text is foundational, but the purposes to which the text and its understanding are to be directed will vary. Basic tools like *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*[26] can form a doorway for students into the main metanarrative versions that guide biblical methods active today.[27]

Biblical Studies: Method

Question #1: What are the standard methods used in biblical studies?

Once we have understood the nature of the epistemology and metanarrative of biblical studies, we find that these two elements govern the way method is done. In understanding the biblical text, exegesis is the primary method, with a focus either on the text itself (language, grammar, historical-cultural setting) or on identifying the nature of the text using a variety of critical methodologies (tradition, source, form, redaction, etc.) which leads then to a nuanced interpretation of the meaning or meanings. This is where the *Framework* element, Searching as Strategic Exploration, can have value in helping students to focus on identifying in their searches the varying approaches used by disciplinary researchers in their work.[28]

Question #2: What alternative methods are gaining acceptance in biblical studies?

Students need to know that the method employed in any piece of biblical analysis is often the product of a particular biblical studies metanarrative variation. Is this a redaction study, a study employing source criticism, or a form critical study? Is the intent grammatical-historical study of the text at face value or is its goal to fracture colonial understandings of the text to understand it better in a post-colonial world? Search, within biblical studies writing, has to be strategic in order to draw out the emphases and beliefs behind them.

Our current search tools, unfortunately, do not provide filters to separate out the various methodologies (as does a database like PsycINFO). This means that students need to have eyes to see beyond the mere words in book and article titles to the metanarrative-driven methods that underlie these works.

Whether the methodological approach involves grammatical analysis, redaction history, or post-colonial criticism,[29] students need to pay attention to the presuppositions that govern method. In the face of such complexity, a student can use the categories of epistemology, metanarrative and method as roadmaps to move intelligently into each of these critical worlds.

Theological Studies as a Discipline

We have devoted considerable space to biblical studies in order to demonstrate that disciplines can be complex and that students being enculturated into a discipline need to understand multiple and various signposts. As our first discipline showed, there may well be a core knowledge base, mainstream metanarrative and agreed-upon methods, but there are also multiple variations.

Theological Studies: Epistemology

Question #1—What is the most essential knowledge in the discipline?

Of all the disciplines of theological education, theology represents the greatest diversity. On one hand, theology can be viewed as an expression of the convictions of the church (in each of its many forms and beliefs), thus making theological statements equivalent to faith statements. On the other, theology has long been an object of academic study. For seminarians, it is (and needs to be) both, since theological education is rigorous but has practice as its goal.

To delineate the essential knowledge base of theology, we need first to define the term "theology." A conservative approach would argue: "More precisely, the word [theology] denotes teaching about God and his relation to the world from creation to the consummation, particularly as it is set forth in an ordered, coherent manner."[30] Other scholars, operating outside of a conservative mindset, find it exceedingly difficult these days to define theology, now that this discipline has shattered into multiple approaches. Yet even these scholars will argue that there is a coherent epistemology. John Kent writes: "The final authority of Scripture and tradition remains unimpaired, however diverse interpretation may become: although there are many cases in which Scripture and tradition settle nothing, nothing can be settled apart from them."[31]

We thus find two foundations for theology's knowledge base: The Christian Scriptures and the tradition that has developed around them from their writing to the present day.

Question #2—How did the knowledge base develop over time?

The doing of theology is as old as the writing of the Christian Scriptures themselves in that later biblical writers often drew theological themes from earlier writers.

It is not difficult for theological students to discover the history (tradition) of theological thinking and to recognize the importance of the work of the Church Fathers, Scholastics, Reformers, Counter-Reformers, and so on, to the knowledge base of theology. While all of this developed through forces that the *Framework* would describe with the concepts, Authority is Constructed and Conceptual, and Scholarship as a Conversation, students need to see that the knowledge base of theology is a negotiated one. Innumerable writings over the history of the church were discounted or disputed to such an extent that they were ultimately deemed not authoritative. Others have risen to generally accepted status (Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and so on). Newer theologians all face evaluation by the disciplinary academy. Some of their works will survive the passage of time, while others will not.

Theological Studies: Metanarrative

Question #1—What motivates theologians?

It may seem simplistic to argue that theologians are devoted to understanding their world in the context of the Divine, but this is foundational. In this sense, theology is inquiry.[32] It is a quest to know and understand the Divine in relationship with the world, and thus to act. While it can have a purely academic motive, most often theologizing seeks to bear some fruit to improve human understanding, to probe difficult issues, or even to improve the human condition. Yet the motivation to do theology is tempered by the contexts within which theologians find themselves. Franke argues: "It is not the intent of theology simply to set forth, amplify, refine, and defend a timeless and fixed orthodoxy."[33] We must recognize that theologians are seekers and interpreters. Even if they believe in an infallible Scripture, all discussion that arises from it is the work of humans living in context. Just as authority is constructed and contextual,[34] so theologians recognize that their work is human and very much based both on their presuppositions and on the contexts in which they function.

The twentieth-century division between conservative (focusing on theology rooted in the biblical text and traditions congruent with it) and liberal (focusing on doing theology that is congruent with the modern world's understanding of itself and its aspirations) has now fragmented. The two main streams are actually based on a more foundational context, sometimes described as "theology from above" and "theology from below." Paul Tillich provided a good deal of clarity to the distinction by referring to "kerygmatic theology" and "apologetic, or answering, theology."[35] The former is theology from above practiced within the believing community. It is intended to inform the church of its belief system derived from Scripture and tradition. The latter is a theology that considers crucial questions in the larger world and attempts to respond to them theologically, thus starting from below in the world of humans.

Each theology has its risks. Kerygmatic approaches resist dialogue with other systems of thought and thus can be insular. Answering theology must not forget its roots. As Tillich argues regarding the latter: "It loses itself if it is not based on the kerygma as the substance and criterion of each of its statements."[36] Most theologians today offer a blend of the two, giving them differing emphases.

Question #2—How diverse is the theological studies metanarrative?

The metanarrative of theology has, in the past century, become exceedingly diverse. This can be attributed to a variety of factors, though the growth of Postmodernism is seen as a key driver. Van Huyssteen argued: “Even the briefest overview of our contemporary theological landscape reveals the startling fragmentation caused by what is commonly called 'the postmodern challenge' of our times.”[37]

This should not cause the theological student to despair, because there are common patterns through the diversity. One represents the distinction between theologies from above and below. Within kerygmatic approaches we find three major streams: biblical theology (focus on theology as woven through the biblical narrative), systematic theology, and historical theology. Most theologians devote themselves to one or another of those streams, though overlap and even integration of approaches are possible. For answering theologies, there is generally a distinct interest in a specific issue: post-colonialism, liberation, feminism, and so on.

A second pattern distinguishes between those who take philosophical approaches to theology (something that has existed since the Church Fathers) or a biblical and tradition-based orientation. Among the latter, many theologians decry the influence of non-Christian philosophies, from Platonism to Postmodernism, on theological work.

Theological Studies: Method

Question #1: What are the standard methods used in theological studies?

Question #2: What alternative methods are gaining acceptance in theological studies?

For theology, method is driven by metanarrative and epistemology. The values you hold regarding the theological task determine the methods you will choose and the knowledge base you affirm. Each type of theology has its own method, with variants. Thus, for example, a biblical theologian generally has little concern to systematize his/her work outside of the embedded narrative, a historical theologian is most interested in the discussions of theology through history, and a liberation theologian enlists the Bible and theology to form a response to the oppressed and to the oppressive systems in the world.

The methods thus vary, and theological students must remain vitally aware of the context within which they are working, both its motivations and the knowledge base it affirms. We can never assume that there is only one way to do theology.

Pastoral Theology as a Discipline

We now turn to a discipline that is less text-based and more oriented toward practice. Within pastoral theology we include a variety of sub-topics: pastoral care, preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, Christian education, and so on. Though there is a great deal of diversity, pastoral theology unites itself in praxis, that is, putting belief and theory into practice. As such, it is based in other disciplines like biblical studies, theology and church history rather than simply being a set of skills divorced from other theological subjects. At the same time, it is guided by newer disciplines such as sociology, psychology, justice studies, and so on. Browning, in the Theology and Pastoral Care series from Fortress Press, spells out the emphases and potential tensions in its series foreword: "Our purpose … [is to] (1) retrieve the theological and ethical foundations of the Judeo-Christian tradition for pastoral care, (2) develop lines of communication between pastoral theology and other disciplines of theology, (3) create an ecumenical dialogue on pastoral care, and (4) do this in such a way as to affirm, yet go beyond, the recent preoccupation of pastoral care with secular psychotherapy and other social sciences."[38]

"Pastoral Theology" as a term is well chosen. The praxis of ministry is immersed in theological thinking. Pamela and Michael Cooper-White, for example, stress that, "Practices of ministry … do not exist apart from theology."[39] Thus, whatever direction it takes, pastoral theology is not mere social work or secular counseling. It only achieves its purposes in the context of the biblical-theological foundation that defines it.

Pastoral Theology: Epistemology

Pastoral theology has a knowledge base, which in some ways is ancient and in others changes constantly with transformations in society.

Question #1—What is the most essential knowledge in the discipline?

Like theology itself, pastoral theology can be a discipline from above or from below, though many pastoral theologians practice elements of both. From above, the knowledge base of theology rests in biblical teaching and the various traditions of ministry practice that have come down to us through the centuries. Pastoral theologians from above stress that the Bible itself is the primary source for true ministry praxis, and that this source has been further enhanced by the traditions that interpreted biblical instruction about pastoral work. Secondary literature in this mode of thinking seeks to interpret biblical and theological mandates in terms of praxis.

Alternatively, many pastoral theologians today are not content simply to be informed by the Bible and tradition, as if their theology dictates their practice in every way. For them, the traditional knowledge base has its value but so does new thinking in which praxis informs a reinterpretation of theology or even develops new theological thinking. Cooper and Cooper argue: "Practical theologians … are generally no longer content merely to apply received dogma, but as of the later twentieth-century claimed the authority of practices themselves to instruct and inform theological reflection."[40] Thus new publications in the field can move beyond tradition to forge new thinking and updated theological understanding.

Question #2—How did the knowledge base develop over time?

The knowledge in pastoral theology is a result of a long history of reflection on practice. Over time, pastoral theologians have recounted their experiences, published guides and theoretical pieces, and gradually shaped our thinking about ministry as theological praxis. Newer voices are involved in rethinking old ideas or shaping new ones. Since this discipline's writings emerge out of reflection and instruction based in experience, the newer voices tend to be practitioners as often as they are scholars with high-level academic credentials. Thus, students of pastoral theology may well find that the authors they respect lack doctorates but have years or decades of experience.

Pastoral Theology: Metanarrative

As with most disciplines of theological education today, the metanarrative of pastoral theology is fragmenting. While there is a foundational cultural understanding among pastoral theologians, there are also variants that can put the culture at odds with itself.

Question #1—What motivates pastoral theologians?

Pastoral theologians function as mediators between belief and action. As Steyn and Masango have argued, "Not only should practical theology be energised by its theology, it should also, as its name implies, be practical in its nature, offering help to all people in need of pastoral care."[41] With regard to the latter, where theology is interpreted to provide such help, the work of pastoral theology is cultural and methodological, enlisting whatever tools are available to determine both needs and responses. Browning probably said it best when he argued:

> *For a practical theology to be genuinely practical, it must have some description of the present situation, some critical theory about the ideal situation, and some understanding of the processes, spiritual forces, and technologies required to get from where we are to the future ideal, no matter how fragmentarily and incompletely that ideal can be realized.*[42]

Question #2—How diverse is the pastoral theology metanarrative?

Because pastoral theology involves praxis, its metanarrative can serve many different goals as various pastoral theologians deal with different needs.

Some, for example, have a problem with the individualism of much of pastoral theology, arguing that pastoral theologians must also be concerned with the larger community.[43] Others find their ethos in social justice, arguing that we cannot properly help people until societal structures and abuses are overcome. For them, the metanarrative echoes that of famous Christian activists like Martin Luther King.

Since pastoral theology covers a wide range of types of ministries, metanarratives may be expressed in a passion for preaching, religious education, pastoral counseling, and so on. Each shapes the common metanarrative of praxis with its own interests and emphases.

Pastoral Theology: Method

Question #1: What are the standard methods used in pastoral theology?

Question #2: What alternative methods are gaining acceptance in pastoral theology?

When it comes to method, the things pastoral theologians do are too numerous to describe here. We have a clear link between epistemology (especially secondary literature) and method in that the major methodological advances are made by practitioners who write about their work, their methods, and their goals. From there, the scholarly conversation is at work as pastoral theologians critique and build upon one another's work. The literature is expansive, and new methods are constantly being initiated. Jaison writes of pastoral theology: "It is a critical, constructive and grounded theological reflection by communities of faith, carried on consistently in the contexts of their 'praxis', which here denotes a combination of knowledge born of analytical objectivity and distance, practical wisdom and creative skills."[44]

Pastoral theologians enlist many of the other disciplines of working with people–psychotherapy, sociology, public speaking, education–but they "sanctify" those methods by putting them into the context of theologically interpreted praxis.

Finding a Path to Disciplinary Inclusion

We have considered a method of disciplinary analysis that leads to a deeper understanding of how three sample theological education disciplines function. The same could be done with the other disciplines. We have seen that the *Framework,* particularly the concepts Authority is Constructed and Contextual, Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as a Conversation, and Searching as Strategic Exploration, provide understandings that can help such disciplinary analysis.

Two questions emerge. First, how can understanding of disciplines through the model described above actually help students to enter into disciplines so that their articulation and research are done at a level of insiders rather than outsiders? Second, what role can librarians take in the task of helping theological students become disciplinarians? Let us address each question in turn.

Disciplinary Understanding and Enculturation

Our students come to us as relative outsiders to the disciplines they will be studying. They may have some undergraduate religious or theological education, but not at the level that will help them properly belong. Their professors are passionate about their subjects, prone to jargon and concepts that sometimes go over their students' heads (as many librarians can attest to having heard from students). For students, starting in a course is like entering a conversation at mid-point, knowing that the discussion has a history but failing to grasp what that history might entail.

When it comes to research and writing, students often lack understanding of the nature of the knowledge base, the way authors in a discipline comport themselves and engage in the scholarly conversation, and the common methods and conventions of expression favored by the discipline.

Disciplinary analysis around the themes of epistemology, metanarrative, and method, can open up a discipline to the kind of understanding that goes deeper than knowing content, and instead moves into the very culture of those who practice it. While experience in the discipline is required to deepen the enculturation, disciplinary analysis can form an entry point to making that deeper cultural understanding happen.

The Role of Librarians

Many theological librarians have few venues to enable disciplinary analysis. Why, then, are we even considering using such a model in our work? We do this for one simple reason: Librarians are well equipped to think in terms of disciplinary cultures while faculty, as diligent as they are, can struggle to find time and means to impart enculturation to their students, simply hoping it will happen to some measure.

This is a unique opportunity for librarians to bring the value of their work into the academy by engaging with faculty regarding the following:

1. Our students struggle with research. They often do not understand our assignments and write in ways unfamiliar to our disciplines.
2. Imparting knowledge and showing students how to use databases for research is not enough to make them disciplinary practitioners. We see evidence of that in the often low quality of their written work.
3. The problem is that students have not yet been enculturated into our disciplines.
4. As academic librarians, we have a model that may help.

So how would you as a librarian use this model? You could simply introduce it to faculty. You could co-teach a session with a faculty member in a student classroom in which you would explain elements of the model, and the professor would articulate the content of the discipline's epistemology, metanarrative and method. You and the professor could co-develop guides to the cultures of the professor's discipline, offering links to representative writing or statements of preferred method. Your reference interviews with students could include elements of disciplinary analysis that explain how to best research and write a project.

You can work with faculty to develop learning outcomes and assignment templates built around perceived gaps in student knowledge and skills related to functioning within a discipline. This would involve having faculty articulate the goals they want students to reach and then designing assignments to meet those goals.[45]

It is important for us to help students become insiders. The theological librarian has a vital place in that work. For more guidance on practical ways to implement disciplinary analysis in our work as librarians interacting with faculty, see *https://libguides.twu.ca/DisciplinaryEnculturation*.

Bibliography

Association of College and Research Libraries. *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2016.

Becher, Tony. “The Significance of Disciplinary Differences.” *Studies in Higher Education* 19, no. 2 (June 1994): 151. doi:10.1080/03075079412331382007.

Becher, Tony and Paul R. Trowler. *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines.* 2nd ed. Philadephia: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University, 2001.

Billett, Stephen. “Situated Learning: Bridging Sociocultural and Cognitive Theorising.” *Learning and Instruction* 6, no. 3 (1996): 263–80.

Brown, John Seely and Paul Duguid. “Organizational Learning and Communities of Practice: Toward a Unified View of Working, Learning, and Innovation.” *Organization Science* 2, no. 1 (1991): 40–57.

Browning, Don S. “Practical Theology and Political Theology.” *Theology Today* 42, no. 1 (April 1985): 15–33.

——. “Series Foreword.” In *Pastoral Care and Hermeneutics,* edited by Donald Capps. Theology and Pastoral Care, 9–10. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Budiselić, Ervin. “An Apology of Theological Education: The Nature, the Role, the Purpose, the Past and the Future of Theological Education.” *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (July 2013): 131–54.

Carter, Stacy M. and Miles Little. “Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research.” *Qualitative Health Research* 17, no. 10 (December 2007): 1316–28.

Cooper-White, Pamela and Michael L. Cooper-White. *Exploring Practices of Ministry.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.

Edgar, Brian. “The Theology of Theological Education.” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 3 (2005): 208–17.

Farrell, Robert and William Badke. “Situating Information Literacy in the Disciplines: A Practical and Systematic Approach for Academic Librarians.” *Reference Services Review* 43, no. 2 (2015): 319–40.

Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Finnin, William M. “The Sociality of Love as Theological Foundation for Pastoral Care and Counseling.” *Iliff Review* 37, no. 3 (Fall 1980): 39–51.

Fordham, Michael. “Teachers and the Academic Disciplines.” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 50, no. 3 (August 2016): 419–31. doi:10.1111/1467-9752.12145.

Franke, John R. *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Graham, Elspeth, and Joe Doherty. “Postmodern Horizons.” In *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences,* edited by Elspeth Graham, Joe Doherty, and Mo Malek, 196–220. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992.

Hagen, Kenneth George. “Does Method Drive Biblical Study?” *Logia* 10, no. 1 (Epiphany 2001): 37–40.

Hauser, Alan J. and Duane Frederick Watson. *A History of Biblical Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003–2009.

Hayes, John Haralson and Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

Jaison, Jessy. “Practical Theology: A Transformative Praxis in Theological Education Towards Holistic Formation.” *Journal of Theological Education and Mission* (2010): 1–13. Retrieved from *https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/da3f/15282691848af2a8477a2c2c205a74403aca.pdf*.

Kent, John. “The Character and Possibility of Christian Theology Today.” In *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology,* edited by Peter Byrne and J. L. Houlden, 875–94. London: Routledge, 1995.

Lambek, Michael. “Recognizing Religion: Disciplinary Traditions, Epistemology, and History.” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 61, no. 2/3 (April 2014): 145–65. doi:10.1163/15685276-12341313.

Lave, Jean and Etienne Wenger. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Lieu, Judith and J. W. Rogerson, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies.* Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2006.

Lipponen, Lasse. “Information Literacy as Situated and Distributed Activity.” In *Practising Information Literacy: Bringing Theories of Learning, Practice and Information Literacy Together*, edited by A. Annemaree Lloyd and Sanna Talja, 51–64. Wagga, NSW: Wagga Centre for Information Studies, Charles Stuart University, 2010.

Masango, Maake J. and Tobias H. Steyn. “The Theology and Praxis of Practical Theology in the Context of the Faculty of Theology.” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67, no. 2 (2011): e1-e7. doi:10.4102/hts.v67i2.956.

Merton, Robert K. “The Normative Structure of Science” (1942). In Merton, Robert K. *The Sociology of Science,* edited by Norman W. Storer, 265–78. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.

Nichols, James T. “The 3 Directions: Situated Information Literacy.” *College & Research Libraries* 70, no. 6 (2009): 515–30.

Pedynowski, Dena. “Science(s): Which, When and Whose? Probing the Metanarrative of Scientific Knowledge in the Social Construction of Nature.” *Progress in Human Geography* 27, no. 6 (2003): 735–52.

Reventlow, Henning Graf. *History of Biblical Interpretation.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009-2010.

Scholz, Susanne, ed. *Biblical Studies Alternatively: An Introductory Reader.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Segovia, Fernando F. *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.

Shepherd, Massey H. "What Should a Commentary Be or Do?" In *The Commentary Hermeneutically Considered,* edited by Edward C. Hobbs, 1–4. Berkeley, CA: Center for Hermeneutical Studies and Modern Culture, 1978.

Simmons, Michelle Holschuh. "Librarians as Disciplinary Discourse Mediators: Using Genre Theory to Move Toward Critical Information Literacy." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 5, no. 3 (2005): 297–311.

Smith, Kevin G. "Integrated Theology: A Key to Training Thinking Practitioners." *Conspectus (South African Theological Seminary)* 12 (September 2011): 185–98.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Van Huyssteen, J. Wentzel. "Tradition and the Task of Theology." *Theology Today* 55, no. 2 (1998): 213–28.

Wang, Li. "An Information Literacy Integration Model and its Application in Higher Education." *Reference Services Review* 39, no. 4 (2011): 703–20.

Wright. D. F. "Theology." In *New Dictionary of Theology,* edited by Martin Davie, Tim Grass, Stephen R. Holmes, John McDowell, and Thomas A. Noble, 903–4. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.

Notes

1. Brian Edgar, "The Theology of Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 3 (2005): 208–17; Kevin G. Smith, "Integrated Theology: A Key to Training Thinking Practitioners," *Conspectus (South African Theological Seminary)* 12 (September 2011): 185–98; Ervin Budiselić, "An Apology of Theological Education: The Nature, the Role, the Purpose, the Past and the Future of Theological Education," *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (July 2013): 131–54.
2. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Stephen Billett, "Situated Learning: Bridging Sociocultural and Cognitive Theorising," *Learning and instruction* 6, no. 3 (1996): 263–80.

3. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2016).
4. Michael Fordham has argued cogently that teaching is not a generic exercise but that teachers are disciplinary practitioners engaged in the discipline they teach. Michael Fordham, "Teachers and the Academic Disciplines," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 50, no. 3 (August 2016): 419–31, doi:10.1111/1467–9752.12145.
5. Lave and Wenger, 27ff.
6. James T. Nichols, "The 3 Directions: Situated Information Literacy," *College & Research Libraries* 70, no. 6 (2009): 515–30; Lasse Lipponen, "Information Literacy as Situated and Distributed Activity," in *Practising Information Literacy: Bringing Theories of Learning, Practice and Information Literacy Together,* ed. Annemaree Lloyd and Sanna Talja (Wagga, NSW: Wagga Centre for Information Studies, Charles Stuart University, 2010): 51–64; Li Wang, "An Information Literacy Integration Model and its Application in Higher Education," *Reference Services Review* 39, no. 4 (2011): 703–20; Robert Farrell and William Badke, "Situating Information Literacy in the Disciplines: A Practical and Systematic Approach for Academic Librarians," *Reference Services Review* 43, no. 2 (2015): 319–40.
7. Lave and Wenger, 89ff.
8. Farrell and Badke, 323.
9. Compare Merton, who describes these three elements as "accumulated knowledge," "cultural values and mores," and "characteristic methods." He views the three as vitally interrelated. Robert K. Merton, "The Normative Structure of Science" (1942), in Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science,* ed. Norman W. Storer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 265–78. Carter and Little use the terms "epistemology," "methodology," and "method," meaning in turn, "justification of knowledge," "justification for the methods of a research project," and "research action." Stacy M. Carter and Miles Little, "Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Health Research* 17, no. 10 (December 2007): 1316–28.
10. ACRL, *Framework*.
11. Michael Lambek, "Recognizing Religion: Disciplinary Traditions, Epistemology, and History," *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 61, no. 2/3 (April 2014): 168, doi:10.1163/15685276–12341313.

12. Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning,* 89ff. This concept was also described in John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid, “Organizational Learning and Communities of Practice: Toward a Unified View of Working, Learning, and Innovation,” *Organization Science* 2, no. 1 (1991), 40–57.
13. Elspeth Graham, for example, argues that the deniers of metanarratives themselves operate within their own metanarrative: “Postmodernism rejects metanarratives like those which underpin modernism. Yet postmodernism … also appears to rely upon metanarrative.” Elspeth Graham and Joe Doherty, “Postmodern Horizons,” in *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences,* ed. Elspeth Graham, Joe Doherty, and Mo Malek (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 208.
14. ACRL, *Framework.* For more on metanarratives in disciplines, and critiques of metanarrative theory, see: Tony Becher, “The Significance of Disciplinary Differences,” *Studies in Higher Education* 19, no. 2 (June 1994): 151, doi:10.1080/03075079412331382007; Tony Becher and Paul R. Trowler, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines,* 2nd ed. (Philadephia: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University, 2001); Dena Pedynowski, “Science(s): Which, When and Whose? Probing the Metanarrative of Scientific Knowledge in the Social Construction of Nature,” *Progress in Human Geography* 27, no. 6 (2003): 735–52.
15. Carter and Little, for example, demonstrate how epistemology is made visible through method so that the two are intertwined, as illustrated in their framework for evaluating the quality of a particular method in the social sciences (”Justifying Method, Justifying Knowledge”).
16. Michelle Holschuh Simmons, “Librarians as Disciplinary Discourse Mediators: Using Genre Theory to Move Toward Critical Information Literacy,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 5, no. 3 (2005): 306.
17. Wenderoth, Christine. “Research Behaviors of Theological Educators and Students: The Known and Unknown,” *American Theological Library Association Summary of Proceedings* 61 (2007): 178–83. Perhaps the most significant sign that faculty are not yet addressing this issue is the fact that there is almost no higher education literature on student research ability development except for that provided by librarians.
18. A small sampling would include Alan J. Hauser and Duane Frederick Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003–2009); Henning Graf Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009-2010).
19. Kenneth George Hagen, “Does Method Drive Biblical Study?” *Logia* 10, no. 1 (Epiphany 2001): 39.

20. Hagen, 39.
21. For a sense of the variety of biblical scholarship over past decades see: "Part One: On the Discipline," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies,* ed. Judith Lieu and J. W. Rogerson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1–132.
22. Massey H. Shepherd, "What Should a Commentary Be or Do?" in *The Commentary Hermeneutically Considered,* ed. Edward C. Hobbs (Berkeley, CA: Center for Hermeneutical Studies and Modern Culture, 1978), 1.
23. Some scholars decry a presuppositional approach, however. Hagen argues: "The task of interpretation is to lay out the message of Scripture. Otherwise it is ripped out of historical context and made to float on the horizons of Western philosophical inquiry" (p. 39).
24. Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 1.
25. John Haralson Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 16.
26. John Barton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
27. For further examples of diverse metanarratives in action, see Susanne Scholz, ed., *Biblical Studies Alternatively: An Introductory Reader* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003).
28. ACRL, *Framework*.
29. This concept, which may seem somewhat obscure to students, is well described in Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000).
30. D. F. Wright, "Theology," in *New Dictionary of Theology,* ed. Martin Davie et al. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016), 904.
31. John Kent, "The Character and Possibility of Christian Theology Today," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology,* ed. Peter Byrne and J. L. Houlden (London: Routledge, 1995), 875.
32. Compare the ACRL *Framework* threshold concept, "Searching as Strategic Inquiry," along with its knowledge practices and dispositions.
33. John R. Franke, *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 84.
34. ACRL, *Framework*.
35. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), vol. 1, 6–8.
36. Tillich, vol. 1, 7.
37. J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen, "Tradition and the Task of Theology," *Theology Today* 55, no. 2 (1998): 213.

38. Don S. Browning, “Series Foreword,” in *Pastoral Care and Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald Capps, Theology and Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 9.
39. Pamela Cooper-White and Michael L. Cooper-White, *Exploring Practices of Ministry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 12.
40. Cooper-White and Cooper-White, 19.
41. Maake J. Masango and Tobias H. Steyn, “The Theology and Praxis of Practical Theology in the Context of the Faculty of Theology,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67, no. 2 (2011): e1-e7, doi:10.4102/hts.v67i2.956.
42. Don S. Browning, “Practical Theology and Political Theology,” *Theology Today* 42, no. 1 (April 1985): 20.
43. William M. Finnin, “The Sociality of Love as Theological Foundation for Pastoral Care and Counseling,” *Iliff Review* 37, no. 3 (Fall 1980): 39–51.
44. Jessy Jaison, “Practical Theology: A Transformative Praxis in Theological Education Towards Holistic Formation,” *Journal of Theological Education and Mission* (2010): 1–13, retrieved from *https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/da3f/15282691848af2a8477a2c2c205a74403aca.pdf*
45. See Farrell and Badke.