



Reading Standards

Question

How do you deal with the different levels of literacy of students taking classes? According to the reading requirements that Don Davis lays out, many of the courses have three books to read with hundreds of pages of reading . . . and most are theologically deep and not easy to digest. How do you keep the bar high, yet at the same time not overwhelm students who, many of which, don't even have a high school diploma?

Answer

In dealing with literacy, it is very important to understand the way in which the reading assignments are designed in TUMI courses. As a rule, unless otherwise noted, the reading assignments are given as exposure and supplementary material to the actual classroom lectures, dialogues, and discussions. Albeit various readings and articles are used to provide conceptual outlines for some materials, as well as referred to selectively within teaching segments, the readings themselves are not the substance of the teaching. Our philosophy is to use texts to support the basic conceptual and intellectual skeletons which are constructed in the actual outlines of the course; professors profess, students learn, and texts support. As such, we do not directly quiz nor test from the books. This is not to say that the texts are either unnecessary or irrelevant; as mentioned above, often we selected the texts on the basis of their ability to cover the central concepts while, at the same time, be somewhat manageable and readable. For students who cannot read well or who find the assignments burdensome, we ask that they do as best as they can with the reading assignment, allow the mentor to highlight the key concepts associated with the book, and integrate as much of the concepts into the actual discussion of the lesson topic, where applicable.

Question

As a satellite, do we have any freedom to substitute some of the required reading books for certain courses with other books of our choosing?

Answer

Capstone is an integrated curriculum; the books were selected not because there were not more difficult or different books on the subjects, but because they were the books best suited to supplement



the concepts we want to cover. By definition, texts are geared both to professorial discretion and subject matter. We have history with the texts included, and have tested them in real world settings with real leaders. They supplement the concepts we seek to cover. In an integrated curriculum, you must be careful to teach in sync with the objectives of the lesson and module, and frankly, we cannot guarantee where mentors will go if we were to grant blanket authority to sites to change every and anything. The concepts of the texts are integrated in the outline, supplemented within them for emphasis and focus. (Remember certain issues of interdenominational status, historic orthodoxy, and nonsectarianism were hammered out in selecting these books. We selected them on their ability to enhance our lessons while avoiding idiosyncratic and tangential directions).

As theological educators, we had a dramatically broad reservoir of potential texts on every subject, and selected these on the basis of our learning objectives and mandate to be interdenominationally open and historically orthodox. So, as a rule, texts should not be substituted. Of course, denominations and worshipping communities will want to articulate their own distinctive doctrines and practices, and you should feel free to add texts to further reflect those distinctions. You should always be extraordinarily careful to reiterate the lesson and module objectives lest you wind up teaching idiosyncratically and not integrally.

Knowing that this curriculum is being employed in various theological communions by diverse Mentors and students can help you understand the priority of preserving our unity and diversity as we serve very distinctive communities of the King. We love them all, and serve them all.

