Chapter 11
Considerations for teaching gender in theological seminaries
Florence Matsveru

Introduction
The intensity of the gender revolution is increasingly being felt in today’s church. Denominations that had taken it for granted that the Bible is clear on how to handle gender issues are being challenged to rethink it more deeply. This challenge can no longer be ignored and demands the serious attention of pastors and Christian leaders. The theological seminary is the hub of the church in the sense that what comes from the pulpit is a reflection of the impact of the seminary on the pastor (assuming that churches send their pastors to seminary). Theological institutions therefore have a primary role to actively teach gender.

Any teaching on gender in theological seminaries needs to consider three factors, which are the subject matter of this article: 1) The reality of the matter; 2) The necessity of biblical principles in teaching gender; and 3) The different academic levels of students: a taxonomical approach.

1 The reality of the matter

Real gender issues
Theological seminaries need to realise that the gender revolution did not originate in a vacuum. There are some very practical issues that have progressively led people to rethink societal ideologies and practices. Global policies on gender and ministries of gender equality are in existence today because there are real gender issues to be addressed. Oduyoye and Kanyoro plainly spell out some of the social evils in African culture, marriage and Christianity. Issues such as gender and poverty, gender and HIV&AIDS, gender and violence, gender and the media, gender and culture, gender and identity, gender and employment, gender and marriage, and gender and the church were identified by the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) to be some of the real issues challenging today’s church. Namibia’s Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare produced a Statistical Profile of women and men in Namibia. All the above issues are covered in the profile in one way or the other, except gender and the church. It is encouraging to note that “[g]ender inequality in education has decreased” in Namibia. Education opens doors to every sphere of life, and theological education is not an exception.

Some systems - written or unwritten - or the abuse thereof have caused untold gender-based suffering. The abuse of power has been one of the major causes of gender-related social evils, thereby bringing about the gender revolution. The revolution is either a result of distress and discomfort felt by those who are crying out, on their own behalf, or a result of compassion and an effort to become a voice for the voiceless. Quite understandably, the gender revolution by women is an attempt to respond to such suffering. Theological institutions are challenged to

1 Florence Matsveru is a lecturer of African Social Issues and Study Skills at Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary, Windhoek, Namibia.
2 Oduyoye, Mercy Amba and Kanyoro, Musimbi R.A. The will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa.
3 These issues were raised at the NetACT Workshop on Gender Equality held at Stellenbosch University, South Africa from 1-3 August 2011.
think carefully and to take a leading role in training pastors and other Christian leaders to proactively defend God’s truth, to model true Christian living and to promote human value and dignity. The NETS principal\(^5\) once said these profound words: “God’s people should be the catalyst for social transformation…. A genuine societal transformation will only flow from the hearts of transformed men and women.” Assuming that the lecturers are already transformed, students’ thinking patterns and practices need to be transformed to conform to God’s standards. Seminaries that do not teach on gender may be guilty of promoting gender-based social evils by their silence, since the pastors they train - and therefore the church at large - will also be silent about it.

The other reality that needs to be considered is the two-sided nature of gender, which is the next subheading.

**The two-sided nature of gender**

Beverley Haddad describes gender as “the socially constructed and culturally defined differences between men and women that are usually identified through a set of role expectations.”\(^6\) The word “expectations” signifies the fact that gender does not necessarily mean inherent capabilities, but is rather determined by society. This is emphasised by the fact that gender is “socially constructed” and “culturally defined”, and that it is about “roles” (or nurture) rather than nature.

Because of the reality of gender-related problems, there is a temptation to focus on one sex and neglect the other when teaching gender. The seminary should display sobriety and objectivity. Thinking about long term solutions is a process that needs to be emphasised in the seminary. Sobriety and objectivity helps to address both sides of gender rather than just the one that is currently feeling the heat.

From the above definition, gender should be understood as a neutral term that refers to both male and female roles. This correct perception of gender helps bring about a balanced outlook, thereby producing longer lasting results. A lopsided view of gender (which focuses on one sex) needs to be corrected in the seminary. Such a view is problematic because it can have a see-saw effect (Figures 1-3 below) on the social lives of people. To explain this further, women’s cries for gender equality today are an attempt to address the problems they find in the patriarchal system. There is no measure as to how far this can go. If there is no balance in our outlook, a few years from now may see men staging a male revolution in the same manner, which will in turn cause women to re-uprise, and the cycle goes on. This scenario does not help to achieve permanent gender reformation. Figures 1-3 below illustrate the see-saw effect.

\[\text{Figure 1: Male dominance}\]

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\(^5\) Rev Josh Hooker, Principal, Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary, 25 July 2011.

The first scenario is what women are currently trying to address, where the see-saw is men-heavy. Figure 1 above shows women and their position in society, including the church, as insignificant, while men are portrayed as the drivers of society; heavily rooted in power and domination.

The opposite scenario is such that the see-saw slides all the way in the opposite direction and becomes women-heavy (Figure 2). Women are now the drivers of society, heavily rooted in power and domination, while men have become insignificant.

![Figure 2: Female dominance](image)

The effects of the Figure 2 scenario are just as unhealthy as the first one. As women cry out to be recognised, it is not helpful to do it in such a way as to step on the heads of men. This is usually the result of reactivity as opposed to pro-activity. On a recent Namibia Broadcasting Corporation live television program called Tupopyeni⁷, men were complaining that new legislations have been tailored to favour women only; that the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare was focusing on women only; and that women were taking advantage of such legislation to emotionally and psychologically abuse men. Theological institutions need to add their voice against systems that are likely to have a negative impact on the social lives of both men and women.

Figure 3 below illustrates a gender balance. It reflects both males and females as contributing equally to society, both being able to realise their full potential, both being equally held responsible for their actions, and both enjoying the blessings of the Lord on earth.

![Figure 3: Balance](image)

Examples of such a scenario include: parents raising their children in such a manner that they feel significant and useful regardless of their sex; in the home, parents modelling mutual love and respect for each other; at schools, both boys and girls being encouraged to perform well, not for the purpose of beating the opposite sex, but in order to lead a productive life and contribute positively to society; at work, both men and women having equal opportunities, recognition and value; and in church, both men and women mutually valuing one another and being able to use their God-given abilities.

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⁷ Tupopyeni is a Namibian live weekly television program that discusses current affairs.
Gender equality should not be perceived as sameness. Such an understanding would be nonsensical, since it is obvious to all that men and women are not the same. This is why the balanced see-saw retains the words “male” and “female”. However, it is possible for each one to do their part, working together in unity to fulfil that which God created us for.

Theological institutions need to model the two-sided nature of gender and the positive implications of paying attention to both sides. At the NetACT gender equality workshop held in Stellenbosch in August 2011, participants agreed that we need to address “gender” issues rather than “women’s” issues if we are to have a holistic approach to the matter, although we do not ignore the fact that the majority of marginalised and disadvantaged people are women and that their issues need urgent attention.

Gender studies in theological seminaries need to appeal to male as well as female students. In most cases, gender has been construed as a women’s issue. As a result, men have felt that they have nothing to do with it. Studies that are tailored to appeal to only one sex are doomed to fail since they disregard fifty percent of its targeted population. The endeavour to uplift women should not amount to an endeavour to reduce men. Groothuis rightly says that “our efforts need to become less of a battle and more of a ministry.” The term “gender”, if understood correctly in its neutral form, will be taken more seriously by both men and women, thereby bringing longer-lasting results. Both sexes therefore need to be engaged with. This implies male and female lecturers teaching on gender, male and female students learning gender, and male and female content in the gender curriculum.

Having seen the realities around gender, the nature of theological institutions requires that they be biblical in their response. The next consideration for teaching gender in theological institutions is the necessity of biblical principles.

2 The necessity of biblical principles for teaching gender

The temptation to either undermine or misuse God’s Word can become very high in the face of any revolutionary response to societal evils. The Evangelical understanding of Scripture regards the Bible as the primary source of addressing all matters of life. In any effort to find solutions to gender problems, seminaries should continually be cognisant of the everlasting authoritative position of God and take his Word seriously.

While students need to be exposed to the different views around gender, it is important that the views that get serious consideration in the seminary are those that claim the Bible as their authority, over and above secular worldviews. Biblical views should be approached open-mindedly.

The different views on gender call for a studious attitude on the part of the lecturer as well as the student. In studying biblical texts on gender, or any other issue, translation and hermeneutics are the two pillars that should guide the study. A New Testament scholar, Paul Gunning strongly warns against the temptation of eisegesis when dealing with controversial issues. He emphasises the importance of original languages, original contexts, genre, and the nature of the texts (e.g. whether the texts are proscriptive or descriptive) to determine how they can be applied in our day.

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9 Paul Gunning (BTh Hons: New Testament) is a Lecturer of New Testament Greek at NETS.
Below are examples of how translation and interpretation have been employed on 1 Cor 14:33-34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 (two of the most debated gender texts) respectively from different angles. These passages fall under gender and the church.

**Translation**

The translation one uses has a significant impact on his/her interpretation of Scripture. To date, the Bible has been translated into almost every language under the sun, and every translation has either its intended audience, an endeavour to stay true to the original writings or both in mind. The original languages themselves have also evolved over time, with more than five thousand Greek manuscripts to date. The depth to which a seminary goes in terms of translation depends on its mission and priorities. A guideline would be: the higher the qualification the greater the emphasis on original manuscripts and translations.

Students need to be aware of how other theologians have viewed gender issues. The two major Christian views on gender equality are the traditional/hierarchical/ complementarian view (hereinafter referred to as the traditional view) and the biblical egalitarian view. Bowman defines the traditionalists as those who regard men and women as “equal in dignity and worth, though women are subordinate to their husbands and barred from holding offices in the church of leadership over men.” He describes egalitarianism as regarding men and women “as equals in authority in the home and given equal access to all positions of leadership in the church”.

It is noteworthy that none of these views condones gender-based violence, poverty discrimination in education, or any of the social evils identified earlier under the previous heading.

Both traditionalists and biblical egalitarians have used different translations to support their respective views. The translation of 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 is used here as an example. Different Bible versions present this passage differently. Translation in this case refers to meaning at face value, word order and verse arrangement.

A random survey of the different Bible translations has shown the following two basic treatments of 1 Corinthians 14:33-34:

**Division of verse 33**

33 For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace.

[new paragraph] As in all the congregations of the saints, 34 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says (NIV).

**Unity of verse 33**

… 33 for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

[new paragraph] 34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says (NASB).

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The NIV and the NASB represent several versions that either divide or unite verse 33. Table 1 below is a random list of the different versions.

Table 14: Different versions on 1 Corinthians 14:33-34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division of verse 33 (Preferred by Traditionalists)</th>
<th>Unity of verse 33 (Preferred by Biblical Egalitarians)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Revised Standard Version (1999)</td>
<td>***The Reader’s Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young’s Literal Translation (1898)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wycliffe Bible (2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significance of 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 to gender studies especially lies in the phrase: “as in all churches.” This phrase gives universal authority over whatever it is referring to. On the one hand, linking the phrase with verse 33 renders “God being a God of order” universally applicable in all churches at all times. On the other hand, linking the phrase to verse 34 renders the “silence of women in church” universally applicable to all women in all churches at all times. Traditionalists use Bible versions that apply the phrase to verse 34, while biblical egalitarians use those that link it with verse 33. Translation therefore is important in studying controversial subjects such as gender equality. However, translation alone is insufficient.

**Hermeneutics**

It would be simplistic to only employ translation on a serious and controversial issue such as gender equality. This is where hermeneutics comes in. Yarborough describes hermeneutics as a
“constellation of assumptions, principles, and _modus operandi_ of the exegete.” Hermeneutics helps us to interpret a passage according to what it meant to the original readers, and how that meaning can be applied to today.

The continuum below shows two extremes of biblical interpretation, and the seminary should help students to get to a point where they find their own place on the continuum.

![Figure 4: Biblical interpretation continuum](image)

**Literal interpretation**

Literal interpreters would focus more on the actual words as they appear on the pages of the Scripture (whether original languages or other translations), with little consideration of the rest of the Bible and the contexts within which the words were written or said. The passage therefore would be regarded as a complete entity and self-explanatory.

The dangers of literal interpretation of every biblical passage is that those who use it will either find it very difficult to apply different passages of Scripture since this kind of interpretation may result in perceived contradiction of different passages. Also, literal interpretation of Scripture may lead to legalism which may not necessarily have been originally intended by the author.

**Liberal interpretation**

Liberal interpreters would focus more on the context. The dangers of liberal interpretation lie in the resultant denial of the authoritative nature of the Word, transferring that authority to contexts. This way of interpreting Scripture can lead people to only those Scriptures that tend to agree with their contextual perceptions.

**Balanced interpretation**

A balanced interpretation understands the actual words of a passage in the light of the rest of Scripture and of the context within which the words were written.

Where one stands along the continuum largely depends on one or more of the following: one’s church tradition; one’s theological understanding, one’s cultural beliefs; and one’s personal convictions (sometimes based on experiences). Theological understanding should have the highest consideration in theological seminaries.

**Interpretation examples of 1 Timothy 2:11-15**

Well-meaning theologians and other writers from both the traditional and the egalitarian camps have attempted to understand scriptural passages such as 1 Timothy 2:11-15 with a genuine desire to remain biblical while at the same time addressing the evils of gender inequality. Instead of ignoring such passages, these authors have done well to take them head-on in the light of the whole of Scripture. Expectedly, the conclusions differ as to how these passages should be interpreted and applied in today’s context. For example, Douglas Moo and Wayne

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12 For example Wayne Grudem, Douglas Moo, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, Craig S Keener to mention a few.

Grudem\textsuperscript{14} support the universality of the subordinate position of women to men, while Rebecca Merrill Groothuis and Craig Keener promote the equality of men and women both in the home and outside the home, including the church\textsuperscript{15}.

In response to feminism, Douglas Moo argues against loosely limiting Scriptural passages to specific contexts since almost the entire New Testament is written to specific circumstances – correcting certain false teachings, answering specific questions, seeking to unify specific church factions, etc., - but this does not necessarily mean that what is written applies only to those circumstances.\textsuperscript{16}

Moo gives the example of “justification by faith” in Galatians, which applies to all people all the time, yet Paul was writing to the Galatians. According to Moo, the text itself must tell us whether it is limited to a specific context or not, and he sees 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as unlimited.

On the other hand, Rebecca Merill Groothuis argues that:

If 1Timothy 2:11-15 can be understood as a prohibition relevant only for women in a historically specific circumstance (which it can) and if there is no other biblical text that explicitly forbids women to teach or have authority over men (which there is not), and if there are texts that assert the fundamental spiritual equality of women with men (which there are), then women who are not in the circumstance for which the 1 Timothy 2:12 prohibition was intended may safely follow whatever call they may have to ministry. In other words, it ought at least be acknowledged that the traditionalist interpretation is debatable on biblical grounds.\textsuperscript{17}

Groothuis goes on to argue that numerous exegetical uncertainties exist in the 1 Timothy 2:11-15 gendered passage, and that we cannot base an important biblical teaching upon this isolated text.\textsuperscript{18}

Musa Dube brings together both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and concludes with a call to the church to “improve the relationships between men and women both in the church itself and in broader society”\textsuperscript{19}.

More studies of this nature – which begin by seriously engaging with Scripture as the foundational source and move to contextual application – will see more meaningful, longer-lasting and more biblical transformation. Such studies are more suitable in theological institutions. They consider what the Bible says, the possible reasons why things were the way they were in biblical times; whether certain practices were condoned or condemned; why Scripture says what it says (if discoverable); why things are the way they are in our contexts, the pros and cons of the status quo, and how Scripture can be applied to the different contexts.

\textit{Some guiding principles for avoiding pitfalls in teaching gender: Mayer’s matrix}


\textsuperscript{16}Moo, Douglas. 1991, pp.179-193

\textsuperscript{17}Groothuis, Rebecca Merrill. 1997, p.211

\textsuperscript{18}Groothuis, p.212

Mayers’ matrix (Figure 5) is a valuable guide for checking our priorities for gender studies in theological seminaries.”20 Willcox uses Mayers’ matrix to argue for biblical absolutes and cultural relativity in doing theology.

Table 15: Adapted from Mayers’ matrix as in Willcox, 2005. Cutflowers: Female Genital Mutilation and a Biblical Response21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual Relativism</th>
<th>Biblical Absolutism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antinomian (without law)</td>
<td>Traditionalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Ethics</td>
<td>Biblical Relativism/Contextual Absolutism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below is an explanation of the matrix:

Biblical relativism/contextual absolutism results in situation ethics. The context has the final say, and the Bible is used as a helpful tool. Culture therefore becomes the primary point of decision-making and social practice, and the Bible becomes a supporting tool.

Biblical absolutism/contextual absolutism is a traditionalistic view22. They are of equal importance. In terms of gender issues, both the Bible and our context (experiences) have equal authority to dictate. Proponents of this view look for biblical justification for what happens in their context, especially that which they believe to be right. If there is a clash between the two, there will be a ripping off of some kind since one cannot be above the other.

Biblical relativism/contextual relativism imply that there is no law. In this case, the Bible can mean different things to different people. This is a postmodern view of both biblical and contextual realities – the idea that what works for you is the right thing; there are no absolutes. Gender issues therefore can be looked at according to our different contexts, and the Bible can be reinterpreted to suit our different contexts.

Biblical Absoluteism/Contextual Relativism places the Bible above our different contexts. Although both the context and the Bible are taken seriously, the Bible has the final say. This means that contexts can be changed to suit Biblical principles, and not vice-versa.

The Biblical absolutism/contextual relativism position should be the guiding principle for gender studies in theological institutions.

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21 For purposes of this article, the word “cultural” has been replaced by “contextual” in the matrix.
22 Please note that this is different from the traditional view on gender referred to elsewhere in this article.
Some guiding principles for avoiding pitfalls in teaching gender: Van der Walt’s model

Another guiding principle for teaching gender is Van der Walt’s gender reformation vs gender revolution model for societal renewal. Van der Walt introduces three models: 1) the dualist-pietist model which defends the status quo and leaves Christians as those who have no concern about the goings on in the world since their focus is on heaven; 2) the revolutionary model that is vehemently against the existing order and wishes to create a utopia on earth. Revolutionaries are aggressive and abrupt in their approach to change and are focused on destroying the status quo. The results of the revolutionary model are more and more revolutions as pictured in the see-saw effect illustrated in Figures 1-3 above; 3) the reformationalist model that sees God transforming the world. Proponents of this model wish for a realistic renewal of the world – “but not utopian perfectionism.” Its strategies are transformational and may take time. It is non-violent – working like “salt, yeast [and] light.” It involves “total conversion of the human heart in order to change sinful structures from within.”

Both traditionalists and biblical egalitarians should be able to agree on the reformationalist approach to teaching gender in theological institutions if the gender problem is to be addressed.

The church is the salt and the light of the earth. The seminary should therefore model the best way of dealing with gender issues by training its students to uphold biblical standards in dealing with gender issues. However, this is a process and students need to be taken from one level to another in learning about gender.

3 Students’ different academic levels: a taxonomical approach

Gender has become a very controversial topic in churches and the society at large. The challenge for theological institutions is to correct misunderstandings about gender, to evaluate ideologies and to help the students to see things from a biblical perspective and make informed decisions in dealing with gender issues. A progressive approach to gender studies can help to reach them at their different levels, thereby bringing about real transformation.

A theological institution can decide to either embed gender studies within some of its courses, or to mainstream gender as a full course. The mission and educational policies of each institution should inform such a decision. Whether an institution decides to embed or to mainstream gender studies, an intentional and systematic approach to this serious matter should be considered by all theological institutions.

The controversial nature of gender studies and the different academic levels call for a taxonomical approach to teaching gender in theological institutions. A taxonomy is “a hierarchical organisational structure for the classification of concepts or things.” NetACT has recommended Bloom’s taxonomy for its member institutions and Bloom’s revised taxonomy (BRT) is being implemented at Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary (NETS). I recommend BRT for teaching gender in theological institutions because of its progressive and its two dimensional nature which allows institutions to classify objectives, instruction and assessment according knowledge levels and cognitive process levels. BRT is briefly explained below.

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24 Prof Jurgens Hendriks. Executive Director of NetACT. Bloom’s taxonomy. A presentation at a NetACT curriculum development conference held in 2010.
A brief explanation of Bloom’s revised taxonomy (BRT)

BRT of educational objectives is “a framework for classifying statements of what we expect or intend students to learn as a result of instruction.”\(^{25}\) It focuses on two dimensions: the knowledge dimension and the cognitive process dimension. Tables 16 and 17 below show the elements of each dimension.

### Table 16: Structure of the knowledge dimension of BRT (adapted from Krathwohl. 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cognitive process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual knowledge</td>
<td>Aa. Knowledge of terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ab. Knowledge of specific details and elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>Ba. Knowledge of classifications and categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bb. Knowledge of principles and generalizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bc. Knowledge of theories, models, and structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural knowledge</td>
<td>Ca. Knowledge of subject-specific skills and algorithms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cb. Knowledge of subject-specific techniques and methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cc. Knowledge of criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive knowledge</td>
<td>Da. Strategic knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Db. Knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dc. Self-knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 17: Structure of the cognitive process dimension of BRT (adapted from Krathwohl. 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cognitive process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remembering</td>
<td>Recognising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recalling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exemplifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summarising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inferring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explaining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying
Executing
Implementing

Analysing
Differentiating
Organising
Attributing

Evaluating
Checking
Critiquing

Creating
Generating
Planning
Producing

The two dimensions of Bloom’s revised taxonomy help lecturers to check curriculum alignment. Curriculum alignment is the process of organising instruction (including instruction materials), objectives (or standards), and assessment. The curriculum alignment brings together the knowledge dimension and the cognitive process dimension using the taxonomy table as illustrated in Table 18 below (please note that the cell contents are examples only, and are explained below):

Table 18: Taxonomy table (adapted from Amer, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Dimension</th>
<th>Cognitive Process Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual knowledge</td>
<td>Remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>Objective (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural knowledge</td>
<td>Instruction (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The taxonomy table helps the lecturer to reflect on the relationship between the objectives he/she sets for students, his/her instructional activities and manuals, and the assessments he/she sets for his/her students. A complete alignment is when all three elements fall into the same cell (as shown in Cell B2 where objective 2, instruction manual 2 and assessment 2 agree). A lecturer who is working with objective 1 will not achieve that objective because he/she is teaching and assessing at a lower level. The students of a lecturer working on objective 3 are

doomed to fail because the lecturer is teaching at a lower level than the objective and the assessment. For a more detailed explanation of BRT please refer to Krathwohl27 and Amer28.

**Applying Bloom’s revised taxonomy to gender studies in theological institutions**

Bloom’s revised taxonomy allows institutions to apply it either within a level or across levels of study. For example, an institution can decide to make gender studies a diploma level course. The first year can focus on remembering and understanding. Applying and analysing can constitute the second year, while evaluating and creating can be the focus of the final year. In another institution, entrance level students (e.g. certificate level) can be introduced to the course at the remembering and understanding levels; the diploma level can focus on applying and analysing, the undergraduate degree level can focus on analysing and evaluating, and postgraduate studies can focus on evaluating and creating.

NETS implements BRT in line with the Namibia Qualifications Framework (NQF) (similar to the South African Qualifications Framework). Below is a picture of how the framework is implemented at NETS.

Table 19: NETS’ Taxonomy29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>NQF Level</th>
<th>Category (Minimum expectation to pass the course)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Remembering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in Ministry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Ministry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Applying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Theology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Analysing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Evaluating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>Creating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suppose NETS was to apply BRT in mainstreamed gender studies and across its qualifications ladder, the taxonomy would look like Table 20 below. Please note that the details in Table 20 are just random and general examples (assuming that NETS has grown to postgraduate level).

Table 20: Example of a taxonomy for gender studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>NQF Level</th>
<th>Cognitive Process Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remembering</td>
<td>At this level, the student can be exposed to gender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Krathwohl, David R. 2002.
29 Please note that NETS does not yet offer postgraduate studies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in Ministry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Here the student is expected to demonstrate his/her understanding by putting information in his/her own words. This may include summarising different views on gender, comparing the different views, interpreting a biblical passage on gender, etc. This example is on the conceptual and procedural level of the knowledge dimension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Ministry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>Students can be taught to implement gender knowledge in different areas of gender such as gender and the media; gender and poverty; gender and work; gender and HIV&amp;AIDS; gender and violence and; gender and the church, etc. A student who has gone up to this stage will be able to implement ready-made programmes in his/her area of ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Theology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td>Here students can be introduced to different methods of interpreting gender passages (as in the translation/hermeneutics example above) or to differentiate secular and biblical approaches to gender issues. This example is at the procedural level of the knowledge dimension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Students should be able to critique different views from a biblical perspective. Examples: evaluating the literal/liberal continuum and finding and defending their position; evaluating different views using Mayers’ matrix and Van der Walt’s model and decide on a position; exegetical papers and debates can be useful here. The metacognitive level of the knowledge dimension fits here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate studies</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>Students should be able to design a gender program or to develop a gender policy or curriculum for their area of ministry. Generally speaking, this example encompasses the conceptual, procedural and metacognitive levels of the knowledge dimension.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion
Theological seminaries are faced with the challenge of gender equality. Rather than ignoring this challenge, the seminaries should take the lead in modelling the right response to social evils. The issues being raised by women are real, and should be acknowledged and taken seriously. However, the seminary has the primary role of teaching pastors to deal with social problems using biblical principles. Teaching gender in seminaries can be difficult due to students’ different levels of understanding and the controversial nature of students. A taxonomical approach to the matter may be helpful.

Bibliography


Hendriks, Jurgens. 2010. Reflective and analytical thinking: Bloom’s taxonomy. A presentation at a NetACT Conference held in Malawi.


