

Inspiration and Wonder

Planning curriculum within narrative frameworks

God in relationship, God at work – with the human race, with his creation, with the nations, with Israel, and finally, with Jesus Christ and His followers. **This is what the Bible is all about.** And although there are many narratives of person and event which make up the Scriptures, both the centre and climax of those narratives is the life and work of Jesus Christ – a life that was both scandalous and outstanding, ordinary and miraculous. Indeed, His was a divine-human life which ever since has demanded our attention.

The Challenge of the Bible

As such when one reads the Scriptures the challenge is not so much to believe certain things (though that is part of the challenge); no, **the challenge is to become a certain sort of person** – a person like Abel, not like Cain; like Joseph, not like Reuben; like Hezekiah, not like Manasseh, and most profoundly, like Jesus ... not like Judas ... or Satan.

Our world and our generation must continue to be confronted with the challenge of the Bible. All other things – including education – must be assessed and understood in the light of the biblical narrative which finds its centre and climax in Jesus. How should this narrative understanding of the Bible affect the way we educate? More specifically, how might we conceive of curriculum in the light of God's written word?

Curriculum in Narrative Terms

One valid response is to conceive of curriculum in narrative terms, that is, to pursue outcomes, to present knowledge and understanding, to consider values and attitudes, and to develop skills from within narrative formed curriculum frameworks. Two guiding narratives which we have chosen for **Human Society and Its Environment** (HSIE) curriculum development in the High School in which I teach during 2001 are as follows:

The World – Weird, Wacky or Wonderful?

Each unit within the Years 7-8 HSIE curriculum, is being developed within the overarching narrative statement: "The World – weird, wacky or wonderful? Gods, rulers, heroes and chaos ..." *Within that framework, units of History, Geography and Biblical Studies are being developed.*

Australia - Land of Destruction or Delight

Each unit within the Years 9-10 HSIE curriculum, is being developed within the overarching narrative statement: "Australia, land of destruction or delight ... Aussies, people who wreck or reconstruct ... Who are we? Where are we going? What will we become?" Again, within that framework, units of History, Geography and Biblical Studies are being developed.

Throughout, the challenge to the students is not only to gain knowledge and understanding, or to develop skills and attitudes; more profoundly, the challenge is to inspire our young people; to elicit wonder in their minds; to stir them to make choices, to adopt values and to choose heroes to follow, as they embrace certain narratives, reject others and envision a future for the nation and world of which they are part.

Rod Thompson, ICTE Lecturer & Teacher
Email: rodthomp@ozemail.com.au

