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Increasing student participation leads to greater retention, richer diversity of insights, better student preparation, and improved communication skills.

The Case for Student Participation

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In recent years, Church leaders have repeatedly reminded gospel teachers of the importance of drawing students into the learning process more actively.

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland gave a remarkable demonstration as part of the worldwide leadership training on February 10, 2007, showing gospel teachers how to involve students in our lessons. Among other things, he emphasized it is “better to take just a few good ideas and get good discussion—and good learning—than to be frenzied, trying to teach every word in the manual.”¹
- During the February 2006 address to religious educators, Elder David A. Bednar reminded us that particularly when it comes to learning by faith, “we primarily are to act and not only to be acted upon—especially as we seek to obtain and apply spiritual knowledge.”² Although his focus was on gospel learners, the implication of Elder Bednar’s teachings for gospel instructors is clear: we must provide opportunities for our students to act, rather than simply acting upon them.
- In his 2005 address to religious educators, Elder Richard G. Scott gave a role-playing example of his own of how to help students glean principles from scriptures. He was downright emphatic in pushing participation: “Never, and I mean never, give a lecture where there is no student participation. A talking head is the weakest form of class instruction.”³

- The CES Teaching Emphasis has invited seminary and institute teachers to, among other things, “help students learn how to explain, share, and testify of the doctrines and principles of the restored gospel. We are to give them opportunities to do so with each other in class.”

The upshot of this collective counsel is clear: the more opportunities we give students to actively participate in the process of gaining insights, the more our students will retain those insights.

While this counsel is hardly new,⁴ it represents a dramatic change from the national norm. One survey concludes that 73 to 83 percent of college professors “spend almost the entire hour lecturing to a passive student audience.”⁵ Sadly, an informal survey of BYU–Idaho students shows that despite the emphasis on greater student participation in our classes, my colleagues and I still have a long way to go in implementing the teaching approach we have been invited to adopt.⁶ Anecdotal evidence suggests this may be true for other religious educators as well, although many have made great strides in recent years.

Although many religious educators have embraced the idea of increasing student participation, some continue to question whether greater student participation is truly desirable and possible in their classrooms.⁷ While recognizing that lecturing is an important element in any college classroom, my aim in this article is to review the benefits of greater student participation and address some of the common concerns about doing so.

Benefits of Student Participation

There are many potential benefits to greater student participation in the classroom,⁸ but I focus here on three that have been most significant in my experience and most applicable in the university setting: greater retention, richer diversity of insights, and better student preparation.

Greater retention. President Harold B. Lee once expressed his “deep concern about the fact that some [students] could go through Primary, Sunday School, Mutual, priesthood quorums, and seminary and come out the other end without testimonies.” His explanation for why this was happening was simple: “*Because our young people have grown up spectators.*”⁹ His concerns in the spiritual context echo those of Derek Bok in an academic context. The former Harvard president wrote that what students retain is “likely to be determined less by *which* courses they take than by *how* they are taught and *how well*

they are taught.”¹⁰ In particular, Bok notes, “Most professors teach as they traditionally have, [continuing to] ignore the accumulating body of experimental work suggesting that forms of teaching that engage students actively in the learning process do significantly better than conventional methods in achieving goals, such as critical thinking and problem-solving.”¹¹

During a question-and-answer session at BYU–Idaho, Elder Bednar articulated this principle in a powerful fashion when a student asked for a scripture reference Elder Bednar used in his remarks. “If I tell you, you’ll never remember,” Elder Bednar replied. “If you discover it for yourself, you’ll never forget.” Similarly, in his February 2006 address to religious educators, Elder Bednar noted: “The most important learnings of life are caught, not taught.”¹² One of my students put it this way: “I seem to remember those points the most that I verbalize in class.”

Research bears out what intuition predicts: students retain far more knowledge in classrooms with active student participation than in lecture halls where they passively ingest professors’ insights.¹³ In his inaugural address at Harvard nearly 150 years ago, Charles W. Eliot similarly observed, “The lecturer pumps laboriously into sieves. The water may be wholesome, but it runs through. *A mind must work to grow.*”¹⁴ Of course, minds can work and grow when reading, taking notes, and listening attentively, but students’ minds are stretched in a distinctive way when they are invited to verbalize their newfound knowledge. As we give students more opportunities to express their thoughts in class, we help them assume the burden of learning and discovering insights for themselves.

The Lord has emphasized the fact that teaching something helps us better understand the very principles we teach: “Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, *that you may be instructed* more perfectly” (D&C 88:78–79; emphasis added). Perhaps because teaching principles is one of the best ways to learn them, the Lord directs us, at least in a gospel setting, to “appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).

Diversity of insights. When the teacher alone speaks in class, the database of knowledge, experience, and insights is limited to one person. But when teachers allow students to share their insights, the database increases dramatically. For example, during a class covering 1

Nephi 16, I invited students to share some insight they had about the story of Nephi and his broken bow. One amateur archer noted that Nephi had to fashion not only a new bow, but a new arrow—even though the text mentions only his bow being broken (see 1 Nephi 16:18–23). The student explained that different types of bows require different types of arrows. Because Nephi made his new bow from wood rather than steel, this student observed, it made perfect sense that he would also have to fashion a new arrow.¹⁵

The student's insight was just one of many things I have learned from the impressive pool of my students' collective knowledge. Much of that knowledge comes from our students' experience: being an avid archer, having divorced parents, being a racial minority, having to choose between being in a successful rock band and serving a mission, living in Saudi Arabia as an American citizen, having joined the Church over the objections of parents, and having raised sheep—to name just a few of the many experiences students bring to the discussion. Providing opportunities for students to incorporate their experiences into their learning can enrich the learning experience for students and faculty alike. On more than one occasion, President Bednar declared that “any faculty member at BYU–Idaho who does not believe that he or she can learn something from a student does not deserve to be a faculty member at BYU–Idaho.”¹⁶

Greater motivation for preparation. My law school experience taught me that where teachers expect and even require students to participate in classroom discussion regularly, student preparation improves dramatically. Students who know they can skate through a lecture without any risk of being called upon are less likely to prepare for class as intensively as those students who know their teachers might call upon them. Just as most of us learn more from preparing for a Gospel Doctrine class we teach than one in which we are students, students tend to learn more when they prepare for classes in which they know they will be actively involved. Admittedly, those of us who have the luxury of giving grades have an advantage in this regard, but even without any grades at stake, students tend to prepare for class more when teachers expect them to participate.

I was reminded vividly of this principle last year at a BYU–Idaho faculty meeting at which a colleague, Rhonda Seamons, used a novel technique to facilitate participation in a large group. Before the workshop began, she circulated among the participants, inviting those willing to answer a question during the seminar to write their names on the paper and place them in a jar. I decided to be a good sport and

entered my name. When the meeting began, however, I got quite a jolt when Rhonda mentioned in passing the reading we were supposed to have done in preparation for the workshop. Having forgotten that reading had been assigned, I immediately regretted putting my name in the jar. But I was stuck, so I paid rapt attention to the speakers and discussion, quickly formulating an answer in my mind to each question that was asked. My name was not drawn until one of the very last questions, keeping me mentally alert throughout the entire meeting. The prospect of participating had sharpened my focus markedly, yielding insights not just from the question I was eventually called on to answer but from every question for which I had formulated an answer.

Concerns Regarding Increased Participation

Notwithstanding these benefits, some faculty harbor genuine concerns about talking less and encouraging students to talk more. I will briefly address some of the concerns I have heard most frequently.

1. It's hard for me to see how my students will learn if I'm not teaching. If our students are going to gather new information and master new concepts, doesn't the teacher need to be the one doing most of the talking and teaching?

Room for teaching by explanation. No one calling for more student participation is suggesting there should be *no* lecturing in the classroom. Most teachers committed to drawing students into the learning process through participation still spend some percentage of their class time explaining things. The question is simply how much of any given hour teachers should spend explaining things.

Learning by participating. Student participation is a means, not an end. Thus, the fact that students are talking does not guarantee that they are learning—or learning anything worthwhile. But with some student preparation, a bit of explanation by a teacher, and above all, some thoughtful questions from the guide, students can learn in the very process of discussing things they did not previously understand or only recently learned.

For me personally, the most vivid example of learning through participation was my experience at Stanford Law School. The professors were clearly more knowledgeable and more intelligent than the students, yet the heart of almost all their courses were student discussions fueled by great questions. Professors used brief explanatory lectures to introduce topics, clarify principles, and sum up discussions, but almost never as their sole or dominant mode of teaching. My classmates and I were certainly not experts, but because our professors expected it, we

had read the assigned cases and were thoroughly prepared to discuss their implications. With insightful questions, our professors gave us opportunities to articulate principles we had just learned. They also helped us promptly reexamine our newfound conclusions by asking probing questions that challenged our assumptions. In the process, we almost always gained insights we had not yet even considered. This is the very essence of the Socratic method at its best: to lead students to discover new insights through a series of thought-provoking questions.

Sometimes I try this in my classes with a single question or two:

- What insights do you gain from these verses by circling the connecting word for? “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17; emphasis added).
- Why was Moroni a particularly good mentor for Joseph Smith?
- How is it possible that someone could give away all their goods to the poor and yet still not have charity? Wouldn’t they be the epitome of charity if they did that?
- How is it fair for the Lord to command us to forgive people who have wronged us and not repented? How have you been able to forgive people in such circumstances?

On other occasions, I might try to help students arrive at a certain destination through a more elaborate series of questions. For example, rather than announce a wonderful insight I read in an *Ensign* article about the plagues the Lord inflicted upon the Egyptians, I might ask these questions:

- Why might the Lord have used plagues to free the Israelites? Why not simply strike Pharaoh dead or cause a deep sleep to come upon all the Egyptians? What advantages do you see to using plagues?
- After my students speculate about that question for a bit, I ask them a second question: What can you tell me about the Egyptians’ religious beliefs? Although none of them are Egyptologists, my students usually establish that Egyptians believed in multiple gods, with each god having responsibility for certain elements or activities.
- I will often follow this question up with another, such as, How might the Egyptians’ religious beliefs have affected the Israelites, who had lived among them for 400 years?

- I then have students read Exodus 12:12, in which the Lord declares, “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.”
- Finally, I might ask, How do the plagues God inflicted on the Egyptians discredit the Egyptians’ gods? After my students begin making the connections, I show a slide lining up each of the plagues with an Egyptian god discredited by the affliction.

Eventually, my students come to the same conclusion that Renee Vorhaus did: “Through the plagues, God showed his power over all the principal gods that were worshipped in the Nile valley, discrediting them and their presumed power.”¹⁷ The students realize that the Lord may have needed not only to get Israel out of Egypt, but to get Egypt out of Israel. But when I help them discover this insight for themselves, I sometimes hear a sound that I never hear when I simply announce or explain such insights to my students without inviting them along on the journey: the sigh or moan of epiphany. Few sounds are more rewarding for a teacher to hear.

2. Doesn’t student participation inevitably come at the cost of covering material? Each minute students spend participating in class is one less minute I have to teach.

Student teaching. I have felt this concern at times myself, worrying that time spent in student participation was time sacrificed on the altar of pedagogical inefficiency. Over time, however, I have realized that rather than merely tread water, great classroom discussions actually cover ground. Guided by skilled teachers,¹⁸ good discussions cover much or most of the material teachers otherwise would have covered themselves. In the end, they arrive at the same destination as they would have if they had lectured, but students have done much of the driving.

One Harvard physics professor conducted an experiment with his students demonstrating that students were capable of learning even more when he talked less. In class, he would briefly explain a physics principle and then give a test question about the principle. After all his students had noted their answers, he gave them a few minutes, working in small groups, to try to change each other’s minds. While watching these small groups in action, the physics professor repeatedly saw that those students who had answered the question correctly were often better at intuitively understanding why some of their classmates had gotten the answer wrong—and at helping correct the misunderstanding.¹⁹ Students taught in this way “made twice as much progress in

grasping the underlying physics as well as substantially outperforming their classmates in solving the quantitative problems common to most introductory physics courses.”²⁰ In short, students learned more in the classes where the professor actually talked less.

Once again, it is worth noting that as with this professor’s approach, even active guides will need to precede and connect some discussions by explaining certain concepts themselves. Efficiently combining lecture and discussion methods can minimize the trade-off between greater student participation and covering material. For example, a New Testament teacher might share some factual background about Paul’s life without inviting any participation. But after a brief lecture on the subject—or perhaps at the outset—the teacher might ask students how Paul’s background prepared him for his mission. As students answer, they will invariably make many or even most of the points the teacher would have made if she had simply lectured on the same question herself. She can then fill in any missing thoughts by concluding with additional insights of her own.

Covering material versus mastering material. While wise teachers may use discussion to cover much of the same material as lecturers, they may ultimately cover less material than someone who simply lectures. That would be a problem if simply covering material were the goal. Elder Richard G. Scott reminds us that it is better for students to understand a few significant principles well than a potpourri of principles poorly: “Remember, your highest priority is not to get through all the material if that means it cannot be properly absorbed. Do what you’re able to do with understanding. . . . Determine . . . what is of highest priority.”²¹ Elder Holland reiterated this point even more bluntly during the February 2007 worldwide leadership training:

In discussing preparation, may I also encourage you to avoid a temptation that faces almost every teacher in the Church; at least it has certainly been my experience. That is the temptation to cover too much material, the temptation to stuff more into the hour—or more into the students—than they can possibly hold! Remember two things in this regard: first of all, we are teaching people, not subject matter per se; and second, every lesson outline that I have ever seen will inevitably have more in it than we can possibly cover in the allotted time.

So stop worrying about that. It is better to take just a few good ideas and get good discussion—and good learning—than to be frenzied, trying to teach every word in the manual.²²

Ultimately, those who teach solely by lecturing so that they can cover more material win a Pyrrhic victory at best: they may cover more

material, but their students actually understand less.

3. It would be great to try this style of teaching with Harvard Business School students, but doing it with my students is a whole different challenge. I'm not sure it can really be done with seminary students or even undergraduate students.

To be sure, the more motivated and capable the students, the better this approach works. Still, we have plenty of evidence that students rise to the call when given the chance, not just at the collegiate level but even among high school seminary students. Indeed, as a former institute and seminary teacher, I cannot help but see some irony in this objection. Before President Clark's arrival at BYU–Idaho, some raised the concern that student participation might be fine for seminary students but really wasn't scholarly enough for college-level students. When this former dean of the Harvard Business School arrived on the scene and called for “much less lecturing, . . . maybe 20 percent of the time in lecture,”²³ however, it was difficult for professors to dismiss this method as something best suited for teenagers. Instead, the opposite argument soon emerged: perhaps our students weren't sharp enough to succeed with this method.

Yet when given the chance, BYU–Idaho students in my classes have risen to the occasion and have consistently made meaningful contributions. Moreover, I have witnessed seminary classes in which high school freshmen regularly and thoughtfully participated when given the chance. Indeed, as Elder Bednar declared should happen, I have been able to learn from the insights my students have shared. Almost as rewarding as hearing a student's sigh of epiphany is having one of my own, courtesy of an insight shared by a student.

“Why did Jesus weep?” I asked my New Testament class one day when discussing the raising of Lazarus from the dead in John 11. “He appears to know that he is going to be able to raise Lazarus. Why would he weep? The timing seems odd.” I am embarrassed to admit that despite pondering and researching this question during my lesson preparation, I had found no satisfactory answer.

A young woman on the front row raised her hand and shared an insight that seems obvious in retrospect, but it had escaped me: “Maybe He was crying because He loved Martha and Mary so much that He grieved for the suffering these sisters had to endure. Their brother was dead and their grief was real. By waiting three days, He was able to perform a miracle that would help convert many people,” she explained, “but it came at the cost of Mary and Martha's very real heartache for those three days. Maybe that's why He cried.”

4. *What about students who think they know more than they do—and in the process simply confuse things? It seems inappropriate for teachers to abdicate control of the classroom to the most vocal students.*

Master teachers invite student participation, but they never cede control of the classroom. Increasing student participation does not require teachers to approve of every comment. Indeed, student comments can do more harm than good if teachers do not correct any misunderstandings created by mistaken student statements. Providing such correction creates tactical challenges for teachers, given the fact that “learning occurs best in an atmosphere of trust and safety.”²⁴ But just as bishops remain responsible for the doctrinal content of sacrament meetings, teachers who invite participation in classrooms can and should ensure that students are not left with any doctrinal or theoretical confusion.

5. *I’ve seen teachers who do this well, but I’m not one of them. It’s just not my style. We should all teach to our strengths, and my strength is lecturing.*

Facilitating student participation can be difficult, and some teachers may do it more effectively than others. Yet for all the reasons discussed above, this is a change worth making. For many, the change will not be easy. Even more patience and dedication may be required for those who naturally prefer to lecture, but even a small adjustment can benefit our students. In fact, as Derek Bok notes, “the experience of many professional schools shows that it is possible for entire faculties to alter their teaching methods to help their students learn to think critically” by using the discussion method.²⁵

6. *To argue that student participation is preferable to lecturing seems a stretch, when we see more sermons than seminars in the scriptures and in general conference.*

While the teachings of prophets and the Savior include both lectures and discussions,²⁶ I concede that the scriptural record we have documents far more lectures than discussions.²⁷ But before building a tower to give our next lecture like King Benjamin, we should note some reasons for caution in wholly emulating the teaching styles we see in general conference and the Sermon on the Mount.

First, different circumstances warrant different teaching styles. Given the translation challenges alone, for example, it is not surprising that general conference addresses are sermons written in advance. Logistically, the kind of teaching described in this article simply is not feasible in many of the teaching settings we witness or see involving prophets. (And the trend in recent training sessions seems to be to

include discussions in addition to talks.) The different approaches we take in sacrament meeting and Sunday School also suggest that there is a time and a place for talks as well as for more interactive learning.

Second, in addition to logistical differences, our circumstances as religious educators are ecclesiastically different than those of prophets and the Savior. Although we can certainly gain great insights from their teaching styles, we must also remember that they are in a unique position to declare doctrine and call sinners to repentance. Thus, while the Savior Himself provided unparalleled sermons, among believers in our day He provided for the appointment of teachers who would preside over discussions in which all would have a chance to participate (see D&C 88:122).

Finally, when confronted with a host of scriptural teachings or statements by Church leaders that could be read to support competing points of view, there is always safety in giving greater weight to the most recent and prevalent line of thinking. *Teaching, No Greater Call*,²⁸ perhaps the definitive statement on teaching in the Church today, notes the following under the heading “Don’t Talk Too Much”:

Teachers who lecture most of the time or answer every question themselves tend to discourage learners from participating. You should be careful not to talk more than necessary or to express your opinion too often. . . . Think of yourself as a guide on a journey of learning who inserts appropriate comments to keep those you teach on the correct path.

Your main concern should be helping others learn the gospel, not making an impressive presentation. This includes providing opportunities for learners to teach one another.²⁹

Clearly, the emphasis on helping students discover insights themselves rather than simply sharing those we have gained is much more than a passing fad or the personal opinion of a single Church leader.

7. Great style can never compensate for bad content. Isn't it more important that I teach true doctrine, with the rest being frosting on the cake?

There is no question that we would all be better off teaching true doctrine poorly than teaching false doctrine or even “fried froth”³⁰ well. Bells and whistles and fancy Powerpoint presentations can never compensate for a lack of knowledge on the teacher’s part. Nor can the most animated student discussion make up for a failure to convey sound doctrine. Thus, as we strive to improve our teaching style, our aim must always be to help our students understand doctrines and principles, not to entertain or please them.

Yet if our goal is to help our students understand the material, we cannot be content with simply mastering the material ourselves. Teaching truth is not enough to discharge our duties; we must also teach it effectively. Getting the content right is necessary but not sufficient; we must also teach our content well if our students are to succeed in learning. While we must guard against emphasizing style over substance, we must also guard against the other extreme: invoking the importance of substantive expertise to excuse ourselves from making stylistic improvements.

Conclusion

Virginia H. Pearce has wisely suggested that as gospel teachers we ask ourselves, “How will I help my students discover what they need to know?” instead of “What will I teach today?”³¹ Elder Bednar spoke along similar lines when instructed: “As gospel instructors, you and I are not in the business of distributing fish; rather, our work is to help individuals learn to ‘fish’ and to become spiritually self-reliant. This important objective is best accomplished as we encourage and facilitate learners acting in accordance with correct principles—as we help them to learn by doing.”³²

Most of us will have our students in class for a relatively short period of time. If all they glean from our classes are insights we have shared as instructors, our impact will be rather limited. We will have fed them for a day, as it were. But if we create opportunities for them to learn how to learn directly from the Spirit—if we help them discover and articulate insights—we will help them feed themselves for life. **RE**

Notes

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 91.

2. David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” address to Church Educational System religious educators, February 3, 2006, West Jordan, Utah, 2.

3. Richard G. Scott, “To Understand and Live Truth,” address to Church Educational System religious educators, February 4, 2005, West Jordan, Utah, 3.

4. “When a teacher takes the spotlight, becomes the star of the show, does all the talking, and otherwise takes over all of the activity, it is almost certain that he is interfering with the learning of the class members” (Asahel D. Woodruff, *Teaching the Gospel*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1961], 37, quoted in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994], 14).

5. Robert T. Blackburn, Glen R. Pollino, Alice Boberg, and Colman

O’Connell, “Are Instructional Improvement Programs Off Target?” *Current Issues in Higher Education* (1980), 32, as cited in Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 120.

6. An informal survey of BYU–Idaho students indicates that they believe professors spend 78.8 percent of class time speaking themselves. Of the 278 students e-mailed, 117 responded. However, with 183 of the students queried coming from Book of Mormon classes, the sample may have been skewed toward underclassmen, who probably encounter more lecturing in larger classes than do juniors and seniors. Furthermore, because all the students surveyed were currently enrolled in one of my classes, the experience of this sample of students may be somewhat skewed. Finally, students’ perceptions of participation levels are not necessarily accurate; one colleague who asked students to estimate what percentage of the time he spent talking in their class found that their estimates ranged from 0 to 90 percent. Still, student perceptions may be the most useful measurement we currently have of actual levels of lecturing and participation.

7. Yet other teachers may desire to increase the level of student participation in their classes but may lack the knowledge of how to best to do so. While important, such tactical concerns are beyond the scope of this article. Mark Beecher and I discuss these broader questions at length in *Becoming a Great Gospel Teacher: Bringing the Gospel Classroom to Life* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2007).

8. Student participation could fall into several categories, including many that describe activities occurring outside the classroom. However, the scope of this article is limited to that subset of student participation activities that occur when students participate in some way inside the classroom.

9. Melvin Leavitt, “Elder Robert L. Backman: Be Where the Lord Can Find You,” *New Era*, May 1982, 13.

10. Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 49.

11. Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 312.

12. Bednar, “Seeking Learning by Faith,” 5.

13. See Wilber J. McKeachie, *McKeachie’s Teaching Tips*, 11th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 31; Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 123. Logistical constraints make student participation in the form of comments more difficult in some settings (as in classes with several hundred students) and impossible in others (as in general conference and sacrament meeting talks). Even in these settings, however, we tend to glean more as students when we use techniques that engage us more actively—such as taking notes or looking for personal applications—than when we are more passive listeners.

14. Quoted in Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 123; emphasis added.

15. My student wasn’t the first to notice this detail (see John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* [Provo, UT: FARMS; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 41–43).

16. David A. Bednar, BYU–Idaho general faculty meeting, August 26, 2003, Rexburg, Idaho.

17. Renee Vorhaus, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, September 1980, 64.

18. Mark Beecher and I discuss the importance of actively managing classroom discussion, as well as some tactical considerations for doing so, in *Becoming a Great Gospel Teacher*, 149–60.

19. Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 132–34.

20. Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 133. For a fascinating example of how one teacher used a Socratic series of questions to teach binary arithmetic to elementary school students, see Rick Garlikov's "The Socratic Method: Teaching by Asking Instead of by Telling" at http://www.garlikov.com/Soc_Meth.html.

21. Richard G. Scott, "To Understand and Live Truth," address to Church Educational System religious educators, February 4, 2005, West Jordan, Utah, 2.

22. Holland, "Teaching and Learning in the Church," 91.

23. Kim B. Clark, "Meeting President Clark—An Interview," *Perspectives*, Autumn 2005, 30. In other settings, I have heard President Clark acknowledge that the desired target rate may need to be different for different disciplines, recognizing that some subjects lend themselves better than others to this style of teaching.

24. Virginia H. Pearce, in Conference Report, October 1996, 14.

25. Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 125.

26. Although He gave sermons, the Savior also used questions extensively. Elder Walter F. González taught, "The Savior used memory questions, reasoning questions, and questions for the heart. We can use them also" ("Teaching as the Savior Taught," *Ensign*, September 2004, 28).

27. President Clark notes that the Savior's teaching with parables undoubtedly inspired discussions among the disciples that the scriptures do not record.

28. More than just another manual, "a new abbreviated and improved edition" of this book was part of the Brethren's response to the First Presidency's challenge to "revitalize and improve teaching in the Church" (Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, October 1999, 100–101).

29. *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), 64.

30. Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report, April 1998, 32, quoting John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, comp. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943), 78.

31. Pearce, In Conference Report, October 1996, 14.

32. Bednar, "Seeking Learning by Faith," 4.