



7-1-2012

Attributes and Approaches of Effective Gospel Teachers

Kendel Christensen

Lloyd D. Newell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Christensen, Kendel and Newell, Lloyd D. "Attributes and Approaches of Effective Gospel Teachers." *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 13, no. 2 (2012). <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol13/iss2/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.



Effective gospel teachers have studied, prepared, and worked to know their subject well; they are lifelong learners who communicate their understanding to their students.

Attributes and Approaches of Effective Gospel Teachers

KENDEL CHRISTENSEN AND LLOYD D. NEWELL

Kendel Christensen (*kendel.christensen@gmail.com*) is a Teach for America corps member teaching Spanish in Philadelphia and pursuing a master's degree in education at the University of Pennsylvania.

Lloyd D. Newell (*lloyd_newell@byu.edu*) is a professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU.

.....
[As teachers], we are appointed—

- 1. To teach the principles of the gospel,*
- 2. Out of the standard works,*
- 3. By the power of the Holy Ghost,*
- 4. Always applying the teachings to our needs, and*
- 5. To testify that what we have taught is true.*

—Elder Bruce R. McConkie¹

Gospel teachers have a unique charge: “A teacher’s goal is greater than just delivering a lecture about truth. It is to invite the Spirit and use techniques that will enhance the possibility that the learner will discover the truth [and] be motivated to apply it.”² But how do we best invite the Spirit so that our students are inspired to apply truth in their lives? Which techniques and approaches to teaching are ideal for each learner? What are the attributes of highly effective gospel teachers? Many of us read student evaluations or receive peer reviews of our teaching, but what would students say if asked to describe an ideal gospel teacher? These and other questions

prompted us to survey almost six hundred seminary, institute, and religion students at Brigham Young University–Provo to find out which attributes and approaches of gospel teachers were most important to them.³

Our research findings led us to highlight five attributes and approaches to effective gospel teaching: inviting the Spirit, enthusiasm, knowledge, personal relevance, and preparation. The authors acknowledge that there are many other aspects of effective gospel teaching and that entire books could be dedicated to each. This study focuses on what one sampling of students reported to be most significant and offers the results for readers to consider. It serves as an affirmation of the attributes and approaches to effective gospel teaching that most of us already know are important but that perhaps merit a more intentional reminder in our efforts to incorporate them. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, “We need to be reminded more than we need to be instructed.”⁴

Methodology

Each student surveyed has experience listening to and being taught by gospel teachers. Each student has a sense of what works in the classroom and what doesn't; each has insight and perspective to give those who aspire to teach the gospel effectively. As teachers, we often energetically forge ahead with *our* goals, *our* lesson plans, *our* style and approach; and in our zeal, we sometimes too quickly assume that we know exactly what our students need and how they want to be taught. Our objective in this study was to get feedback directly from students regarding what they considered to be the ideal attributes of effective gospel teachers. We also wanted to explore whether these attributes and qualities change or remain stable over the different demographics of seminary, institute, and university students.

After receiving feedback and approval from the Education Research Committee of Seminaries & Institutes of Religion for our study, we began distributing our survey.⁵ We sent 250 printed surveys to seminaries in Utah County,⁶ 250 surveys to ten institute classes at the University of Utah institute,⁷ and invitations to twenty randomly selected BYU classes for an online survey that asked identical questions. The authors acknowledge that this sample group isn't necessarily representative of the diverse group of students with whom the readers of this publication across the country interact. Though we recognize the limitations of our study,⁸ we believe the data collected from

students will provide meaningful general principles and insight to anyone trying to improve his or her teaching methods.

The first page of the anonymous survey asked about standard demographics (age, grade, gender, GPA) and asked two free-response questions: “In your opinion, what are the three most important attributes or characteristics that a gospel teacher should have in order to teach the gospel effectively?” and “Describe a memorable lesson that left a profound impression on you. What did the teacher do that made the lesson stand out among other lessons?”

Page 2 of the survey asked students to rate the following attributes of gospel teachers on a five-point Likert Scale (from 1, “Not Important,” to 5, “Most Important”): humble, enthusiastic, prepared, gives the class time to just think, invites the Spirit, knows my name, friendly, funny, bears testimony often, eloquent, allows me to share my true feelings, happy, personal righteousness, tells stories, cares about me, depth of knowledge, encourages class participation, asks us questions, holds class discussions, explains difficult concepts, makes me feel loved, uses object lessons, and is bold. After analyzing the data,⁹ we extracted results that merit consideration by all gospel teachers.

Results

*Seminary (Grades 9–12).*¹⁰ Table 1 shows the top ten attributes for seminary students, as reported by counting the number of times each attribute was mentioned on the open-ended portion of the survey:¹¹

Table 1

Attribute	Mentions
Enthusiastic	43
Knowledgeable	35
Fun	35
Personal relevance ¹²	33
Spiritual	30
Caring	26
Funny	25
Testimony	23
Kind	22
Invites the Spirit	21

Table 2 shows the quantitative portion for seminary students who rated the following attributes as most important (out of a high of 5):

Table 2	
Attribute	Score¹³
Invites the Spirit	4.74
Happy	4.52
Friendly	4.52
Enthusiastic	4.45
Explains difficult concepts	4.42
Prepared	4.42
Knows my name	4.33
Personal righteousness	4.31
Depth of knowledge	4.22
Cares about me	4.20

*Institute.*¹⁴ Table 3 shows the responses to the open-ended portion for institute students, who responded as follows:

Table 3	
Attribute	Mentions
Knowledgeable	60
Enthusiastic	35
Has the Spirit	29
Personal relevance	25
Testimony	23
Love	23
Confident	14
Spiritual	13
Friendly	11
Funny	10

Table 4 shows the quantitative portion for institute students:

Table 4	
Attribute	Score⁴⁵
Invites the Spirit	4.83
Prepared	4.47
Depth of knowledge	4.47
Enthusiastic	4.27
Personal righteousness	4.16
Happy	4.14
Explains difficult concepts	4.08
Friendly	4.02
Humble	3.93
Asks questions	3.88

*BYU students.*¹⁶ Table 5 shows the free-response data for the BYU survey:

Table 5	
Attribute	Mentions
Knowledgeable	55
Has the Spirit	50
Love	44
Personal relevance	39
Enthusiastic	38
Testimony	35
Humility	29
Caring	16
Spiritual	13
Confident	12

Table 6 is the quantitative results for BYU students:

Table 6	
Attribute	Score ¹⁷
Invites the Spirit	4.61
Explains difficult concepts	4.26
Prepared	4.10
Depth of knowledge	4.10
Personal righteousness	4.07
Enthusiastic	4.06
Happy	4.00
Bears testimony	3.94
Friendly	3.85
Humble	3.79

Other results. Other interesting findings include the following:¹⁸

- “Funny” was ranked in the bottom five in the quantitative portion for all three groups (with scores of 3.91, 2.90, and 3.07, respectively), but was in the top ten answers for the open-response questions for both seminary (twenty-five mentions) and institute (ten mentions).
- “Eloquent” was universally rated low in the quantitative portion by all three groups (last for seminary, third to last for institute, and fourth to last by BYU students)
- “Object lessons” and “giving the class time to just think” also rated low in the quantitative portion (bottom third by all three groups).
- “Knows my name” was rated the eighth most important attribute in the quantitative portion by seminary students but was rated in the bottom third by institute students and last by BYU students.
- “Preparation” scored in the top six in all three lists for the quantitative portion (second for institute and third for BYU students).
- Females rated inviting the Spirit, being friendly, bearing testimony, class participation, and “makes me feel loved” at a statistically significantly¹⁹ higher level than males (4.83 vs. 4.73, 4.21 vs. 4.06, 4.05 vs. 3.86, 3.91 vs. 3.69, and 3.80 vs. 3.64, respectively). Males scored “boldness” statistically significantly²⁰ higher than did females (3.66 vs. 3.35).

- Eloquence, “allows me to share my true feelings,” and class participation were rated significantly higher²¹ for those with the highest GPA rating²² when compared to all the other GPA groups.²³ Eloquence scored 3.63 by the highest GPA group vs. a range of 2.77 to 3.1 for all other GPA groups, “allows me to share my true feelings” scored 4.13 vs. a range of 3.2 to 3.62 for all other GPA groups, and class participation was rated 4.18 vs. a range of 3.5 to 3.77 for all other GPA groups.
- BYU students mention “teaches doctrine, not opinion” as the most important attribute eight times in the free-response section. It is not mentioned once in either of the other groups.
- Students seem to perceive “has the Spirit” and “spiritual” as somewhat different qualities. From what students said in the free-response section of the survey, we understand “spiritual” to be a description of a teacher’s nature, way of life, character, and sense of commitment to the gospel and spiritual things. “Has the Spirit” is taken to mean that when he or she teaches, the Spirit is present and that the Holy Ghost testifies to hearts that what is taught is true.

Looking at both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the results, five attributes stood out as the most frequently mentioned or highest rated among all groups: invites the Spirit, enthusiasm, knowledgeable, personal relevance, and preparation.

“Invites the Spirit”

It is the Spirit that matters most.

—President Ezra Taft Benson²⁴

When all three groups of students were combined, the Spirit was mentioned over ninety times (16 percent of all surveys)²⁵ on the free-response portion of the survey and was rated the highest of all attributes on the quantitative portion—an impressive 4.72 out of 5 (combining all groups). From such a response, it is evident that students are intimately aware of the power and importance of the Spirit and that they truly yearn for it in their gospel classes. Rightly so, as Elder David A. Bednar has taught, “The Holy Ghost is . . . *the* teacher and witness of all truth.”²⁶

Effective gospel teachers give primacy to having the Spirit with them and seeking the Spirit as they teach. Elder Gene R. Cook said, “Who will do the teaching? The Comforter. Be sure you don’t believe you are the ‘true teacher.’

That is a serious mistake. . . . Be careful you do not get in the way. The major role of a teacher is to prepare the way such that the people will have a spiritual experience with the Lord. You are an instrument, not the teacher. The Lord is the One who knows the needs of those being taught. He is the One who can impress someone's heart and cause them to change."²⁷

This influence of the Spirit became clear and compelling in our data. One tenth-grader, when describing a lesson that stood out to him, recalls, "Our teacher was telling us a story about God's will being greater than our will. He told us a story about his daughter getting very bad pneumonia. Long story short, he finally realized he thought he knew better than God and changed his attitude. The Spirit was so powerful that $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ of the class was crying. Teaching by the Spirit is by far what made it incredible."²⁸

One BYU senior, when answering the same question, wrote, "He taught truth from his heart, not knowledge from his brain." The statement is reminiscent of something President Boyd K. Packer taught: "We can become teachers, very good ones, but we cannot teach moral and spiritual values with only an [intellectual or] academic approach. There must be spirit in it."²⁹ Another tenth-grader echoed this sentiment when he said, "Teaching with the Holy Ghost is better than from a book." Truly, we must always remember, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught, "Most people don't come to church looking merely for a few new gospel facts or to see old friends, though all of that is important. They come seeking a spiritual experience. . . . They want . . . to be strengthened by the powers of heaven. Those of us who are called upon to speak or teach or lead have an obligation to help provide that, as best we possibly can."³⁰ In the words of one BYU freshman, his preferred method of being taught is by "not just factual stuff . . . [but] a way of teaching that allows the Spirit to be present." The Spirit is the key to all we do as religious educators. As Elder Gérald Caussé of the Seventy reminds us: "For you teachers of the Church, the principal goal of your lessons is the conversion of hearts. The quality of a lesson is not measured by the number of new pieces of information that you give your students. It comes from your capacity to invite the presence of the Spirit and to motivate your students to make commitments. It is by exercising their faith by putting into practice the lessons taught that they will increase their spiritual knowledge."³¹

Enthusiasm

Part of what may be lacking, at times, in the decent teacher is a freshening personal excitement over the gospel which could prove highly contagious.

—Elder Neal A. Maxwell³²

Enthusiasm was mentioned 114 times as an important attribute for an effective gospel teacher (21 percent of all students surveyed). When we averaged the ratings of enthusiasm quantitatively, it scored 4.30 out of 5. From this, we conclude that students crave energy and full engagement from their teachers. Indeed, one BYU junior, when asked to list three of the most important attributes for an effective gospel teacher, simply listed two—“have a passion for the gospel” and “being able to transfer that passion to the students.” A high school senior concurs that what is most important is to “be creative and outgoing in teaching (no monotone . . . no one likes ‘dry’ talk).” The same student says that he is the most engaged when a teacher is “lively and into the lesson.” This is precisely what is admonished in *Teaching, No Greater Call*: “Nurture your own enthusiasm for studying the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets. Your enthusiasm may inspire those you teach to follow your example.”³³ Likewise, President Henry B. Eyring taught, “You need to exemplify optimism. . . . Your students will then feel your faith, and that will bolster theirs.”³⁴ And a BYU sophomore wrote, “The teachers that have the most memorable lessons are the passionate ones, who live and love what they teach.”

Many of us have experienced the boost that comes from an enthusiastic teacher. Whenever we see someone teach or speak with energy, we perk up—we ask ourselves whether we are placing sufficient importance on the subject. We each have an innate sense of wanting to listen to someone who speaks with conviction just as we subconsciously tune out (or perhaps, in our digital age, iTune out) anyone who seems to be merely going through the motions. Effective gospel teachers should be on guard to avoid falling into a colorless, lifeless routine. David M. McConkie of the general Sunday School presidency recently stated, “Successful gospel teachers love the gospel. They are excited about it. And because they love their students, they want them to feel as they feel and to experience what they have experienced. To teach the gospel is to share your love of the gospel. Brothers and sisters, a teacher’s attitude is not taught; it’s caught.”³⁵

Students radiate this desire to have teachers who are excited about the gospel. Among the survey responses to “the most important attribute in a gospel teacher” were “a love of teaching” (graduate student), an “engaging personality” (junior in college), “positive and excited” (tenth-grader), “animated” (eleventh-grader), a “passion for the gospel” (BYU freshman), and “a large love for teaching” (eleventh-grader). A BYU senior stated, “[The class that left the greatest] impression on me was from a teacher who taught with enthusiasm, the Spirit, and with urgency. He also spoke from the heart. He told stories that related to the principles he was teaching to help us stay focused. He motivated us to be better and to improve. I left enlightened, inspired, and uplifted.” Likewise, the most impactful lesson in the life of one BYU sophomore was “a lesson we had on Christ’s suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. The teacher was just very passionate about the topic and was really able to stress the importance of it in all of our lives.” Truly, “a teacher with spontaneous humor and enthusiasm can raise a class of twenty average students to unlimited heights as doers and teachers of truth.”³⁶

Knowledge

The more knowledge of truth we have, the better we can progress spiritually.

—President Dieter F. Uchtdorf³⁷

Knowledge was mentioned as the top attribute for gospel teachers—148 times on the free-response portion of our survey (27 percent of all students)—and received a combined average of 4.12 out of 5 for importance in the quantitative portion. Students admire teachers who have sacrificed time to learn the gospel well. They yearn for the wisdom and truth that they sense the gospel contains but that they themselves are too inexperienced to yet possess. Likely, students are attracted to knowledgeable teachers because, as the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Knowledge does away with darkness, suspense and doubt; for these cannot exist where knowledge is.”³⁸ As one institute senior said about his most memorable gospel lesson, the “teacher was able to answer a difficult question with both history and cross-referencing scriptures.” The world our students live in is permeated with darkness and doubt, but the moment they walk into a gospel classroom, something is different. *Something should be very different.* The atmosphere is hopeful. The teacher is not cynical. He or she talks about things that the media and world at large ignore or belittle, yet the teacher speaks with authority. The authority is simply the power

of the word, well understood, lived, and experienced, and thus powerfully conveyed. Effective gospel teachers are gospel scholars; they have studied, prepared, and worked to know their subject well; they are lifelong learners who communicate their understanding to their students. President Henry B. Eyring taught, “You can study the word of God, not for yourself alone but to be an emissary of the Lord Jesus Christ to all the world. When you increase your power to teach the gospel, you are qualifying to help Heavenly Father in gathering His children.”³⁹

Often we are tempted to play to our strengths as gospel teachers and ignore small details that might give added context and power to our teaching. As one institute student stated, “I like when instructors briefly go over the background of the scriptures covered, the culture, and other pertinent events of the time, etc.” But our students deserve to have a teacher that, as one eleventh-grade student expressed, “knows what he is talking about.” Treasuring up the word continually is the best way to respond to this most important calling.⁴⁰

Personal Relevance

*Gospel learning, or religious education, could be defined as the process through which, with the influence of the Holy Ghost, a person acquires gospel knowledge, chooses how to respond to that knowledge, and uses that knowledge in his or her own life.*⁴¹

Because we realized the significance of this attribute only after administering our study, we did not include a measure of importance in the quantitative portion of our survey for what we are calling “personal relevance,” but the students mentioned it ninety-four times when asked to list the three most important attributes that a gospel teacher should possess (17 percent of all students). In addition, there was no other single attribute that the students wrote more about when describing lessons that left a lasting impression on them. One high school senior described the gospel teacher that most inspired him: “He asked us a powerful question that applied to a recent local tragedy; it made us think to ourselves. He directly connected things to us.” An institute student offers a similar sentiment: “He made the lesson real. It applied to my life, but not only mine. It applied to all of us in the class.”

Helping students see how the gospel relates to their individual lives transforms their religion from merely “an extra chair in the room which

[students] acknowledge as something that has always been in their lives, but cannot describe its importance”⁴² to the centerpiece—a masterpiece proudly displayed in their “room of life” as something cherished. As Elder David A. Bednar instructed: “As parents and 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. ‘If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God’ (John 7:17).”⁴³



Learning by doing requires courage, and it is vital for every gospel learner. The miracle is that students want to be challenged and stretched by their teachers. One tenth-grader said, “I am very thankful when a teacher is frank and honest.” An institute sophomore said, “Lessons that stand out are ones that make me want to change something in my life and give me specific ways to do so.” One BYU senior said, “When the teacher has sincerely invited me to change is when I have had the most profound impressions in class. I have felt that several of the invitations I have received are answers to my prayers.” And an institute student adds, “I love lessons that take gospel stories and relate them to my life. The gospel story is no longer just a story but a lesson with important doctrines.” Truly, as President J. Reuben Clark wisely stated in his classic 1938 talk “The Charted Course,” “The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted.”⁴⁴ More recently, President Eyring reiterated, “I can promise you some things [about your students]. . . . They will respond when you treat them as honest seekers who want to believe.”⁴⁵

Because of this eagerness, our time in class should be directly connected to the teaching of life-changing principles and doctrines. Students in effective classes can become better acquainted with the mind and will of the Father so that they can better obey his will in their individual lives. We assist our students by striving to make relevant connections with their personal lives, current challenges, and events in the media and culture. One institute student wants his teachers to “help apply scriptures to everyday life.” Another college student says that the most memorable lessons are when “the teacher applied the lesson directly to what I was dealing with (e.g. dating, school, work, etc.)” A graduate student at institute described his most impactful lessons as “the ones that teach on a personal level. They share personal stories and experiences. They tailor their lessons to the audience and they think about the audience on an individual level.” Facilitating students to think and seriously ponder about individual application follows a divine pattern. Again we learn from Elder Bednar: “Consider the question posed by Heavenly Father to Adam in the Garden of Eden: ‘Where art thou?’ (Genesis 3:9). The Father knew where Adam was hiding, but He nonetheless asked the question. Why? A wise and loving Father enabled His child to act in the learning process and not merely be acted upon. There was no one-way lecture to a disobedient child, as perhaps many of us might be inclined to deliver. Rather, the Father helped Adam as a learner to act as an agent and appropriately exercise his agency.”⁴⁶

Preparation

The difference between focusing on the learner and focusing on teaching or on the teacher is illustrated by the difference in a teacher who says, “What shall I do in class today?” and one who says, “What will my students do in class today?” or “What will I teach today?” and “How will I help my students discover what they need to know?”⁴⁷

Preparation was mentioned thirty-two times as the most important attribute in an effective gospel teacher (6 percent of all students) and received an overall rating of 4.27 out of 5 when averaged among all three groups. Robust preparation is at the heart of effective teaching, and there are no effective shortcuts. Students sense if their gospel teachers have paid the price to know the subject, if they study and plan for each class, if they walk into the room spiritually and mentally prepared. Serious preparation leads to deep conviction. One BYU junior recounts: “I had a teacher who unabashedly taught the doctrine found in the scriptures, without mincing words. . . . He never taught *anything* that couldn’t be substantiated by ample scripture references or quotes of general authorities, and of which he didn’t have a burning testimony. There were no ‘near truths’ or ‘Sunday School’ stories of an apocryphal nature, as there often are in the church—everything was word for word what the scriptures said. As a result, this often forced us to re-evaluate what it was the scriptures really did say, and recommit ourselves to study the gospel.” This ability to bring the scriptural truths or the whats and whys into the minds and hearts of our students—such that they have a burning desire to pray and study the scriptures more on their own—is what effective gospel teachers strive for.

Students can discern when we really “know what we are talking about” or when we merely arrive to class to “spend the time,” not having prepared for that specific day. One institute student said that he likes it when a teacher knows the material so well that he or she can “switch it up” at any time, according to the Spirit. Preparation both precedes and carries power,⁴⁸ and, for our students, it can mean the difference between leaving our class nourished and renewed or walking away with merely a “theological Twinkie”⁴⁹ with which to survive the day. The best teachers are prepared, as one tenth-grader said, so they “*really* teach, they don’t just talk.” One ninth-grader was so impressed with her teacher’s preparation that she expressed that “you could tell she really believed in what she was talking about.” That conviction—the conviction that is so readily seen in a dedicated and prepared teacher—is worth the

time, hard work, and investment for the gospel teacher whose goal is to edify and educate hearts and minds.

Conclusion

This study focused on the meaningful attributes and approaches that students felt were most important in effective gospel teachers. The quantitative and qualitative nature of the research generated rich data providing valuable insights for those who desire to improve their gospel teaching. All of this is only a starting point, however. Benefit could be obtained from a more extensive study, perhaps one that undertook to catalog a full gamut of teaching attributes and approaches, that researched more fully the fluctuations among individual grade levels, or that went beyond Utah and the Wasatch Front to cross-cultural samples in various locations throughout the world. At the very least, any follow-up study should attempt to more fully measure the widely described “personal relevance” characteristic. If we were to do the study again, we would ask students to rate a quality such as “makes lessons applicable to my life.”

Ongoing research is needed on the subject of gospel pedagogy, but we hope that this article in some way has inspired what President Boyd K. Packer and Elder L. Tom Perry admonished in the 2007 worldwide leadership training meeting: “All of us—leaders, teachers, missionaries, and parents—have a lifelong challenge from the Lord to both teach and learn the doctrines of the gospel as they have been revealed to us.”⁵⁰ Part of effectively teaching and learning the doctrine includes taking a serious look at our teaching attributes and approaches and seeking improvement, as well as striving to conform our lives to what the Brethren, as well as our students, are asking of us. **RE**

Notes

1. *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), 10.
2. *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 61.
3. This study was conducted during winter semester 2010 at BYU as a faculty-mentored student project. We express appreciation to Kenneth Plummer, manager of research, evaluation, and assessment for Seminaries & Institutes of Religion; Dennis Eggett, director of the BYU Center for Collaborative Research and Statistical Consulting; the Education Research Committee of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion; Sandee M. P. Muñoz of the BYU Office of Research and Creative Activities; BYU Religious Education and Religious Education faculty support; and the seminary, institute, and BYU religion students and teachers who participated in the study.

4. Neal A. Maxwell, "Teaching by the Spirit—"The Language of Inspiration" (CES Symposium on the Old Testament, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, August 15, 1991), 3.

5. The authors acknowledge that many of the questions we sought to answer might be better gained by personal interviews but were constrained by the time and resources that process would require.

6. We determined selection by whole class. From all the seminary classes with students enrolled in Utah County, we selected classes at random until we reached 250 enrolled students. It resulted in ten classes from Lehi, Lone Peak, Mountain View, Orem, Pleasant Grove, Springville, and Timpview High Schools.

7. Also selected at random, by whole class.

8. The authors would have liked to survey a much broader group of students, including those outside of Utah but were constrained by time and the logistics it would have required. As a result, any time that statistical significance is referred to, it is in reference to the group sampled (e.g., seminaries in Utah county), not the entire population of seminary students that CES serves.

9. The methods used were standard tallying and grouping, as well as chi-squared tests.

10. All seminary grades were grouped together. Of the 250 surveys, 207 were completed and included in the data.

11. The data was collected from counting each attribute mentioned when students responded to the question "In your opinion, what are the three most important attributes or characteristics that a gospel teacher should have in order to teach the gospel effectively? (List 3.)"

12. That is, "what is taught relates to *my* life."

13. Averaged out of a high score of 5, rounded to the nearest hundredth.

14. 123 students responded.

15. Averaged out of a high score of 5, rounded to the nearest hundredth.

16. 218 students responded.

17. Averaged out of a high score of 5, rounded to the nearest hundredth.

18. All scores are out of a possible of 5. If every respondent rated something "most important," it would receive a score of 5.00.

19. To the $p < 0.001$ level.

20. To the $p < 0.001$ level.

21. Statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

22. Those that scored 3.9–4.0 on a 4.0 GPA scale.

23. The other GPA groups were "below 2.74," "2.75–3.24," "3.25–3.64," and "3.65–3.89."

24. Ezra Taft Benson, mission presidents' seminar, April 3, 1985, in *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 199.

25. Out of 548 responses.

26. David A. Bednar, "Seek Learning by Faith," *Ensign*, September 2007, 66.

27. Gene R. Cook (address delivered to religious educators, September 1, 1989), quoted in *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 41.

28. All comments from students quoted in this paper are in possession of authors.

29. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 276.

30. Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Teacher Come from God," *Ensign*, May 1998, 26.

31. Gérald Caussé, "Even a Child Can Understand," *Ensign*, November 2008, 34.

32. Maxwell, "Teaching by the Spirit," 5.

33. *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 62.

34. Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 154.

35. David M. McConkie, "Gospel Learning and Teaching," *Ensign*, November 2010, 14.
36. Charles R. Hobbs, *Teaching with New Techniques* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 24–25.
37. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Truth Restored" (devotional address, Education Week, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, August 22, 2006).
38. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 340.
39. Henry B. Eyring, "Faith and the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, May 2008, 64.
40. See D&C 84:85.
41. *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994), 11.
42. Personal notes, from Christian Smith, "Soul Searching: Understanding the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers—Findings from the National Study of Youth & Religion" (Marjorie Pay Hinckley Endowed Chair Lecture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, February 2008). Also of interest, Dr. Smith noted that Latter-day Saint teenagers could articulate their religious belief better than the average religiously affiliated teenager in the United States.
43. Bednar, "Seek Learning by Faith," 67.
44. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "The Charted Course of the Church in Education," in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1965–75), 6:44–58.
45. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God*, 154–55.
46. Bednar, "Seek Learning by Faith," 63.
47. *Teaching the Gospel*, 13.
48. See D&C 38:30.
49. Holland, "A Teacher Come from God," 26.
50. Boyd K. Packer and L. Tom Perry, "Principles of Teaching and Learning," *Ensign*, June 2007, 82.