

Teaching the Art of Congregational Engagement



Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Psalm 119:31-33
Matthew 28:19-20



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and Black Church Collaborative Institute**

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Psalm 119:33-37

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I will observe it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.

35 Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

36 Turn my heart to your decrees, and not to selfish gain.

37 Turn my eyes from looking at vanities; give me life in your ways. NRSV

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the Lord alone. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ **Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.** ⁷ Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹ and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. NRSV

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and **teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.** And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” NRSV

30 Second Challenges

1 How do you define teaching?

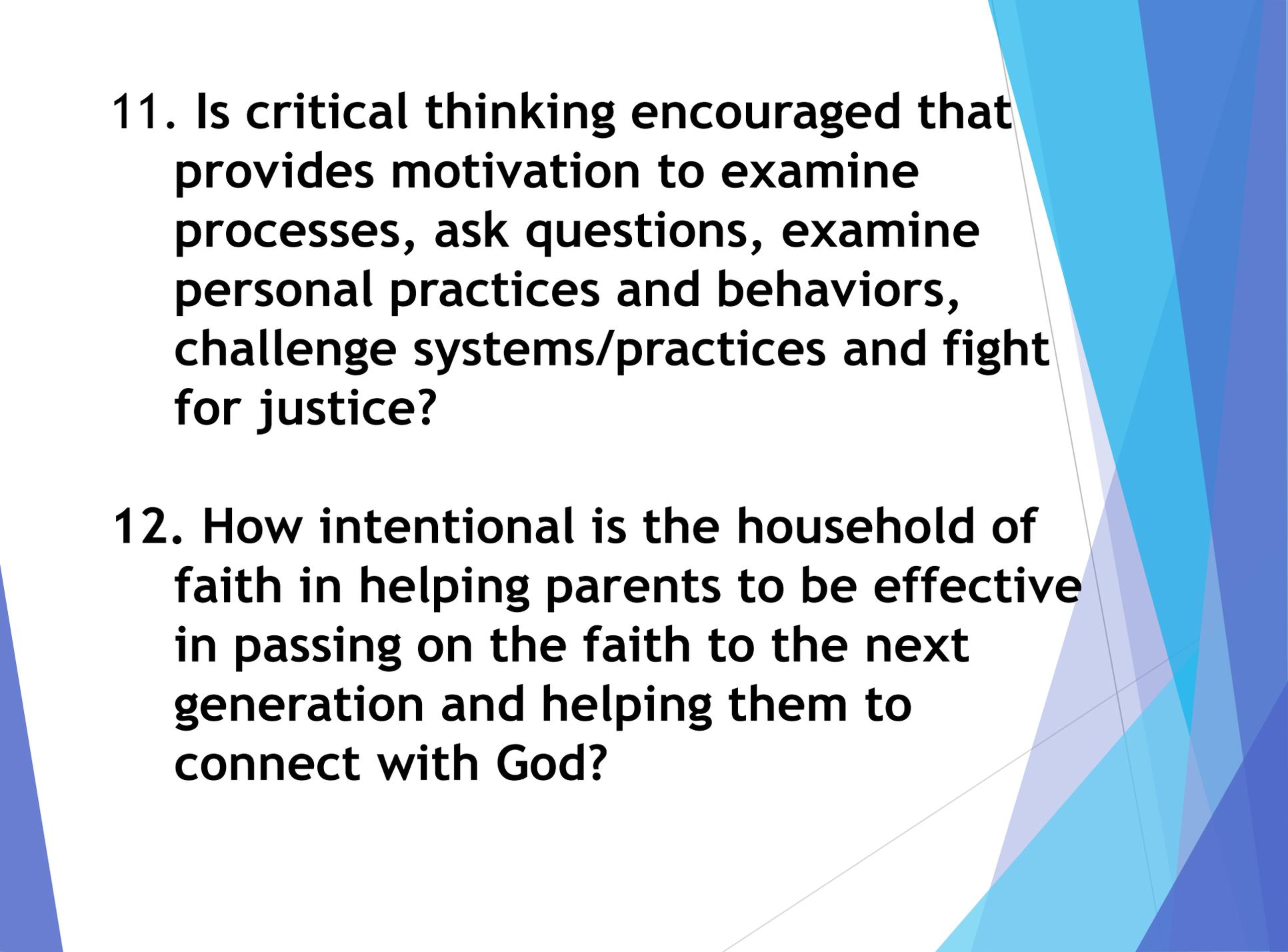
2 How do you define engagement?

Questions for the Faith Community

1. What are the methods of engagement used by congregations, especially during the pandemic?
2. Is there intentionality in helping persons to move from **cognitive knowing** to **behavioral knowing or acting**?
3. How are individuals helped in **applying** biblical understandings (faith) in all aspects of living (finances, relationships, care of the body, decision making, practicing sabbath, living in community, etc.?)

4. Are teachers within the faith community nurtured so that they understand what happens in the brain for learning and meaning making to occur that results in transformation?
5. What are the factors that impact congregants' learning? (environment, experiences, methodology, economy, biases, assumptions, etc.)
6. Where are individuals learning to hate, love, be violent, practice justice, make ethical decisions, protect the environment or understand diverse cultures?

7. Is there **intentionality in engaging the entire brain** in the learning process.
8. Does the faith community pay attention to the neuroscience research findings regarding learning and teaching?
9. Does the faith community examine the teaching methodology of Jesus?
10. Is the faith community intentional in sharing the history, contributions and culture of all generations of persons of color?

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- 11. Is critical thinking encouraged that provides motivation to examine processes, ask questions, examine personal practices and behaviors, challenge systems/practices and fight for justice?**

 - 12. How intentional is the household of faith in helping parents to be effective in passing on the faith to the next generation and helping them to connect with God?**

Questions for Seminars

1. How does the Seminary prepare congregational servants (CS) for practical ministry such as Christian Education?
2. Where does modeling occur within the Seminary to help provide guidance to congregational servants?
3. Does the Seminary place equal focus on enabling CS to preach, administer and teach?
4. What field experiences are possible to enhance learning?

Questions for Seminars

5. Are the experiences and methodologies provided by the Seminary for CS more teacher-based than learner based?
6. How does the Seminary demonstrate engagement in the classroom?
7. What requirements are within the curriculum to provide a balanced holistic approach to theological education?

How is teaching defined?

Teaching is the act, practice or process wherein information, experience, and skills are shared with others with the goal that they will acquire, as their own (LEARN), that which is exchanged.

Teaching promotes change!

**Experiences Teach and Impact
Learning, Behavior
plus Give or Deny Voice**

Everything Teaches

Intersectionality Exists - Look for it!

Teach for Understanding and RESULTS

**Examples of missed teaching opportunities
within the household of faith**

Gleaning Prayer

- **Examples of teaching/learning opportunities used intentionally for an impact by the household of faith**

School Board

Caring for Others

History & Heritage

These examples illustrate engagement that reveals behavioral knowing

The Teaching Process should

- ▶ Stimulate the learner's brain and promote learning and change
- ▶ Be learner/brain based and intentionally monitor behavioral changes
- ▶ Identify and address objectives in all three domains: Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral
- ▶ **Engage** learners in doing something that impacts future behavior
- ▶ **Provide** helpful resources

THREE AREAS of CHANGE

- Change in **cognitive** knowledge - KNOWING
- Change in emotions/**affective** knowledge - FEELING
- Change in **behavior** - DOING

How is learning defined?

Learning is a process where there is a **change** in (1) the acquisition of knowledge, (2) mastering a skill, (3) perfecting an ability and gaining information has occurred or was enhanced as **a result of engagement** in a formal or informal teaching/learning experience.

Learning is change!

- ❖ Learning is a chemical formula or equation that reveals change.
- ❖ Believers need to grow and change in the process to reflect their communing with God and being the light/salt in the world.
- ❖ Learning can be fun and transformational.
- ❖ *Note: Change may be resisted!*

Teach to Connect and Create Learning Pathways

- ▶ As people learn, the brain is busy finding **connections with what is already present** in the brain.
- ▶ Effective teachers create opportunities for learners to make brain connections with what is known and new information.
- ▶ If **no connections** are made in the brain, **no learning** occurs. **What if the brain is a sea of disconnected neurons?**

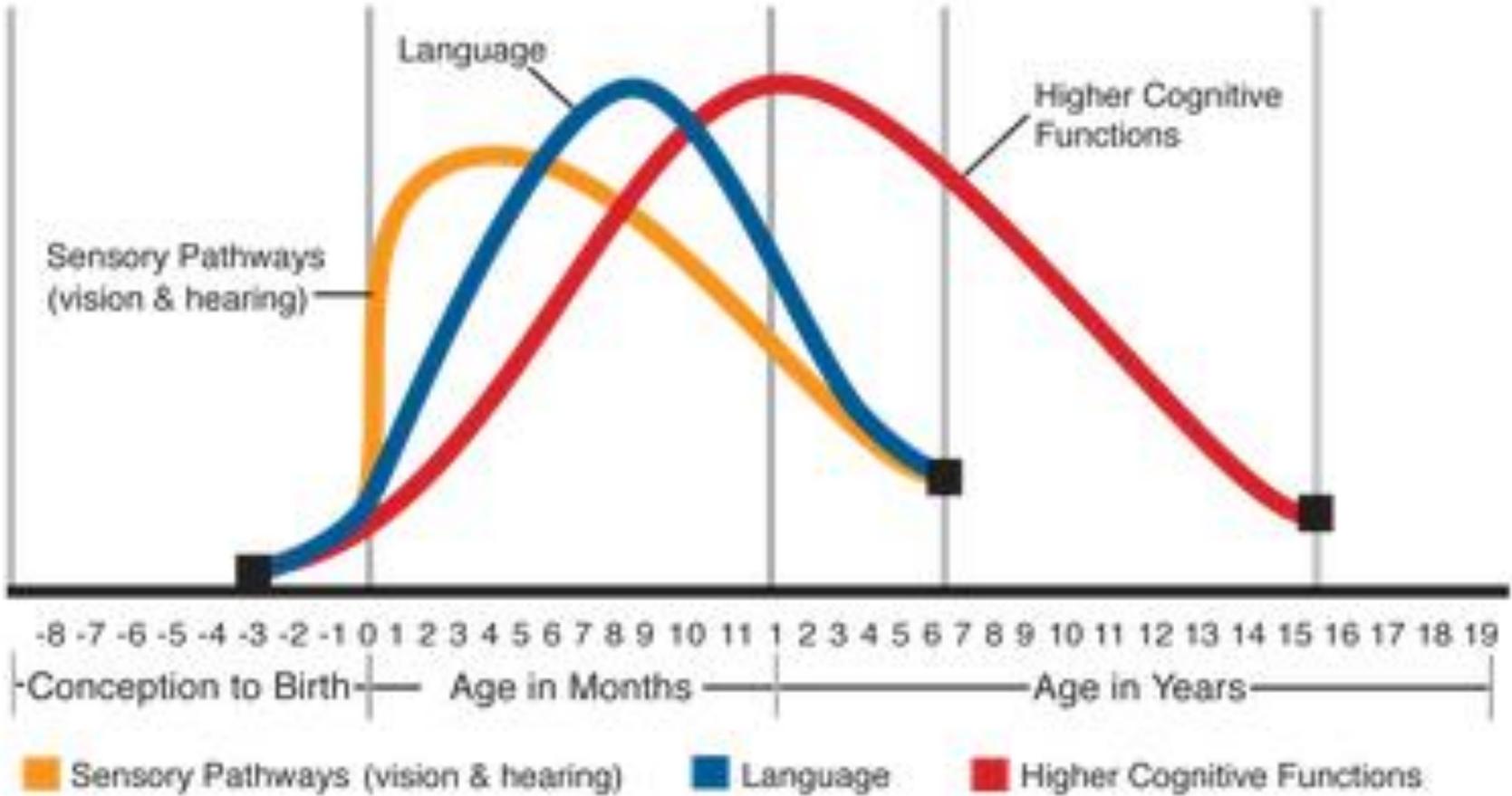
The Learning Process begins as one is born

Harvard University pediatrician Jack Shonkoff says, “**brains are built not born.**” Most of the cells are there, but the connections - the wiring that forms the architecture is not.

Every experience a baby has, forms a neural connection in the brain. These connections — called synapses—form very rapidly in the early years at a rate of **700 synapses per second.**

(Resource: wwwfirst2000days.com)

This graph shows when those connections peak for different brain functions.



Graph Source: C.A. Nelson (2000)

Neuroscience

- **Neuroscience is the study that addresses the structure, development, function and chemistry of the nervous system.**
- **Educational Neuroscience is where mind, brain and education is explored.**
- **Learn what promotes effective learning and understand what happens in the brain.**

Neuroplasticity

The **reorganization (change)** that occurs in the brain as a result of the experiences that one has which **create neural circuits** that provide a basis for neural connections in the future.

STRETCHABILITY



Brain Points

- ▶ Learning takes place when **multiple connections are made simultaneously** between ideas and experiences. (P. 9 - Loving God.)
- ▶ If neural connections are made, boredom tends to disappear.
- ▶ Asking open-ended questions in a positive manner fosters connections, creativity, learner ownership, rather than shutdown or disinterest.

Brain Points

- ▶ Teachers should strive to influence how the brain receives, processes, stores and retrieves information and experiences.
- ▶ Plan to **engage** the various parts of the brain.
- ▶ Learning requires **attention** and **focus**.



Participatory Learning

- ▶ To participate means to take a part or share with others.
- ▶ Participation is **ENGAGEMENT**
- ▶ It is not done in isolation but in community.
- ▶ It is relational.
- ▶ It requires the learner to be involved in ways that are not passive (accepting what is given without any influence, resistance or dialogue about the matter).

1 Minute Challenge

- ▶ **Name the ways that you have engaged congregants within the faith community.**
- ▶ **Are the ways you named - Teacher Based or Learner Based?**
- ▶ **Are these activities magnetizing?**
- ▶ **Are results of engagement obvious?**

Congregational Engagement

- ▶ **Provides and explains biblical foundations for living and provides opportunities for application**
- ▶ **Addresses all aspects of life and relationships**
- ▶ **Provides information, training and opportunities to engage in advocacy for issues like prison reform, food deserts, health matters, child welfare, gun violence, etc.**
- ▶ **Functions with an understanding of how people learn and communicates what makes teaching effective**

Congregational Engagement

- ▶ **Uses the knowledge from neurological research findings and incorporates it into teacher training**
- ▶ **Examines the teaching style of Jesus and notes the current neurological research connections regarding effectiveness.**
- ▶ **Uses various methodologies to intentionally connect with what is already present in the brain**

Sticky Learning

Magnetized Learning

“Knowledge and methods that may be applied in various contexts to enable your ideas to **be understood** and **remembered** and to have a lasting impact.”

▶ Holly J. Inglis (Sticky Learning)

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

- ▶ The place to teach is **EVERYWHERE**
- ▶ Use every teachable moment intentionally.
- ▶ Everything that the church does teaches.
- ▶ The key is awareness and intentionality

Essential Steps to increase Congregational Engagement

- 1. Be inclusive - all ages/generations, cultures and issues**
- 2. Rename/rebrand the teaching/learning component so that its role is stressed as ministry**
- 3. Provide intentional nurture for all teachers emphasizing how the brain learns (neuroscience)**
- 4. Explore, train and use all media options to enhance participation and reach all ages**

- 5. Use teaching methodologies to stimulate neural connections**
- 6. Find ways to connect with congregants'/ learners' existing knowledge and experiences**
- 7. Be intentional in addressing life issues (racism, care of the land, pollution, ethical decision making, justice, economics, LGBTQIA+, violence, food and health disparities, housing, etc.) from a biblical perspective with 21st century applications**
- 8. Provide opportunities for learners to understand how faith is applied to all aspects of life**

- 9. Go beyond cognitive knowing to behavioral knowing (showing), checking for understanding, meaning making, critical thinking and transformative action.**
- 10. Operate beyond the walls of a faith facility**
- 11. Remove nurturing for congregational engagement from the back burner to the forefront**
- 12. Secure the commitment of leadership on all levels to invest in the ministry of congregational engagement**

Resources

- ▶ **Ambrose, Susan A., Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett and Marie K. Norman. *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass (Wiley Imprint), 2010.**
- ▶ **Hawkins, Thomas R. *Loving God With All Your Mind: Equipping the Community of Faith for Theological Thinking*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2004.**
- ▶ **Inglis, Holly. *Sticky Learning: How Neuroscience Supports Teaching That's Remembered*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.**
- ▶ **Maddix, Mark A. and Dean G. Blevins. *Neuroscience and Christian Formation*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2016.**
- ▶ **Sousa, David A. *How the Brain Learns. Fifth Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin: A Sage Company, 2017.**
- ▶ **[Why the First 2,000 Days Matter: A Look Inside the Brain | Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences \(I-LABS\) \(uw.edu\)](#)**
- ▶ **<https://modules.ilabs.uw.edu/module/first-2000-days-matter/>**

Additional Resources are provided on the Resource Handout.