Classroom Instruction and Mentoring Compared

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The comparisons listed below refer to mentoring *new Christian leaders.* We mentor them the way Jesus and His apostles did. Pioneer fields especially require mentoring for new pastors and cell leaders, until churches are reproducing and doing what the New Testament requires. We compare mentoring and lecture not to show that one is better but that we need balance between the two as churches mature. The authors do both. To multiply churches or cells, educators must do both.

Both methods can impart the inspired Word, prepare leaders and exalt Christ. Both are essential, depending on the level of development. Tradition exalts lecture beyond reason and overlooks much-needed *mentoring*. We plead for *balance*. The comparisons show clearly why we need *both*.

1. Physical Factors		
1a Amount of Time Required	**Mentoring.** Training new leaders is time-consuming. Paul mentored Timothy and Titus by spending much time with them and giving them fatherly care. When they matured in the faith and outgrew the need for such intensive care Paul left them to train other leaders. Their mentoring tapered off but they kept it up as they passed on what they learned from Paul to newer leaders. Just as newborn babies need much personal attention, new leaders and new churches need mentoring until they are doing what the New Testament requires for them.	**Classroom.** Classroom teaching is more time-effective. It works well for more mature leaders who no longer need the intensive care, and whose flocks are doing the things the New Testament requires.
1b Location	**Mentoring.** Location is not important as long as two-way communication occurs between all present.	**Classroom.** When we lecture a large group of mature leaders we normally prefer a classroom designed for one-way communication.
1c Seating	**Mentoring.** Our trainees form a circle or some other arrangement that allows maximum interaction. When modeling	**Classroom.** Our students usually face the same way, seeing mainly the backs of other students' heads.

Arrangement	skills we walk (or ride) together or sit around a table as at the Last Supper,	
1d Frequency of Sessions	**Mentoring.** Where mentoring is the primary method of training new leaders, such as among those who use *Train And Multiply*[TM], sessions are less frequent, with more reading and fieldwork done between sessions. Patterson relates that he normally held sessions every two weeks when he developed *Train And Multiply* in Honduras. We meet more often for very new churches and less often for those who live far away, or for whom transportation is difficult for other reasons.	**Classroom.** Classes are normally daily for regular students in institutional degree programs. For a particular course, sessions are commonly two or three times a week.

2. General Acceptance and Enrollment Factors		
2a General Acceptance	**Mentoring.** Mentoring as a vital part of Western Evangelical theological education has limited acceptance. Relatively few educators mentor in a disciplined way or teach the value of it. We observe in movements where churches reproduce, however, that someone is mentoring *new leaders* in some way.	**Classroom.** Especially for more mature leaders, classroom instruction is almost universally accepted as the norm.
2b Require-ments for Enrollment and Field Work	**Mentoring.** We train potential leaders who meet the biblical qualifications for 'elders' who are spiritually mature and, for example, keep their children in order. They normally do not add to the Biblical requirements, lest they deny the pastoral vocation to persons whom God has gifted for it. Crucial to our understanding of mentoring is that our trainees are required to have a flock of some kind or a definite current ministry. In a pioneer field the	**Classroom.** When teaching long ago in the original, traditional Honduran Bible Institute, like many other educators in pioneer fields we often enrolled single young people who were not proven in service and thus failed to meet the biblical requirements for an elder. They were not mature enough to start a church or lead a group that includes mature heads of families. Graduates who became pastors did so because they studied a certain number of years for a diploma

	flock may begin with one's family and grow into a church or cell. Trainees put into practice *immediately* what we help them plan and prepare for, with their flock or ministry group.	that demonstrated that they could recapitulate memorized material for examinations.
2c Size of Group	**Mentoring.** We seek to keep the group small enough to listen and respond to each student-worker. They help each one plan what his people will do the next few weeks. Christ occasionally took three of the twelve apart for special counsel.	**Classroom.** We often seek larger classes. Floor space sometimes determined class size rather than learning dynamics.
2d Duration of Training by Instructors	**Mentoring.** We continue intensive mentoring until new leaders and churches no longer need it. The interaction is too time-consuming to continue indefinitely. Christ phased it out with the twelve, as Paul did with Titus whom he left in Crete to prepare others (Titus 1:5-9). He also left Timothy in Ephesus to do the same (2 Tim. 2:2). Once a leader can carry on ministry without the mentor's help or a church is functioning well, mentors phase out the personal interaction. Ongoing training then takes the form of more conventional lectures or workshops. Mentoring resumes, however, for a special need such as a change in ministry or a personal matter, such as when Paul wrote Philemon, a house church leader, about a matter of slavery. In this sense, mentoring never ends.	**Classroom.** Degree requirements, class schedules and semester calendars determine the duration of our teaching, often without reference to the maturity of a student's church or ministry development.

3. Relationships		
3a Between Instructor and Student	**Mentoring.** As mentors, we show love, care and interest. Paul shed tears for new leaders in training (Acts 20:31).	**Classroom.** For leaders who are mature enough to make their own application of the material, our main concern is normally less personal and focuses on how well students grasp the subject.
3b Between Students	**Mentoring.** As we see among Jesus' disciples and in Paul's apostolic bands, we enable interaction between trainees who serve one another and participate together in current ministry. No students worked alone. They traveled by twos or small groups to minister while they learned.	**Classroom.** We give only minor attention to students' interaction except for special events or to keep order.
3c Interaction with Churches	**Mentoring.** We train leaders as part of normal church life. After Pentecost, training took place while raising up or shepherding congregations, also as apostolic bands traveled to sow the seed in new areas. Wherever the apostles made disciples churches or urban cells multiplied. Cells are small churches and may be part of a larger one. New Testament churches met in homes and were part of an interactive, citywide 'church' that was a network of tiny house churches or cells.	**Classroom.** Imbalance in education easily occurs when we limit teaching exclusively to an institution isolated from the rest of the Body of Christ. Even in a church building, classroom teaching can be quite disconnected from the life of the church members and the community.
3d Interaction with Society	**Mentoring.** We keep new leaders in touch with current events that affect their work. John the Baptist's imprisonment and death, for example, profoundly affected Jesus' disciples. Paul's companions were constantly affected by community events such as the riot in Ephesus. We make sure that our students' deal *immediately* with community matters that relate to their faith and morals.	**Classroom.** Patterson relates, "Early in my ministry, while teaching in an institution, I purposely shielded students from outside influences." Imbalance occurs if new leaders have little or no involvement with outside society, and deal with current events only to prepare for ministry in the far future.

3e View of Students	**Mentoring.** Our image of the leaders-in-training includes hands to serve, feet to spread the gospel and heart to obey Jesus in love--a balanced body. We consider them as student-workers or apprentice-pastors who serve in a ministry from the beginning. We help them take on more and more responsibility as Paul did, while they grow in knowledge and skill.	**Classroom.** Patterson explains, "In our traditional Honduran Bible Institute before we mentored, we gave more attention to scholarship. We expected our trainees to be good students, but not necessarily servant-leaders. Classroom teaching sometimes aims too exclusively at a student's ears and brains."
3f Formality of the Educational Structure	**Mentoring.** Mentoring can be informal and spontaneous, or totally formal with scheduled sessions and policies as firmly structured as for classroom training. We give the wrong impression to say it is *always* "non-formal." At Western Seminary, we do it in a very formal, highly disciplined way for graduate credit. Patterson relates that in Honduras, after they began mentoring, pastors received all formal training by mentoring for the first two or three years, or until their churches were doing all the ministries that the New Testament requires. Their *menu* required core modules, done in the order that a new church needed them. A good menu monitors progress by both the student and his church, leading to certificates for well-defined levels of church development. Some prefer the term 'coaching' instead of mentoring, but it falls short of the serious note that we find in mentoring in the New Testament. Jesus and Paul did not train new leaders the same way they taught the public. When Jesus taught the crowds by the sea His classroom was a beach. To mentor a smaller group of new leaders, however, He turned, climbed	**Classroom.** Formality is consistent; classrooms and degrees require a formal approach to education. More emphasis is put on cognitive content and standard examinations.

	a hill and sat with them to converse. We discredit mentoring is if we assume that it is only for students with a problem, or only an occasional unscheduled chat in a teacher's office or hallway. The fact that it often places more emphasis on the immediate implementation of learning content should not lead us to assume that its structure must be less formal.	
3g Organizing to Educate	**Mentoring.** We try to serve in harmony as a team or interactive body, as Scripture requires in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4:11-16. A mentor serves those with other spiritual gifts while they serve him with theirs. Normally we work closely with a church or network of churches, or an educational arm of the churches or mission agency focused on churches.	**Classroom.** We organize in departments for the sake of specialization. Imbalance occurs when we isolate our teaching from other New Testament ministries, or if we isolate our educational institution from churches.
3h Church Participation in Curriculum and Learning Activities	**Mentoring.** We help congregations to provide the arena for training leaders. New Testament churches sent out apostles to make disciples in neglected areas and trained the new leaders in the process.	**Classroom.** Church participation in classroom training is nil or perfunctory if we ask pastors merely to recommend a theological student. We also weaken our students' application of material if we implement internships too long after regular learning has taken place—or too late for meaningful involvement by the church in curriculum development.
3i Team Ministry	**Mentoring.** We view team ministry as the New Testament norm, not merely an option. Every passage that describes how to use spiritual gifts requires it. We ask other mentors to help students with special needs. A trainer and students serve as a team. Teams are temporary and task-focused, not permanent; no permanent apostolic teams appear in	**Classroom.** We seldom teach as a team or require teamwork of students for most of what they learn.

	the New Testament.	

4. Recognition of Student's Work		
4a Recognition of Achieve-ment	**Mentoring.** We recognize pastoral or evangelistic achievement. Assessment of learning depends mainly on results in ministry. Teaching is good only if the students do good ministry. Paul the apostle did not rely on written credentials (neither did he condemn them).	**Classroom.** We praise students who do well on tests and acknowledge achievement with diplomas, degrees, certificates or public honors.
4b Motivation	**Mentoring.** We help students to aim for effective service for Christ and His church and to obey Him in love (John 14:15; Hebrews 13:17).	**Classroom.** We urge students to aim for good grades and, although inadvertently, to compete for honors. Do we dare mention here that competition, if it leads to rivalry, is listed in Scripture with murder, drunkenness and adultery as a wicked work of the flesh!
4c Professional Recognition	**Mentoring.** We normally are not concerned with professional credentials. Mentoring, even when producing excellent results, usually goes unrecognized by education institutions. Field practitioners who value results higher than formal credentials recognize skill acquisition.	**Classroom.** Institutional recognition opens doors for paid positions and offers credentials that are widely accepted.

5. Objectives and Commitments		
5a Vision and Long Range Purpose	**Mentoring.** We aim for the same results as the apostles had; wherever they mentored new leaders, new churches multiplied.	**Classroom.** We often aim with stronger emphasis for such ideals as academic excellence, increased enrollment, growth of the institution and its positive image.

	Mentoring	Classroom
5b Students' Commitment	**Mentoring.** Student-leaders commit to a shepherding ministry from the outset of their training, at least to shepherding their own families as the core of a new cell group or church. Their education integrates more and more practice of pastoral skills as they move forward. We push them into the swimming pool from the very beginning--but into the shallow end, requiring that they do only what their level of training allows. They do no pulpit oratory, for example, while still taking child's steps as new leaders.	**Classroom.** Our students often commit more consciously to completing units of study or degree programs. In some programs, they commit to internships that are quite separate from classroom learning.
5c Teacher's Commitment	**Mentoring.** We commit to listen or in some other way learn first what the student is doing with his church or people, to detect current needs and ministry opportunities. Mentoring for us includes modeling the corresponding skills. We mix fieldwork with teaching the Word, history, doctrine and any other relevant discipline. We work in cooperation with other instructors or mentors with skills in areas that we lack. We help students plan activities for their churches or ministry groups, and hold them accountable to follow through.	**Classroom.** We commit more consciously to prepare our presentation well, assign ample reading that is relevant to the subject, and communicate in a way that assures understanding.
5d Who Benefits	**Mentoring.** Mainly inexperienced leaders need mentoring, or those who are experienced but are making a career change or are introducing a new ministry or project for which they lack orientation.	**Classroom.** Institutional education is most effective for those who require mastery of vast amounts of systematic knowledge.
5e Ability to Resist False Doctrine	**Mentoring.** Training new leaders by mentoring is more common in newer mission fields where *movements* of church reproduction take place spontaneously (that is, without extensive financial help and control from outsiders), also in churches in	**Classroom.** Historically, traditional academic theological institutions have bred far more false doctrine (non-biblical, excessively rationalistic, dishonoring to Christ). In some areas, it is hard to find a seminary that teaches the authority of the Word of

	which small groups reproduce spontaneously. A fervent faith in Christ, awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit in people's lives and devotion to the Word of God almost universally characterize such movements. Mentoring in this context has an almost universal record of conservative, Christ-centered teaching by people filled with the Holy Spirit. The only false doctrine that appears to be very common is legalism, which is characteristic of such church planting movements no matter how new leaders are trained, because appreciation of God's grace requires a degree of maturity and knowledge of His Word. In animistic cultures, it also takes time to abandon fetishes and superstitions, but no more time than what is common under traditionally trained leaders.	God and strongly focuses on Jesus Christ. Especially in older seminaries and Christian colleges, teachers often spend much of their time correcting the errors of the last generation of professors.
5f View of Leadership for Those Trained	**Mentoring.** We evaluate leadership more from a church's view. We consider students to be leaders only if they lead. Simply teaching is not leading. We must move our people from one point to another. This movement includes growth in Christ-like character, which requires a corresponding increase in ministry involvement by serving others in a practical way. True leaders initiate and continually improve those ministries that the New Testament requires of a church, and bring a high percentage of their flock into active service.	**Classroom.** Patterson recalls how he trained new leaders in the original Honduran Bible Institute. "I failed to balance classroom instruction with reeal mentoring. As a result students confused leading with merely teaching and led few people in their churches into active ministry."
5g Reproduction Dynamics	**Mentoring.** Where the greatest need is to multiply churches or cells, we train in a way that new student-workers imitate and pass on at once,	**Classroom.** Reproduction is seldom a conscious purpose of our teaching, except when we expect graduate students to teach the same subject in

	training others who train still others. Jesus commanded His disciples to do only what they had seen Him do first in a way that they could easily imitate. Paul told the Corinthians to be imitators of him as he imitated Christ (1 Corinthians 11.1). He trained Timothy and Titus in a chain reaction; one trained others who immediately began training still others (2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5). New leaders begin almost from the beginning to train newer leaders in newer churches or cells. Jethro advised Moses in Exodus 18 along similar lines. For new leaders mentors 'lower' pastoral training standards until they are simply biblical, to facilitate reproduction.	the same or a similar institution. Institutional pastoral training seldom relates instruction to church multiplication.
5h Adaptation to Political and Economic Factors	**Mentoring.** Roughly one third of the world's people for political reasons have little or no access to institutional training and require secret **Mentoring.** Another large segment of the world's population know mentoring as their dominant learning style, which enables teaching content to be transferable as in 2 Timothy 2:2, for multiply churches or cells.	**Classroom.** Institutional theological education adapts better to the following conditions. 1) Sufficient affluence to build campuses and pay salaries and tuition. 2) High enough education level to assimilate intensive input. 3) Enough well established churches to employ and benefit from professionally trained clergy.
5i Source of Income	**Mentoring.** Mentoring new leaders is not normally a viable source of income. We do not view it, by itself, as a professional vocation but rather as one of several duties required by the New Testament of any leader. The pastors we train by mentoring consider that to mentor others is a normal and biblical pastoral duty, the same as preaching, giving member care or serving Communion, for which they do not normally charge a special fee.	**Classroom.** We often view teaching as the main duty of a salaried Christian leader, and therefore as a viable source of income.

6. Teaching Methods		
6a Criteria for Using Technology to Communicate	**Mentoring.** When modeling pastoral skills or other activities that new leaders are to imitate and pass on, we use only equipment that is available to them--the light baton for rapid church multiplication. Especially when training workers for a pioneer field, we use only those aids that provide an affordable and reproducible model.	**Classroom.** For training mature leaders, we often seek the latest and highest technology that budgets allow. The primary concern for selecting equipment is effective classroom communication, usually without considering if the method is transferable to others in the students' field.
6b Teaching Style	**Mentoring.** We give much emphasis to modeling pastoral skills, discipline and character, on the job. We respond at once to students' ministry needs and opportunities, by observing, listening, encouraging and demonstrating skills. Such demonstration, if not possible in a church context, often takes the form of role-playing. Jesus did not simply lecture, or teach leaders-in-training what they could learn for themselves. For example, He answered questions with questions such as "What do you read in the Law?" Interaction is evident in much of Jesus' teaching, as He responded to questions and comments. We consider this interaction to be especially important if one's ministry or church is new.	**Classroom.** While lecturing, we do not normally encourage much interaction with or between students.

6c
 	
Teaching Process
	Mentoring. Training includes modeling skills and discussion sessions. In discussion sessions we normally do six things.
	
	    Pray for guidance.
	
	    Listen to each student's report on work done and the condition of the people they are mentoring, pastoring, discipling
		Classroom. Research and subject mastery, lesson objectives, organization of material and choice of learning exercises precede delivery. We give more importance to our responsibility to communicate knowledge than to the student's ability to pass it on immediately to others.

	or serving in some other way. **Plan**. Normally a student's plans flow from the report; we ask students what they plan to do with their people and—often more important—what their people will do. Plans are usually specific things to be done in the next week or two. We often use a *menu* that lists ministry options to facilitate planning. Help each **Review studies** done. **Assign new studies**. Normally these correspond to the plans. **Pray** for power to carry out the specific plans.	
6d When Trainers Prepare What They Impart	**Mentoring.** Extensive preparation by the instructor often takes place *after* listening to a student's report on personal or a church's needs or ministry opportunities, instead of before a session. That is, we use the menu approach to teach in response to current needs of students or their churches. We listen first as students relate their church's progress. We ask questions. Then, normally over the next week or two, we prepare studies to deal with the needs and ministry opportunities that students reported. The resulting materials usually prove helpful also for other trainees.	**Classroom.** We normally prepare class material and outlines before entering the classroom.

7. Application and Order of Presentation of Teaching Content		
7a How Soon Students Apply What Is Taught	**Mentoring.** We expect immediate application to a new leader's life, family, society, cell or church.	**Classroom.** We expect application but not normally as immediate. We seldom apply our teaching to immediate ministry opportunities that students currently face. Sometimes we hope only for some vague future application.
7b Curriculum taxonomy (categories of topics and activities)	**Mentoring.** We categorize truths under verbs--titles urge action. We form our teaching content around church, community or family *activities*. Teaching modules deal with action balanced with abstraction. We present doctrinal truths together with plans to edify the church body at its current stage of growth. We link abstract content to preparation for immediate tasks such as when Christ gave instruction to the 70 to evangelize Judean villages (Luke 10).	**Classroom.** We categorize truth more often under titles that use static, abstract nouns. We present material in a logical and analytical order, comparing similar concepts and listing them together. A unit might deal with all of God's attributes, for example, rather than focusing on one of them and using it to define tomorrow's ministry plans, by developing its application for our people's lives.
7c Scope of Focus	**Mentoring.** We integrate widely different disciplines and applications, focusing them all on the edification of a person, project or church body, which is the integrating factor. Each of Paul's epistles taught a variety of doctrines bundled together but related to the current life of a congregation or individual dealing with others. We verifying first what a particular student's church or ministry requires.	**Classroom.** We limit instruction normally to an area that is well-defined in analytical and logical terms. We relate the subject to other disciplines only when a logical presentation requires it. Focus from an intellectual viewpoint is often sharper because it is limited to one area.
7d Holistic Ministry	**Mentoring.** Greater flexibility facilitates holistic education tied closely to field ministry. We deal in the same session with whatever disciplines help to edify the students and their churches or whomever they serve.	**Classroom.** Sessions tend to limit their scope to one area of cognitive focus.
7e	**Mentoring.** We often use a *menu*. Students select content from different	**Classroom.** We prepare material ahead of class time and normally limit

| Order of Presentation of Content | sources as required by current situations. Jesus said a good teacher in the Kingdom of God is like a householder who brings forth treasures from his storehouse, things both new and old (Matt. 13:52). Extensive preparation of material often *follows* a session, in response to students' reports of needs or ministry opportunities. | it to one subject. We follow its outline closely. |

8. Materials and Sources		
8a Use of Materials	**Mentoring.** We use any relevant material. If we write, edit or compile materials, we present it in a menu format so that new leaders can easily select options that edify their people at their current stage of development and need. For example, the pastoral training program Train & Multiply uses a menu approach with 63 small textbooks, so that students and trainers can easily select material written specifically for current needs, problems or ministry opportunities of a student's new church or cell.	**Classroom.** Our teaching and reading assignments often follow one or more textbooks written specifically for the subject, with little emphasis on options.
8b Authority and Foundations	**Mentoring.** Since mentoring is discipling on a leader level, we base it on the divine authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles. Jesus commands us explicitly in Matthew 28:18-20 to make disciples *by teaching them to obey His specific commands.* The first New Testament church in Acts 2 exhibited this obedience by obeying all of Jesus' basic commands. He commanded over 40 things, which can be summarized in the seven basic commands that the first disciples obeyed in Acts 2:37-47: repentance	**Classroom.** We recognize the authority of Scripture, but give less attention to building ministry on the foundation of obedience to the specific commands of Jesus. Patterson recalls, "When teaching in our Honduran Bible Institute I failed to balance abstract doctrine with obedience to Jesus' commands and students overlooked submission to the living Word Jesus Christ. They considered the foundation of theological education to be only knowledge of the written Word,

	and faith, baptism, breaking bread, love (seen in their fellowship), prayer, giving and making disciples. Jesus' commands form the foundation for all ministry; He is the Rock. Building on it means to obey His words (Matt. 7:24-27). Bible doctrine *per se* is not the foundation; Christ and our relationship with Him are. We establish first a relationship of loving, childlike obedience to Jesus (John 14:15; 15:14). This is foundational--the first floor of the 'building.' The written Word and doctrine are the second and third stories and on up forever. For all eternity we will learn more about God. New Testament curriculum builds upon the commands of Jesus and His apostles, so that students' churches soon practice *all ministries that God requires*.	expressed in propositions."
8c Use of Scripture	**Mentoring.** We use the Bible, especially the New Testament, not only as content for teaching but also as the norm for how our people practice evangelism, confirm repentance, organize churches, conduct worship, relate to other congregations, train leaders and deploy missionaries.	**Classroom.** Patterson explains, "When teaching in the original Honduran Bible Institute I used the Bible almost exclusively as content for my teaching. Our churches as a result seldom used Scripture as the norm for the way they practiced many of the activities required by the New Testament."

9. The Responsibility for Training New Pastors		
9a Primary Responsibility	**Mentoring.** We aim for pastors (shepherding elders) to take the main responsibility and initiative to train the workers for a neglected area. A mission agency or educational program may provide guidelines, tools and some help with teaching,	**Classroom.** Faculty of an educational institution tends to assume the main responsibility for preparing mature Christian leaders. In the original Honduran Bible Institute, our faculty lacked pastoral gifting; therefore, we produced preachers but not pastors.

but should not take the primary responsibility from pastors. In pioneer mission fields, for churches to take this responsibility is essential for normal church multiplication. A church's apostles (the 'sent ones' that Ephesians 4:11-12 promises to all churches) start the process in a neglected area, as we see in 2 Timothy 2:2 and Titus 1:5.	Students taught well but did not shepherd their flocks by leading it into the gift-based ministries required by the New Testament.

Related Reading

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Sinetar, Marsha, *The Mentor's Spirit* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998). Life lessons in leadership and the art of encouragement