Wile teaching first grade, I was shocked to see J. R. in the back of the room with his scissors, leaning against the closet door, rather than coming to the reading rug to review the alphabet. I asked, “What are you doing?”

J. R. responded, “I’m carving my initials.”

“Why?”

“I’m bored.”

Aghast, I gave J. R. a reading inventory and learned that he read at the third-grade level. My heart sank ... I was teaching him alphabet letters when he needed to read short chapter books. I was delivering great lessons, but J. R. was not learning.

Good teaching results in learning. If students have not learned, the teaching has failed, regardless of the stellar performance of the teacher. Many teachers use state-of-the-art teaching methods, but learning falls short because they fail to match student needs with appropriate curricula and pedagogy. To facilitate effective learning, instructors must assess students’ IQ (intelligence quotient), EQ (emotional quotient), AQ (adversity quotient), and SQ (spiritual quotient) and then appropriately match curricula and pedagogy to learners’ needs, thereby facilitating optimum development of souls and spirits for service to God and others.

Most teaching is geared to midlevel students; however, teachers must strategically plan for fast learners as well as those who already have accumulated knowledge in the subject.

For students in need of remedial help, tutoring, simplified material, and targeted assignments provide the needed reinforcement. Additionally, students who process slowly may benefit from an adjusted quantity of work (for example, 10 problems instead of 20). If we truly believe that God designed each student with a particular IQ or potential, then we demonstrate our faithfulness to God’s design by adapting our teaching to the needs of individual learners.

**IQ: Intelligence Quotient**

For this discussion, intelligence quotient will refer to students’ learning potential and their already accumulated knowledge. Before teaching, instructors should ask if their learning plan (1) includes formal and/or informal assessment of what students already know about the topic, (2) uses the assessments to design lessons, (3) is paced appropriately for students’ needs, (4) provides optimum practice and review for slower learners, and (5) prepares challenging extension activities for faster learners.

Most teaching is geared to midlevel students; however, teachers must strategically plan for fast learners as well as those who already have accumulated knowledge in the subject. Curriculum compacting (Renzulli, Smith, and Reis 1982) frees instructors to use strategies such as (1) pretests that qualify students to skip material or entire books if they have already mastered the content; (2) “the-five-most-difficult-first” (Winebrenner 1992), which allows students to skip the easy problems if they correctly complete the five most difficult problems first; and (3) the “peel off strategy,” which invites gifted students to leave group instruction or activities once they understand the concept. Challenge, or extension, modules are provided for students who quickly master units.

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**EQ: Emotional Quotient**

Although matching students’ cognitive abilities with lessons improves learning, teachers must also match students’ emotional quotient (EQ) with classroom interaction experiences. For the purpose of this article, EQ will be defined as students’ potential to recognize and manage emotions personally and interpersonally. To assist students in developing their emotional quotient, consider whether students (1) can express what they are feeling, (2) can manage their emotions appropriately for their age, (3) are comfortable working with others, and (4) can work through a conflict with a peer through hearing the peer’s viewpoint, empathizing, and then expressing their own point of view (Goleman 1998). Also ask yourself the following questions about the students:

- Has their emotional capacity expanded or diminished over time?
- What external or internal stressors could be affecting them?
- Would they benefit from practical classroom activities, outside contacts, or both?

I’ll never forget the brilliant fourth grader who threw herself on the floor, screaming, “I’m not going to do that assignment.”

I calmly replied, “You will when you’re through with your fit,” stepped over her, and continued to assist the other children. Julie writhed on the floor, tears drenching her dress, and I continued to ignore her. When the recess bell rang and I dismissed the children, Julie sprang from her prostrate posture, wiped away her tears, and darted toward the door. I calmly blocked the door, firmly stating, “You have an assignment to complete, young lady.”

Julie crept back to her seat, finished her assignment, and then was out the door in a flash. After speaking with Julie’s family, I learned that at home, if anything was slightly difficult, she would have a fit and get her way. Now in fourth grade, Julie finally needed to face challenging tasks while managing her personal emotions. More mini-fits emerged,
but the behavior disappeared within a few weeks.

We all recognize the students who struggle to manage their emotions: fits, tantrums, jealousy, rage, withdrawal, and responses rooted in deep emotional trauma or chemical imbalance. When inappropriate behaviors emerge—regardless of the nature, nurture, or contextual roots of the problem—we must help. When students become emotionally capable—learning to manage personal emotions as well as sense and respond to the needs of others—they are better equipped to fulfill their God-given potentials.

That said, we must acknowledge that managing emotions, for some students, requires every ounce of energy they have and sometimes even every ounce of energy you have; however, time invested now will save heartache later as you assist your students in understanding what it means to love themselves, God, and others.

AQ: Adversity Quotient

Understanding students’ academic and emotional capabilities and adjusting teaching accordingly can significantly enhance learning; however, we must also nurture students’ adversity quotient (AQ), a term coined by Paul Stoltz (1997). He discovered the biblical principle (James 1:2–4) that individuals, in order to succeed in the world, need “salmon-like tenacity” in the face of difficult circumstances. Questions for you to reflect on include the following: Do I challenge my students appropriately and regularly? Do I orchestrate disequilibrium to promote task persistence? Do I teach my students to frame failures? Do my students welcome challenge?

Appropriate levels of challenge in the learning context nurture the AQ of students. When students enter your classroom, they are generally in a state of equilibrium. But as you introduce challenging concepts, students move into a state of disequilibrium (adaptation of Piaget 1985). This disequilibrium heightens cognition and emotion, developing students’ AQ and task persistence, as well as resulting in greater levels of concentration as students struggle to understand the concept, make cognitive accommodations, and return to equilibrium.

Absence of challenge or disequilibrium creates boredom for gifted students, and overdone challenge for excessive durations can discourage slower students.

“Why don’t you measure out the size of your bathroom on the ground?” He didn’t tell me how. Finally, I cut out four 1-foot squares of cardboard and laid them on the ground. “Oh.” Mr. Piersen also asked, “Would doors be helpful so that you could move from one room to the next?” I spent all evening feverishly planning my dream house. The task that initially seemed simple turned out to be quite complex, contributing to my learning because it precipitated disequilibrium, challenged me, piqued my interest, and required time and creativity.

Daniel Apple and Karl Krumgieg’s accelerator model (2000) suggests that teachers must widen students’ “happy zone,” or the range in which students can learn without boredom or excessive challenge, by providing appropriate doses of anxiety-producing disequilibrium. By widening the students’ happy zone, teachers increase students’ endurance of difficult circumstances and enhance students’ cognitive and emotional engagement, thereby strengthening potential achievement.

In broad terms, EQ and AQ develop through nurture and admonition respectively. Diana Baumrind (1966) suggested that these two dimensions of parenting are not two extremes on one continuum, but two separate continuums that describe four parenting and teaching styles. Caregivers can be high or low in the support or nurture of a child and high or low in the control exercised and expectations communicated to a child. The apostle Paul outlined these parenting dimensions in Ephesians 6:4, commanding fathers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Additionally, in 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul described his interaction with the believers as being “gentle ... as a nurse” (v. 7, KJV) and as having “exhorted and comforted and charged...
The first three pedagogical elements to consider when matching students’ needs with curricula and pedagogy—IQ, EQ, and AQ—correspond with the three elements of the soul—mind, emotion, and will. The intersection of IQ, EQ, and AQ in the context of an authoritative learning environment (home and school, see figure 1, upper-right quadrant) establishes the ideal environment for the development of students’ spiritual quotients (SQ), or life of the spirit. The Commission on Children at Risk (2003), in *Hardwired to Connect*, argues for “authoritative communities,” or groups of people committed to one another over time, who model and pass along values to the next generation, a plan that God designed long ago (Psalm 78:1–8). The Commission describes authoritative communities, providing the ideal context to nurture religiosity and spirituality, which readily develop in the learning context of effective Christian schools and of godly homes.

SQ is the life of the spirit of students, representing their awareness of and response to God, His standards, His creation, His claim on their life, and His call to live a holy life of worship, communion, service, and witness of His good news. As Christian teachers, we mentor the development of SQ in our students’ lives as we model, interact, and explicitly teach God’s truth in the context of our subject matter.

The following are important questions for reflection: do the students demonstrate (1) increasing discrimination between right and wrong? (2) increasing awareness of God and creation and increasing expression of thanks to God? (3) increasing trust solely in God’s grace for salvation and sanctification? (4) growth in knowing God, communing with Him, and following the leading of the Holy Spirit? (5) growth in character that reflects God’s divine nature, the fruit of the Spirit, and godly wisdom? (6) increasing use of their spiritual gifts for empowered service to the Church? (7) increased abiding in Christ, leading to active engagement with the world to reach the lost?

The most significant moments in pedagogy are not the polished, seemingly perfect lessons, though it is great to have these.
the moments of learning. And the most essential moments of learning take place when your students catch a glimpse of their role in God’s kingdom. Good pedagogy is about identifying and maximizing the cognitive potential of students (IQ), strengthening their management of emotions and interpersonal skills (EQ), developing their task persistence (AQ), and—ultimately—helping them develop their spiritual life (SQ) so that they fulfill their assignment in God’s kingdom.

References

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<td>1. Development of conscience</td>
<td>Romans 2:12–16</td>
<td>Model and teach God’s standards</td>
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<td>2. Development of awareness of God</td>
<td>Romans 1:18–25</td>
<td>Demonstrate awe/fear of God; teach His amazing creation</td>
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<td>3. Trust in God’s grace for salvation and sanctification</td>
<td>Romans 1:16–17, Galatians 3:1–5, Philippians 3:2–9</td>
<td>Witness about God’s daily work in your life, His fulfilling the promise to save you from sin and its consequences</td>
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<td>4. Knowing God, communing with Him, and following His Spirit</td>
<td>Jeremiah 9:23–24, 1 Corinthians 2:6–14, 2 Timothy 3:16, Philippians 3:2–9</td>
<td>Teach God’s Word, provide times for student Scripture reading and prayer, model acknowledging God as Counselor for each decision made</td>
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<td>5. Growth in character that reflects God’s divine nature, the fruit of His Spirit, and His wisdom</td>
<td>2 Peter 1:3–11, Galatians 5:22–23, James 3:13–18</td>
<td>Model walking in the Spirit, teach biblical principles</td>
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<td>6. Spirit-gifted and empowered service to the Church</td>
<td>Romans 12:4–21, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Ephesians 4:11–13</td>
<td>Model use of spiritual gifts, assist students in discovering how God has gifted them, teach students to use their gifts to serve God’s Church</td>
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<td>7. Abiding in Christ, leading to active engagement with the world in order to reach the lost</td>
<td>John 15:1–8, Matthew 28:19–20, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 9:19–23</td>
<td>Model building relationships with nonbelievers and engaging them in conversation about spiritual matters</td>
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