

What does integration of faith and learning mean in operational terms? How can teachers help students integrate faith and learning?¹

The development of integration skills is confounded at times by different interpretations that often lack operational specificity. For instance, one definition suggests that integration must result in bringing concepts “together into a larger whole.”² Another argues that “The integration of faith and values is a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise—both curricular and co-curricular—from a Christian perspective.”³ Yet another definition claims that IFL is “a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and develop integral relationships which exist between the Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines.”⁴

In spite of these variations in definition, we can be sure of one thing: Faith-learning integration occurs when biblical concerns and academic content are interconnected, particularly as they are incorporated into student learning outcome statements. This perspective keeps the focus on the purpose of the lesson rather than on a rigid alignment with varying definitions. However, any lesson-plan alignment must honor the foundational perspective that God’s Word contains ultimate truth.

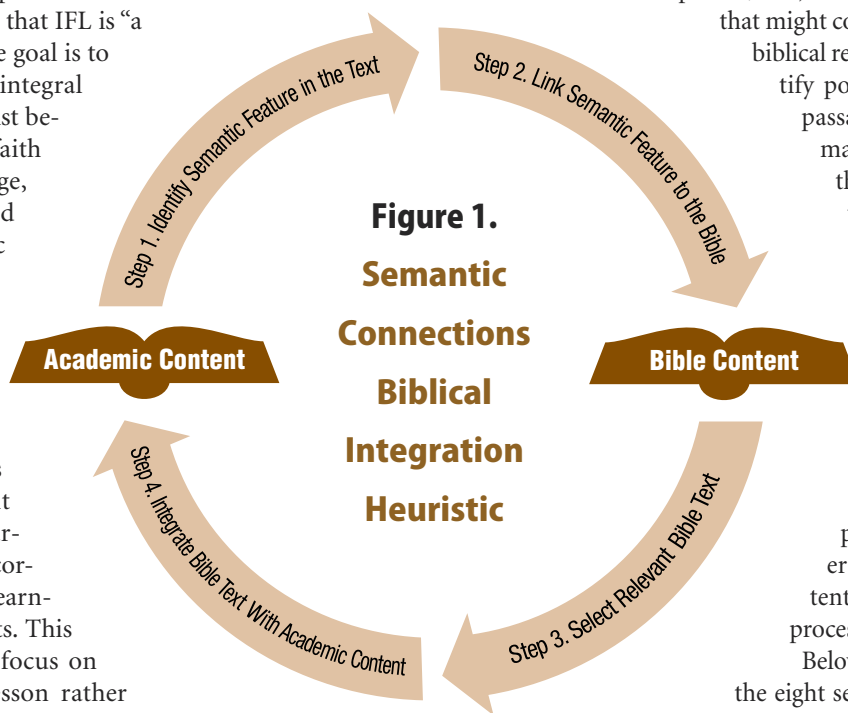
The faith-learning integration skills presented in this article constitute the Semantic Connections Biblical Integration Heuristic. *Heuristic* means “to guide,” “discover,” or “to reveal.” Thus, the proposed integration approach is a guideline for creating processes, not a rigid or mechanical methodology. It accommodates variations in teacher preferences, learner styles, content types, learning outcomes, and worldviews/religious orientations. This heuristic approach incorporates four clearly defined steps that teachers and students alike can readily learn

and use (see Figure 1).⁵ These steps connect to the Bible via semantic properties or features in the academic text. The term “semantic properties” refers specifically to the content of words, phrases, values, facts, principles, issues, assumptions, and implications contained within the textbook or other curriculum material. Simply stated, this heuristic approach uses exemplars of one or more of the eight semantic categories to make connections between the curriculum and biblical content, and to apply these connections in classroom teaching.

The four steps of the heuristic are sequential: (1) Identify a relevant semantic property (e.g., a word, phrase, etc.) in the instructional material that might connect to the Bible; (2) use biblical resources (Figure 2) to identify potentially relevant biblical passages exemplifying the semantic property; (3) select the actual biblical content to integrate with the academic content; and (4) connect the selected biblical and scholastic content in a meaningful way to both the intended learning process and learning outcome (Figure 3). These four steps constitute the structural process; the semantic properties constitute eight potential ways to conduct the process.

Below is an example for each of the eight semantic connection possibilities. In-service teachers and I jointly developed the first example. Students developed the rest of the seven as part of their assignment for the integration lesson.

To facilitate easy connection with the Bible for the first example, we used a textbook by a Christian publisher. The four steps of the process are identified in the example below for the semantic property *word*. The four integration steps for the remaining seven categories are more naturally incorporated into the respective example descriptions. Use of secular as well as Christian content reveals the broad applicability of the heuristically guided process. A graphic representation of all the examples is shown in Figure 4 on page 28.



BY WILLIAM F. COX, JR.

Semantic Property: WORD

STEP ONE involves identifying a “word” in the academic content and connecting it to biblical content. The academic text for this example is Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. The word *liberty* is the exemplar for the semantic property. “Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”⁶ The selection of the actual semantic property (i.e., word, phrase, etc.) and its particular exemplar(s) for integration are important for at least two reasons: (1) For the integration product to be meaningful, the exemplar should have some intuitive connection to Bible content; (2) exemplars should have high potential for providing biblically based clarification of the academic content. These two considerations point to the importance of good biblical understanding, which will help facilitate selection of appropriate semantic properties and corresponding exemplars.

Back to the word *liberty*. An easy way to locate it in the Bible is to consult a concordance, either the one at the back of many Bible versions or a more comprehensive one like *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (KJV). The direction the teacher wants to take in a discussion of *liberty* and how he or she links this to the Bible depends on the biblical content chosen and the goal of the integration. In addition, the expected learning outcome and the teaching approach will influence the teacher’s decision.

STEP TWO involves connecting the chosen exemplar (e.g., *liberty*) to the Bible. If the teaching focus is to compare civil liberty with spiritual liberty, the teacher may select 2 Corinthians 3:17 for integration. Or, if the focus relates to liberty from sin versus liberty (so-called) that justifies evil-doing, 1 Peter 2:16 could be used.

STEP THREE involves selecting the relevant Scripture verse(s) to integrate. Suppose we choose 1 Peter 2:16: “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (KJV). Defined in *Strong* as freedom from restraint [*Strong’s Greek Concordance* #1657], the word *liberty* works well in facilitating the integration endeavor.

STEP FOUR involves integrating the selected biblical material with the academic text. Lincoln’s statement about the United States being conceived in liberty could be biblically enhanced (verbally, practically, or both) and discussed across a wide range of applications. For example, the following comments could be used to biblically enhance the academic text: “America’s founders were intent on not using their God-given authority to maliciously deprive citizens of their *liberties* as occurred in their European homeland. They instead desired to develop a governmental system compatible with biblical principles that would promote the equality of all citizens.” By linking the concept of liberty to biblical illustrations, these comments amplify the targeted sentence in Lincoln’s address, and can lead to additional discussions about American society’s successes and failures in embracing and implementing the principle of equality.

Given the potential biblical relevance of the Gettysburg Address, it could be used to illustrate many other semantic properties. This in fact is what would occur in a typical classroom lesson.

Figure 2. Bible Search Resources

1. Bible Cross-Reference Systems – [w, t]
2. Concordances – [w] *Strong’s* (Bible matched)
3. Study Bibles – *Spirit-Filled Life Bible*; *NIV Study Bible*; *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* [w, bb]
4. Dictionaries – *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* [w]
5. Web Bible Programs [w, bb, t]
 - a. www.blueletterbible.com
 - b. www.crosswalk.com
 - c. www.biblegateway.com
 - d. www.unboundbible.org
 - e. www.biblestudytools.com
6. Electronic Search Engines – www.Google.com [w, bb, t]
7. Education resources – *Haycock’s Encyclopedia of Bible Truths* [t]

KEY: w = Bible entry by word; bb = Bible entry by Bible book; t = Bible entry by topic

Semantic Property: PHRASE

The text for this next example reads: “Isn’t it a wonder that a little seed like this acorn [shows picture] can grow to be a mighty tree like this oak [picture]? An acorn will always grow into an oak tree. It could never be anything else.”⁷ *Strong’s Concordance* identifies a number of verses relevant to promoting the concept that a seed invariably produces the same species as itself.

Great skill is required to discern the focus of the academic text and to enhance it with biblical elaboration. Typically, much of Christian education material does not specify student learning objectives involving integration; as a result, teachers have trouble recognizing what would be appropriate for students to know biblically about any particular lesson. In this example, the relevant topic is not that a tiny seed can produce such a huge tree (although that is also a topic that could be used for IFL). Instead, the focus is on whether seeds (particularly human seed) produce only after their own kind. A biblical perspective—in fact, a biblical principle—is addressed: a seed produces only its own kind.

Other biblical verses based on key words like *grow* and *seed* in the selected phrase include, but are not limited to, Genesis 2:9 (*grow*, *Strong’s Hebrew* #6779—to sprout, bear, bring forth) and Genesis 1:11, 12 (*seed*, *Strong’s Hebrew* #2233—seed, fruit). On the other hand, the KJV import of “seed” in Romans 9:7, 8 (*Strong’s Greek* #4690—*spermah*) is not the same as in Genesis 1:11, 12. Romans refers to Abraham’s children as “offspring” (NRSV). Thus, as accurate as the seed explanation may be in Genesis 1 and 2 referring to the world of plants, the same meaning cannot be read into Romans 9:7, 8. What can be

pointed out is the nature of reproduction: A seed can reproduce only after its own kind (a powerful principle in the creation vs. evolution debate). In 2 Corinthians 9:10, 11, Paul uses the word *seed* (*Strong's Greek #4690—spermah*) in the generic sense of farming, and from this he draws the lesson that one seed in the hands of a good farmer can bring about a good harvest. Likewise, if the gospel seed sown by God is allowed to grow well under His care and direction, this “will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness” and “you will be enriched, . . . [and] generous,” and “your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” Note how in this passage Paul draws the principle of integration between seed, sowing, righteousness, thanksgiving, and God.

The point is that the person doing the integration should be careful to ensure that the integration is faithful to the scriptural meaning. It is insufficient to merely select words and phrases that seem to promote integration; rather, careful research is needed regarding the exact meaning and application

of those words and phrases, particularly as used in Scripture.

Semantic Property: VALUE

The academic text for this semantic property “value” is: “The 1950s produced a national concern over juvenile delinquency. Many parents no longer followed the biblical admonition to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They instead reasoned that it was better to follow human wisdom as promoted by the progressive movement.”⁸

This statement suggests the following issue: The area of concern relates to human wisdom, which some people regard as more credible than God’s revelation. How would one relate this to what the Bible says? We looked up “human wisdom” in the paraphrase *Message Bible* (available at <http://www.biblestudytools.com>).

The *Message Bible* speaks of “human wisdom” as so “tinny, so impotent, next to the seeming absurdity of God. Human

Figure 3. Integration Heuristic Process

1. Identify Semantic Feature to Connect to the Bible	2. Use Resources to Identify Relevant Biblical Content	3. Select Bible Content	4. Integrate Bible Content
Identify <i>words</i> of substance that may have biblical relevance.	Consult references such as the following to link academic text to the Bible: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memory 2. Concordances 3. Indexes 4. Bible commentaries 5. Bible dictionaries 6. Study Bibles 7. Bible encyclopedias 8. Theological texts 9. <i>Webster's 1828 Dictionary</i> 10. Web Bible programs 11. <i>Haycock's Encyclopedia of Bible Truths</i> 12. Resources from the Institute in Basic Life Principles 13. Etc. 	Compare Bible content and academic content to either enrich the academic content (direct application) or to enhance biblical literacy (indirect application).	Use the biblically related information to modify the existing lesson plan, lecture notes, curriculum, etc.
Identify commonly spoken <i>phrases</i> that may have biblical relevance.			
Identify <i>values</i> – wording that evaluates something as good/bad, right/wrong, evil/holy, pleasing/displeasing, etc.			
Identify <i>facts</i> – truth statements in the form of words or numerical data.			
Discern <i>principles</i> – relationships among concepts that signify regularity, cause-effect, dependable rules of behavior, etc.			
Discern <i>issues</i> – problems, dilemmas, uncertainties, hypothetical questions, etc.			
Discern <i>assumptions</i> that are hidden or explicit that support other statements.			
Derive reasonable <i>implications</i> for other time periods, circumstances, peoples, etc.			

Figure 4. Graphic Representation

Semantic Feature	Resource, Definition, and Potential Biblical Selections	Selected Biblical Passage(s)	Integrated Text
Word – <i>liberty</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Strong's Concordance</i> (KJV) – <i>Liberty</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 Corinthians 3:17 [#1657 – freedom] “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” b. 1 Peter 2:16 [#1657] “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” 	1 Peter 2:16 – “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (KJV).	“America’s forefathers were intent on not using their God-given authority to maliciously deprive citizens of their <i>liberties</i> as occurred in their European homeland. They instead desired to develop a governmental system compatible with biblical principles that would promote the equality of all citizens.”
Phrase – “seed...can grow to be”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Strong's Concordance</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Grow</i> – Genesis 2:9 [#6779, to sprout, bear, bring forth] b. <i>Seed</i> – Genesis 1:11, 12 [#2233 – seed, fruit]; Romans 9:7, 8 [#4690, offspring, children of promise] c. Multiply the seed sown – 2 Cor. 9:10, 11, NIV [#4690] resulting in thanksgiving to God. 	1 Corinthians 9:10, 11 – God gives the seed that leads to a large harvest of righteousness, spiritual growth.	The acorn cannot produce any other plant since God has created each type of seed to reproduce only after its own type.
Value – “it was better to follow human wisdom than God’s wisdom.”	www.biblestudytools.com using <i>The Message Bible</i> . 1 Corinthians 1:25; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; and Isaiah 55:8, 9, all of which declare God’s wisdom greater than that of humankind.	1 Corinthians 1:25 – “Human wisdom is tinny... next to ...God’s...” (<i>The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language</i>).	Last sentence of text to read “But, to the contrary, the Bible states that God’s wisdom is much better than human wisdom.”
Fact – Music lyrics can be judged by biblical standards to determine if they are pleasing to God.	Bible concordance search for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence that there are good and bad angels 2. Qualities drawn from <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fruits of the Spirit b. Sermon on the Mount c. Love chapter (1 Corinthians 13) d. Christian virtues 	All verses located are relevant.	Moral absolutes as found in the Bible do apply to music selections.
Principle: Retained bitterness leads to dysfunctional behavior	www.google.com: “bitterness + Bible”	Acts 8:23 Ephesians 4:31	“Burr’s highly problematic and even immoral behavior is symptomatic of someone who harbors bitterness.”
Issue: Does frequent viewing of TV violence lead children to engage in that behavior themselves?	Memory of Bible and critical thinking on the words <i>imitation</i> , <i>character</i> , and <i>evil</i> in <i>NIV Study Bible</i> gives Romans 16:19; 1 Corinthians 11:1, 15:33; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:9	1 Corinthians 11:1 2 Thessalonians 3:9 1 Corinthians 15:33 Romans 16:19 Ephesians 6:4	While the Bible does not address the effects on children of viewing media violence, it advises believers not to endorse violence and to teach children how to avoid and resist it.
Assumption: Adoption of the U.S. Constitution will result in a good society	Christian Constitutional scholars and historical accounts; <i>NIV Concordance</i> – Psalm 33:12	Psalms 33:12 – “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (NIV).	Success of the nation as envisioned in the Preamble is primarily contingent on the self-governance of the citizenry, consistent with God’s Word.
Implication: Various implications of using fly fishing as a metaphor for attracting non-believers to the gospel	Concordance search for <i>fishers</i> – Matthew 4:19. Memory – John 4:7-42; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9	Matthew 4:19 John 4:7-42 1 Corinthians 3:6-9	Students to creatively think and brainstorm on many implications of the fishing picture for evangelizing.

strength can't begin to compete with God's weakness" (1 Corinthians 1:25).⁹ Likewise, 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 speaks of the Scriptures as being profitable for right living. Isaiah speaks of God's ways as being much better than the best of human wisdom (55:8, 9). Combining these concepts, the academic text can be expanded by inserting an additional sentence: "But, to the contrary, the Bible states that God's wisdom is much better than human wisdom."

Semantic Property: FACT

Since much of academic content deals with facts, this property offers rich integration potential. Here is how one music teacher addressed the factual aspects of music theory.¹⁰ This teacher began by presenting music-related facts the students could easily understand, such as the way verses, choruses, and refrains follow a pattern in a music score and in certain types of music. The teacher also covered additional factual dimensions involving theme, authorship, and relationship to other works (e.g., operas, plays) to substantiate that music, like other content areas, has numerous factual dimensions. Further, the teacher assigned biblical research that showed how music was used in Bible times for different purposes (e.g., ceremony, mourning, praise).

The primary intent of the integration activity in this example related to whether certain selected musical pieces were in agreement with biblical teaching. Specifically, students were asked: "Does this piece of music align with biblical principles?"

The teacher used a twofold integration strategy: first, comparing the music's theme to Bible statements, and then comparing the lyrics to edifying biblical qualities. Regarding the first strategy, one student thought that because a piece of music spoke favorably about angels, that music surely must be biblically aligned. The students were asked to use a concordance to find out what the Bible says about angels. The search revealed two types of angels: good (Psalm 34:7; Matthew 2:13; Luke 1:26; Hebrews 1:6) and evil (Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; 2 Corinthians 11:14), rather than only one type, as some students had assumed.

The second strategy was determining whether a song's lyrics were biblically edifying. The teacher selected certain lyrics and asked the students to investigate whether they exemplified biblical qualities such as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), the "love chapter" (1 Corinthians 13:1-7), or Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:5-7). Again, the integration strategy used was to search the concordance for Bible passages related to the texts listed above. For a supplemental project, students were asked to study the notes for these passages in study Bibles such as the *Andrews Study Bible*, the *Life Application Bible*, the *NIV Study Bible*, the *Spirit-Filled Life Bible*, and the *English Standard Version Study Bible*.

After analyzing their music selections, students were required to defend their findings either in writing or orally. This activity helped students to recognize that the moral absolutes contained in the Bible do apply to music selections.

Semantic Property: PRINCIPLE

To illustrate the integration of the semantic property of "principle," the following material was selected:

"[Aaron Burr] was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and his father was a Presbyterian pastor and president of Princeton. He was orphaned at the age of two, a fact that embittered him and blunted the impact of his godly family. Thomas Jefferson's vice president in 1800, he was dropped from the ticket in 1804 because Jefferson no longer trusted him. Looking for a new outlet for his talents, he ran for governor of New York in 1804 but lost—due at least in part to the opposition of Alexander Hamilton. Angered by Hamilton's interference, Burr challenged him to a duel. Burr's aim was sure and Hamilton fell, mortally wounded. Wanted for murder in New York and New Jersey, desperation perhaps drove Burr to his most daring scheme. His plan for some type of national conspiracy was foiled when a conspirator revealed the plot.

"He was arrested and tried for treason. Though acquitted due to lack of evidence, the scandal dealt the final blow to Burr's career. His last days were spent practicing law in New York in near obscurity."¹¹

This passage can be used to study several principles. One relates to harboring bitterness. What does the Bible say about this? The answer can help the teacher to formulate an integration principle on the topic. A concordance can assist with locating appropriate Bible references, but the students in this case tried a new strategy. A Google search for "bitterness + Bible" yielded a large number of sites on bitterness from a scriptural perspective. A careful study yielded the biblical principle that when one cherishes bitterness, this leads to dysfunctional behavior. Google-supplied references include Acts 8:23 and Ephesians 4:31. An application of this principle to the passage on Burr makes us understand that Aaron Burr's highly problematic and even immoral behavior is symptomatic of someone who harbors bitterness.

Semantic Property: ISSUE

An "issue" is characterized by the presence of one or more value- or content-related conflicts in a particular text passage. The academic text below can be used to study the property of "issue": "By the time a child is eighteen years old, he or she will witness on television (with average viewing time) 200,000 acts of violence including 40,000 murders."¹² By engaging in critical thinking, we find a number of issues in this short passage: "Does frequent viewing of violence on TV (as well as on the Internet, and in movies and video games) lead children to mimic what they have seen?" "Should children be allowed to watch large amounts of violent behavior on TV and other forms of media?" "Should media violence be regulated?" "If being exposed to media violence breeds violence in youth, is the effect reversible?" Many more issues may be mentioned, but the point is this: The teacher is empowered to pursue any of these issues, given the choices available in the heuristic process.

Regardless of the issue chosen, the first task is to seek biblical connections to that issue. Focusing on the first issue, we look for biblical passages relevant to viewing violence, particularly by children. Here critical thinking may lead to important Bible references. For instance, reviewing what the Bible says about "imitation" and related synonyms would seem a relevant strategy. The concordance for the *NIV Study Bible* lists such verses

as 1 Corinthians 11:1 and 2 Thessalonians 3:9 as containing the word *imitation*. Or we could search for the word *character*, inasmuch as corruption of character is a main concern when viewing large amounts of violence. The NIV concordance lists this verse: “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Corinthians 15:33).¹³ Searches for synonyms of *corruption* may also yield helpful biblical references. Conversely, a search could be initiated that focuses on prohibitions against wrong behavioral patterns that appear in conjunction with the term *evil* (i.e., Romans 16:19) or to focus on the positive theme of keeping youth in the right path through following the admonition of the Lord (i.e., Ephesians 6:4).

The teacher combined several of the above findings to arrive at a biblical view on the issue: “While the Bible does not address the effects on children of viewing media violence, the Scriptures advise not to endorse violence and to teach children how to avoid and resist it.”

An important goal is for students to understand that the development of a just and orderly society is more a function of the embrace of biblical principles within the heart of every citizen than it is about an articulation of a creed.

Semantic Property: ASSUMPTION

The “assumption” examined is this: Adoption of the U.S. Constitution (which occurred in 1789) would produce a good society. This belief is foundational in the Constitution’s Preamble.¹⁴ “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Several methods can be used to study this “assumption” that will enable a teacher and his or her students to examine the various claimed outcomes of the Constitution (e.g., liberty). The central postulate examined here is that an external creed will produce the internal personal character qualities necessary to achieve all of the positive outcomes listed in the Preamble. Those with deep biblical understanding will likely assert that ultimately, the only way these outcomes will become a reality is by following God’s will. Matthew 6:33 makes it plain: Seeking after God’s kingdom and His righteousness is the key to right living and thus to national well-being. Another “assumption” in the Preamble is that outcomes like “justice” are actually achievable in a world that is inhabited by sin-stained individuals.

As mentioned earlier, one of the keys to successful integra-

tion is identification of the intended learning outcomes. In this case, an important goal is for students to understand that the development of a just and orderly society is more a function of the embrace of biblical principles within the heart of every citizen than it is about an articulation of a creed. While it may be difficult to search for Bible words that link the theme of relationship of the heart attitude of citizens to national prosperity, critical thinking will lead to a search for words such as *nation*, and *bless*, and their synonyms and variations. A concordance search for these words will take us to verses such as Psalm 33:12: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (NIV).

Another approach for similarly specific and global topics is to consult authoritative writings on the subject. For instance, Ruth Haycock¹⁵ has a relevant chapter on biblical principles relating to civil government; organizations such as WallBuilders¹⁶ and the Plymouth Rock Foundation¹⁷ address this matter; and works by Christian authorities on the Bible and the U.S. Constitution can also be very helpful.¹⁸

In brief, we might say that the achievement of the U.S. Constitution’s Preamble’s vision of a successful nation is contingent on its citizens’ self-governance in a manner consistent with God’s Word so that His favor rests upon it, as revealed in Scriptures like Psalm 33:12.

Semantic Property: IMPLICATION

Thus far, we have used a range of academic texts to show the diverse possibilities of the heuristic process. For this last semantic feature, we shall use a picture instead of textual material. For a block printing assignment, students were asked to replicate a watercolor painting by Winslow Homer entitled “A Good

Pool,”¹⁹ which depicts three men in a canoe catching a large fish, a subject that has many implications relating to the biblical topic of fishers of men. A reasonable learning objective that can be achieved via classroom discussion is for students to derive implications analogously from the metaphor of fly fishing to “hook” many non-believers who live in a pool of unbelief. Obviously, as with earlier examples, the lesson can go in several directions, some more fruitful than others.

One productive approach would be to draw implications from the title of the picture by seeing unbelievers in a society as being “a good pool” to fish in for salvation. The analogy might easily conjure up Jesus’ statement that His disciples will be fishers of men (Matthew 4:19). Other implications might draw analogies between the skill of fly-fishing to make the bait (or message) attractive to the fish (unbelievers). Another approach would be to discuss how the lure has to be appropriate to the species of fish. Analogously, the way to attract non-believers is to connect in some way to what is attractive to them based on their culture, personal preferences, etc. Yet another application could be drawn from the fact that sometimes it takes more than one person to fish successfully as depicted by the presence in the picture of several people sharing the fishing tasks (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:6-9). Certainly, other implications could be drawn, but the ones listed above should provide

sufficient clarification regarding the overall technique to be used.

Readers may observe that the usual method of finding relevant Scripture verses for this activity was not discussed. This omission is purposeful since the method used by the teacher was a student group discussion. That is, the teacher intended that the students brainstorm potential Scripture verses and biblically related sources, and to learn from discussion with one another, under her guidance, the ways that they each can connect to the Bible.

Summary

The Semantic Connections Biblical Integration Heuristic provides a practical and systematic, yet readily adaptable approach to integration. It has the advantage of being quick and easy to use, even for beginners, while still containing immense potential to become, with practice, a sophisticated skill-set. The heuristic also helps build critical thinking skills that are important for teachers and students.

As demonstrated above, the heuristic process facilitates a personalized approach for integrating academic and biblical content. It does not impose any content prerequisites such as denominational or worldview understandings but functions within the context of the educational discipline and subject matter, according to the preferences of the teacher/user. Implementation of these skills constitutes one of the major differences between Christian and secular education. Development of integration competence, while typically focused on the teacher, is a crucial learning objective for students as well, though typically it has been underemphasized and underappreciated.²⁰ It is the privilege and responsibility of the Christian teacher to model and stimulate this type of critical thinking in his or her students.

An important final point: The quality of integration will be highly correlated with personal Scriptural literacy. With practice, integrity of research, and prayerful application, the heuristic has great potential for promoting both Bible literacy and biblical integration. ✍

This article is dedicated to Dr. George Akers, who inspired me to become deeply committed to faith-learning integration. His contributions in this area developed me professionally, and his infectious zeal for integrating the nature and word of God into academics has greatly enriched my life.—William Cox.

This article has been peer reviewed.



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8. Adapted from *United States History*, 3rd ed. (Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 2001).
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13. Scripture quotations credited to NIV are from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
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18. Daniel L. Dreisbach, *Real Threat and Mere Shadow* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1987). Also, William F. Cox, Jr., *Tyranny Through Public Education* (Washington, D.C.: Allegiance Press, 2003).
19. See Winslow Homer, *A Good Pool, Saguenay River* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1895): <http://www.clarkart.edu/exhibitions/homer/ia/ts.cfm?ObjectID=30>. Accessed January 30, 2013. This modified assignment product is used by permission of its author, Eric Rice, a student in the Regent University School of Education 519CS course taught by William Cox at a Christian education conference in Anchorage, Alaska, September 16 and 17, 2010.
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