Comprehensive Biblical Integration

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ABSTRACT: Seemingly, the traditional approach to biblical integration in academics transpires on an individual course basis primarily dependent upon the individual instructor. While the courses in an academic program are coordinated and designed to accomplish an academic purpose, biblical integration does not follow a programmatic format with a stated desired outcome. Through following a structured approach of comprehensive biblical integration in an academic program, it is posited that the predetermined desired outcome of biblical integration can be realized and evaluated.

INTRODUCTION

In Christian education we emphasize integrating the Bible into our academic disciplines as a foundation for teaching from a Christian worldview. Theorizing and philosophizing about biblical integration seem to be easier tasks than incorporating a Christian worldview into curriculum through biblical integration. Those who teach concentrate on the biblical integration in their disciplines and more specifically in the particular courses that they teach in their respective disciplines while there seems to be an absence of an overarching purpose in integrating the Bible in academic programs.

Learning is frequently structured and implemented as though it takes place in isolation which is a rare occasion (Dubois, 1993). In the context of an academic program there is a learning relationship among the courses, and the same should follow in the biblical integration in those courses. English (1987) described the purpose of curriculum as “... consistently directed and purposively shaped to promote required and desired learning....it weaves together a coherent system of instruction which is directed towards attaining system goals” (p. 71). A connection of the biblical content in an academic program must be prescribed, and an architecture of curriculum established that delineates the content and delivery within the parameters of the desired outcome (Kaufmann, 2005). The learning relationship and the curricular architecture create a building process for knowledge. The individual courses in an academic program are coordinated and designed to accomplish an academic purpose, therefore should not the same format be followed for accomplishing the purpose of biblical integration?

Once a purpose or desired outcome for integrating Scripture in an academic program has been determined, then a structure can be established for the biblical principles to be incorporated in each academic course in a program. A practical example for implementing this concept is presented for stimulating thought on programmatic integration.

FOUNDATIONS AND METHODS FOR BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

Foundationally, Chewning (2001) posits four propositions for those engaged in the actual process of biblical integration:

a) There can be no genuine integration without the help of the Holy Spirit;
b) The mind of Christ is sufficiently bestowed upon all Christians for their salvation, but much more than the bare minimum of Christ's mind is available to those whom He calls to be teachers;
c) Integration requires cooperation between the Christian and the Holy Spirit; and
d) There are a variety of styles, methods, processes, or ways by which integration may come to pass (p. 114).

These propositions may be considered presupposition but serve as a reminder of the divine source and illuminator of knowledge.

Since biblical integration involves more than identifying companion Scriptures to support academic theory, Chewning (2001) additionally offers 12 methods or styles of biblical integration. These 12 methods or styles of assimilation/integration are presented in Table 1.

Using these various styles or methods assists in more effectively incorporating biblical truth into courses taught in particular disciplines. Palmer (1983) reminds us that: "The teacher is a mediator between the knower and the known, between the learner and the subject to be learned. A teacher, not some theory, is the living link in the epistemological chain. The way a teacher plays the mediator role conveys both an epistemology and an ethic to the student, both an approach to knowing and an approach to living" (p. 29).

As the "living link" we are to incorporate the best methods and tools in fulfilling our role in the "epistemological chain."

**WHY PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH TO BIBLICAL INTEGRATION?**

A proposition in biblical integration should be that the synthesis of truth inculcated in an academic program produces a desired outcome. Do we have a roadmap for the intended destination in biblical integration? For a particular academic discipline, perhaps. For a specific course, more likely. What is the ultimate desired outcome of biblical integration in Christian education? Do we have a design for the desired outcome for biblical integration in our academic programs? Our institutional vision and mission statements may indicate that we have a desired outcome, but what constitutes the plan to accomplish that noble intent?

The vision and mission of Christian colleges and universities differ, but they are common in casting a view of "where we are going" and defining "who we are and what we do" (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). Also, realizing that even the goals and objectives for a comprehensive integration of Scripture in an academic program may vary,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chewning's Method or Style</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Presuppositional</td>
<td>Foundational beliefs on which one's worldview is determined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctrinal</td>
<td>Basic biblical doctrines</td>
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<td>Principles</td>
<td>An applicable truth presented in Scripture three or more times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
<td>The character and conduct of Christ as the archetype for humanity and exemplified in people in Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom Literature</td>
<td>Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes provide practical instruction and direction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allegories</td>
<td>Parables and allegories in Scripture rightly interpreted and applied</td>
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<tr>
<td>The “History Books”</td>
<td>I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Nehemiah, Acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Selected Lenses”</td>
<td>The Holy Spirit reforms our interpretive lenses to be more conformed to the mind of Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Answered Questions”</td>
<td>Biblical principles address current issues</td>
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<td>“Cherry-Picking”</td>
<td>Association of specific verses with specific occurrences</td>
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<td>Paradigms</td>
<td>Guarded use and application of biblical models</td>
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<td>Discipline-Specific</td>
<td>Scripture addressing particular academic disciplines</td>
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for illustrative purposes the vision and goal of one particu-
lar college is the premise in this presentation. The stated
vision of one Christian college is “to prepare men and
women academically and spiritually to serve Christ Jesus in
their careers, in human relationships, and in the world of
ideas” (“Vision and Mission,” 1998). This college further
states in its mission that it is

… committed to high academic and scholarly goals,
affirms the Lordship of Christ over all aspects of life
and the authority of the Bible (the written word of
God) as foundational for the development of a personal
worldview, and recognizes each individual's career as
a calling from God. Therefore, each academic depart-
ment commits itself to evangelical Christian doctrine
and actively seeks to clarify the implications of biblical
truth for its discipline. This commitment applies to all
departments and their offerings: undergraduate, gradu-
ate, and certificate program.


This mission and vision is a proposition for the stu-
dents on which to reflect and develop a worldview while
preparing to serve Christ Jesus in their careers. Dunahoo
(2005) in commenting on Romans 12 says, “. . . thinking
is not merely an academic exercise. It impacts our life and
ministry. So, when we are mentally lazy, . . . our lives
quickly reflect that. As a result, there is not much depth to
our faith, leaving us in a state of vulnerability” (p. 23). The
“renewing of our mind” presents a mandate for students to
think Christianly and not be vulnerable to appealing
philosophies.

Students enter the classrooms in Christian colleges and
universities from diverse backgrounds and with different
levels of religious understanding and knowledge. Bunge
(2002, p. 249) reminds us that:

… many students today know very little about religion
or even about their own religious backgrounds …. Even
students at church-related colleges who were
brought up in main-line churches, attend Sunday
School, were confirmed, and are confessing Christians
remain deeply ignorant about Christianity and are
unable to speak with any depth about their own reli-
gions convictions

This religious background and knowledge divergence
for students coupled with what Alford and Naughton
(2001) define as a divided life or split personality in clar-
ifying the disparity between their spiritual lives and their
work lives confronts students with a formidable challenge
in being able to define their worldview. This dilemma is

expressed in the lament of Douglas Coupland (1995) when
he stated, “Compromise is said to be the way of the world
and yet I find myself feeling sick trying to accept what it
has done to me” (p. 39). As business students wrestle with
the idea of spiritual life and work life being an either/or
versus both proposition, Alford and Naughton (2001) offer
this observation by Jean-Loup Dherse: “Are God and busi-
ness competitors? Well, if they are, we must admit that
business takes precedence most of the time. Indeed, time
seems to be in very short supply, and God can wait. He is
very patient. Business is not” (p. xiii).

This provides insight into possible conceptions that
students bring into the classroom that must be pondered
and addressed in facilitating the development of a world-
view. To attain this outcome a schema or framework must
be developed to accomplish that end. Integrating biblical
truth into academic programs can be accomplished in
numerous ways. Those who are new to spiritual concepts
need to be taught the basic principles followed by deeper
principles as they mature in their spiritual growth (Henry,
1960). There is a learning relationship on which these
principles are built and progress.

**EXAMPLE OF COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATION**

As an example, the following courses are the required
courses for a Master of Business Administration degree at
one Christian college:

- Effective Professional Communication
- Ethical Problems in Business
- Principles of Executive Leadership
- Foundations of Business Studies I
- The Legal Environment for Business
- Current Issues in Human Resources
- Advanced Organizational Behavior
- Marketing Management
- Business in a Global Environment
- Organizational Change and Development
- Finance and Accounting for Managers
- Managerial Economics
- Business Policy and Strategy

Employing this course sequence, a plan for biblical
integration in these courses to accomplish the stated out-
come can be designed. A curricular architecture can be
developed to introduce basic principles followed by deeper
principles as students mature. Rather than using a shotgun
approach of randomly scattering biblical integration
throughout all courses in an academic program, a progres-
sion that builds on the truth presented in each course will
ultimately arrive at the desired outcome. Drawing from the college mission statement previously mentioned, the development of a personal worldview is a desired outcome.

George Barna (2003) stated “…since I became a believer some two decades ago, nobody had ever taught me how to develop a Scripture-based worldview to guide every facet of my life” (p.xix). As students contemplate their worldview, they will struggle with integrating their faith and their future profession or work. Alford and Naughton (2001) ask two questions that underlie this struggle for business students: “What kind of person should I be, as a manager or employee, strive to become? What kind of organizational community should I be, as a manager or employee, strive to build and maintain?” (p. 8). Therefore, if students are exposed to faith and learning in an academic program, it could also serve as the impetus for integrating faith and work in their careers.

It cannot be assumed that all students who attend Christian colleges are Christians. For those non-Christian students the shotgun approach of biblical integration may be difficult to comprehend and therefore may be ineffective in producing the intended outcome of developing a personal worldview, because there is an absence of a relationship with the biblical content in the various courses. Concurrently, the level of spiritual understanding and development varies greatly among Christian students, and the shotgun approach may not be as effective with these students as would a coordinated progression of biblical integration to facilitate the learning relationship among the courses. “Developing a biblical worldview takes time, mental energy, diligence, and reliance on God’s words to us” (Barna, 2003, p. 10).

Using the aforementioned sequence of courses in a Master of Business Administration program as the academic framework, the subsequent presentation of biblical integration provides a pattern of building on biblical truth throughout the academic program to attain the intended goal. It is not the only way but is an attempt to stimulate thinking in broadening the concept of biblical integration to produce the desired end keeping in mind Chewning’s (2001) proposition that “there can be no genuine integration without the help of the Holy Spirit” (p. 114).

The introductory course is Effective Professional Communication, which is a study of effective presentation skills necessary for successful business communication, including the development of both writing and speaking skills. As a genesis of biblical integration, a presentation of the Gospel including the importance of personal salvation would expose the student to this vital basic biblical doctrine. This involves examining the clarity of the message of salvation through the centuries, the various methods of communicating salvation, and the enduring power of the message. In conjunction with this study the communication style of Christ during his earthly ministry would be researched as a model for effective business communication.

In the course entitled Ethical Problems in Business a biblically based ethical study would include a comparison of the diverse methods of moral reasoning such as naturalism, utilitarianism, and relativism with a Judeo-Christian approach. These methods of moral reasoning affect a person’s worldview. At this point in the academic sequence many of the students would not be familiar with the term Christian worldview, only nine percent of adult, born-again Christians have a biblical worldview (Barna 2003). As a part of the biblical integration, worldview would be defined, and worldviews would be analyzed by the way in which they answer the three questions posed by Colson and Pearcy (1999): “Where did we come from and who are we (creation)? What has gone wrong with the world (fall)? And what can we do to fix it (redemption)?” (p.14). Walsh and Middleton (1984) ask similar questions that could also be used: “Who am I? Where am I? What’s wrong? What is the remedy?” (p.35). References from the Bible would be used to answer these questions. The world would be examined through the lenses of the creation of man, the fall of man, and the redemption of man, and the students would be challenged to begin thinking about what is included in a Christian worldview. Olson (2002) in an article, “Seeing Life, the World, and the Academic Disciplines through Christian Eyes,” presented 10 essentials of a Christian worldview, and introducing students to articles such as this one will begin to expose them to what constitutes a Christian worldview. Critical to this course is then relating a Christian worldview to ethics in the marketplace.

The outline of the course, Principles of Executive Leadership, follows the four functions of management: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Since these four functions are explicitly illustrated by Nehemiah in the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem, the Book of Nehemiah provides a case study of modern management theory from the fifth century B.C. confirming that all truth is God’s truth (Holder and Rollins, 2004). This approach necessitates that the student read the book of Nehemiah and research the application of the four functions of management implemented by Nehemiah. Integrating the Bible into the course in this way typifies the practicality of biblical truth to the students.

The biblical integration in these first three courses is laying the foundation on which to build. First, the student...
has had to reflect on his or her own personal spiritual condition with an introspective look at the Gospel and a contemplative review of the significance of salvation. Second, the student has had to ruminate on what his or her own worldview is and whether it is a Christian worldview. Third, the student has been exposed to the practicality of applying biblical principles from the study of Nehemiah. Through this the student has been challenged spiritually and intellectually initiating a process of discovery.

The course, Foundations of Business Studies I, which concentrates on the fundamental accounting principles essential to managerial decision-making, provides an opportunity for a study of character, particularly godly character. With the current well-publicized character failures of a few prominent business leaders, a study of godly character traits is vital. Selected essential character traits, such as honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness, accountability, stewardship, and faithfulness, would be emphasized using scriptures that stress the importance of character development. Consequently, the student will realize the importance of character and learn how to develop godly character traits.

The sequence of courses in this program from The Legal Environment for Business through Managerial Economics does not necessarily need to follow in the chronological order as listed. Even though there is no specific sequence for these courses, each of them through the biblical integration is continuing to build on the truth presented in the previous courses. These courses require the student to actively use Scripture as a resource for the academic course.

The Legal Environment for Business course presents several alternatives for biblical integration. One alternative could be a comparison of civil and criminal law with Mosaic Law. Another could be a study of legal justice and biblical justice and/or a study of legal litigation and the biblical process of conflict resolution. A study of law versus grace presents another possibility. An additional alternative could be to research the biblical concepts relating various legal topics such as employment discrimination, contracts, property rights, conflict resolution, and debt repayment. Through these approaches the student would realize that jurisprudence as is practiced in this country is to an extensive degree based on the Bible and that the Bible can be a relevant and practical guide in addressing legal issues.

Current Issues in Human Resources presents an opportunity for a biblical perspective on working with other people and through other people as a leader. There are biblical principles that relate to human resource management issues such as conflict resolution, succession planning, employee training and development, and workplace diversity. Through a study of the words and deeds of Christ and His disciples, the student can discern principles for employee training and development and succession planning. Scripture encourages us to love and respect others, and Ephesians 6:9 states “… knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” while John 3:16 reminds us that God loves the world and “whosoever” indicates no exclusivity. Jesus and Paul offer examples of conflict resolution. Through this approach students can make immediate application of these biblical principles in the workplace realizing that principles presented in the Bible can provide guidance in inter-personal relationships.

In Management by Proverbs Michael Zigarelli (1999) presents practical management insights from the book of Proverbs that correlate to some of the topics covered in Advanced Organizational Behavior, such as organizational culture, conflict management, attitudes, values, work motivation, job stress, employee performance, and employee development. Using Zigarelli’s book as a companion to the textbook provides a beneficial tool in applying Scripture to organizational behavior concepts. This book is representative of supportive resources that are available written from a Christian worldview with marketplace application. From these types of ancillary materials the student is able to observe a practitioner applying biblical principles in a real world context.

Karns (2002) presents in the article, “Faith-Learning Integration Exercise: Marketing Principles in the Book of Acts,” a learning exercise based on the Book of Acts that presents evidences of the elements of marketing principles in the growth of the early church. This could serve as an effective way of integrating the Bible in Marketing Management with the students being able to observe evidence in the Bible of various aspects of marketing principles such as marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion), market segmentation, strategy, and positioning without misappropriating Scripture (Karns, 2002).

Business in a Global Environment emphasizes the importance of conducting business globally, but how were nations formed? We can see this origin of nations in Genesis 11:1-9 with the building of the Tower of Babel and the resulting creation of languages and the scattering of the people. This is substantiated further in Acts 17:26, “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation…. “ Solomon in 1 Kings illustrates early accounts of international commerce. In the New Testament Paul trav-
eled extensively spreading the Gospel and had an understanding of how to operate effectively in different cultures. Even though Acts 1:8 is a strategy for evangelizing the world by starting locally and expanding the geographical area, it can also serve as a model for a business expanding globally by beginning in the local market and ultimately growing into the worldwide marketplace. There are numerous other examples and applications of biblical principles relating to international business for the student to discover. Again, by using Scripture the student is viewing the world through a biblical lens.

The course in Organizational Change and Development provides an opportunity to analyze the biblical concept of change. In Hebrews 13:8 there is the proclamation, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” which provides stability, dependability, and confidence. Change is found in those who follow Christ as indicated in Romans 12:2, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Other scriptures such as II Corinthians 4:16 “… being renewed day by day”; II Corinthians 5:17, “… if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new”; Ezekiel 11:19 “And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them ….”; and Romans 6:4 “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” all address change. There are accounts of numerous people in the Bible who were changed by their encounter with Christ, such as Paul, Peter, Lazarus, the woman at the well, and the demon-possessed man. The actions of Jesus brought about change — driving the money-changers out of the temple, His resurrection, His teaching, and His miracles. These biblical insights of change can concurrently be related to principles of organizational change.

Since Finance and Accounting for Managers concentrates on the use of financial and accounting methods in decision making and strategy implementation, the importance of the understanding and accuracy of the information on the four major financial statements is emphasized. Financial statements are basically pieces of paper with numbers on them. Accountants accumulate the numbers and produce these reports. What do these numbers represent? What do they mean? What is the significance of the numbers? On financial statements each number bears significance, since each one indicates something about the organization and its operation. The numbers tell a story. In chemistry, biology, zoology, astronomy, and the other sciences, mathematical patterns exist. Are there any mathematical patterns in the Mars Rover Project? Miles, temperature, location (relationship to other planets, stars, sun), and the programming of the computers that control the rover are all based on a mathematical pattern. Did all of these mathematical patterns just happen? They are the result of the order and design of God’s creation. Man did not create these mathematical patterns. Man just discovered these patterns (Rogers, 2004). They have great significance. This course would integrate the significance of numbers and what they represent in the understanding of the Bible. For example, the number one in Scripture represents unity and the nature of God; the number two represents witness; the number three is the divine number representing the triune nature of God; and the number four is the number of creation (Rogers, 2004). This is a way of reinforcing the importance of knowing what financial and accounting methods mean and accurately reporting the numbers so that they relate a valid report to the users of the information. Although this approach does not attempt to relate accounting to biblical numerology, it is a way of challenging the students in using Scripture and to realize the importance of fully understanding what financial report numbers actually represent.

Managerial Economics is another course in which a companion book to the textbook may prove useful. Bulls, Bears, and Golden Calves by John E. Stapleford (2002) affords an introductory perspective into current economic issues with a distinctive scriptural viewpoint. Economic topics such as the role of government in the economy, private property rights, economic growth, unemployment, poverty, investment and interest, and economic efficiency are addressed permitting the student to gain insight into economics and the Bible from a Christian economist. Novak (1996) offers an approach of people in business having intents in their economic activities beyond just economic ones with everyone having a uniquely satisfying calling in their life. Also, there are other books on economics written from a Christian perspective that would serve well as companion books and correspond with the academic content of the course.

The capstone course in this program is Business Policy and Strategy. As is the nature of a capstone course, this is one which encapsulates all of the functional areas of business into the decision making process. Since the vision and mission statements indicated that there was a desired outcome, this course, as a capstone, would indicate if the academic and biblical integration outcomes were fulfilled. As a part of this course the students would submit a compre-
The intent has been to initiate consideration of comprehensive Biblical integration in academic programs. With this consideration being addressed other issues and concerns may surface with one possibly being freedom. Does a framework for comprehensive integration restrict or eliminate freedom, particularly the freedom of the Holy Spirit to work in the instructor and the student? Comprehensive integration should provide structure but not restrain freedom. There are many approaches to achieving the same goal, and the practical examples of biblical integration in this presentation are for demonstrative purposes each of which could be debated and discussed. Agreeably, some of the examples may seem simplistic; however, with collaboration from faculty members, who are experts in their disciplines, more in-depth integration can be developed and designed for specific desired outcomes. An array of methods and examples were used to elicit creative ways of integrating Scripture.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATION

Carla Sanderson, Provost at Union University, said, “In this community, there should be no confusion over goals, administrative goals versus faculty goals, our goals versus their goals. Coming to this understanding is a must for every Christian college faculty of the future” (Dockery & Thornbury, 2002, p. 378). The challenge for each institution in developing a comprehensive biblical integration for an academic program is to arrive at consensus on the biblical principles to emphasize in each course and develop the most effective methods and approaches to accomplish those while allowing for freedom in the fulfillment of the plan. Those personal experiences and teachable moments are in no way eliminated but remain integral ingredients in teaching.

Continuity and coordination of courses are essential elements in academic programs. Continuity and coordination also present a demanding challenge in comprehensive biblical integration; however it is a challenge worthy of undertaking. With a clearly defined institutional and academic vision and mission, a direction is established, and the faculty is then able to focus on putting the pieces together. It will not be an easy task, but it is attainable. Potentially, it provides an effective way of producing the desired outcome.
SUMMARY

Again, this is not the exclusive way to accomplish the outcome of students developing a Christian worldview but is, hopefully, a stimulant for expanding thought on biblical integration. By viewing biblical integration in a broader conceptual framework, we are compelled to look beyond our discipline and the particular courses we teach and consider a complete academic program with the focus on the desired outcome. Through a comprehensive plan of biblical integration the challenge of creating more effective means of instilling a Christian worldview becomes achievable.

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<th>Biblical Reference</th>
<th>Chewning’s Styles</th>
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<td>Executive Professional Communications</td>
<td>Multiple references, primarily Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Hebrews</td>
<td>Doctrinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Problems in Business</td>
<td>Multiple references including Genesis, New Testament</td>
<td>Doctrinal; “Selected Lenses”; “Answered Questions”</td>
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<td>The “History Books”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Multiple references addressing character</td>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Multiple references addressing law and legal issues, grace</td>
<td>“Answered Questions”; Principles</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Business Policy and Strategy</td>
<td>Student selection of references</td>
<td>Various methods (determined by student)</td>
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REFERENCES


