

Determining the Developmental Focus of a Lifelong Learning Event

The educational preparation of Nazarene ministers is to include the following four elements [see *Manual*, 527.3]. These elements provide a way to categorize the primary thrust or developmental focus of each learning event.

- **Content** – the biblical, theological, and historical knowledge necessary for ministry;
- **Competency** – the development of skills for ministry;
- **Character** – the strengthening and enriching of the minister as a person; and
- **Context** – the deepening of the understanding of the ministry environment.

While most lifelong learning events touch upon several of these elements, normally there is one element that emerges as primary. This is the developmental focus of the event. Identifying the developmental focus assists the minister in assuring that the events in which he or she participates contribute to a well-conceived and balanced lifelong learning plan. Identifying the focus also assists the District Board of Ministry in designing or promoting lifelong learning opportunities for its ministers.

The following is a fuller description of each element:

Content—Lifelong Learning events aimed at increasing knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, Christian theology and the history and mission of the Church, and that develop greater understanding with respect to the interpretation of Scripture, the doctrine of holiness, our Wesleyan distinctives, and the history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene.

Competency—Lifelong Learning events designed to enhance skills in oral and written communication, management and leadership, finance, and analytical thinking. In addition to general education in these areas, presentations providing skills in preaching, pastoral care and counseling, biblical exegesis, worship, evangelism, biblical stewardship of life resources, Christian education, and church administration would be examples of core competencies.

Character—Lifelong Learning events that encourage growth in character, ethics, spirituality, and personal and family relationship is vital for the ministry. This would include presentations/events addressing the areas of Christian ethics, spiritual formation, human development, the person of the minister, and marriage and family dynamics.

Context—Lifelong Learning events that contribute to the minister's understanding of both the historical and contemporary context and interpret the worldview and social environment of the culture where the Church witnesses. This would include presentations/events that address the concerns of anthropology and sociology, cross-cultural communication, and missiology.