



2005 ATFE Biennium

**FIELD EDUCATION MANUALS:  
A WORKING GROUP**

Sam Johnson and Richard Cunningham

# Field Education Manuals: A Working Group

Sam Johnson, Boston University  
Richard Cunningham, Seattle University

## Presenters and Participants:

The Working Group on Field Education Manuals was attended by 32 individuals. Six field educators submitted their field education manual for presentation. The six individuals / schools were:

Allen Reeson - Barry University;  
Youtha Hardman-Cromwell - Wesley Theological;  
Thomas Jones - Emmanuel School of Religion;  
Rebecca Bunton - Christian Theological Seminary;  
Gwen Ingram and Douglas Haub - Fuller  
Susanna Metz - School of Theology, University of the South

## Summary of Working Group:

Each presenter had 12 minutes each to share their manual with those present. In the main, each presenter and the two leaders had copies of all of the manuals. Members in the audience asked questions of clarification, other presenters offered insights and the two leaders offered suggestions and comment.

Leadership asked each of the participants to locate the purpose and target audience of their manual using the questions below under “Part I.” The presenters used the time wisely in this first ever-session and received valuable feedback from both the participants and the leadership. At the end of the session the leadership suggested that the ATFE membership should move to sharpening the language they use in developing and producing written materials. The clarification below is offered for further review by the membership.

## Clarification:

The leadership clarified that there appeared to be three types of manuals and suggested that field educators carefully label their materials using the following nomenclature:

### Handbook

- A descriptive publication which defines the nature of the program and the overview of the field education or contextual education program. This could include the overall requirements of the program, specific courses, prerequisite courses, timelines, approvals and etc.

### Manual

- A manual would be designed for a particular course, which could list pedagogical approach, methods, competencies, specific forms and bibliography.

### Resources

- This would contain a series of reprints, articles, methods, handouts from **or** other agencies and institutions.

### Course-Pack

## Acknowledgement:

The leadership encouraged the participants and the presenters to take their work seriously. Manuals and handbooks may not be scholarly works but they are critical tools of communication. Many field educators have been criticized within their institutions for not publishing academic works. On the one hand this may be true; however handbooks, manuals and resources or course-packs are extremely

important because they communicate the process, pedagogy and curriculum of the course. In addition, these publications are much needed in that they communicate to a variety of audiences: student, faculty, inquirer, local congregations, ecclesial leadership and the general public. By taking the audiences of these publications more seriously, academic institutions will place a higher value on this type of publication.

### **Action / Recommendation:**

Those participating in this working group, the presenters, participants (audience) and the leadership affirmed the need for peer review of field educators – handbooks, manuals, and resources or course-packs.

- The working group recommends to the ATFE Steering Committee that this opportunity be built into the overall design of the Biennial Consultation. This might be divided into two parts: the first for those submitting materials for peer review meeting at the first part of the consultation. A second session would be toward the end of the session for the benefit of those who might submit materials in the future.
- It was generally thought that a peer review – with some comment, notation and / or letter could be written for the individual’s president or dean as part of an annual review or rank and tenure consideration.
- Another value of a peer review would be of interest to ATS when they are engaged in a site review for the member school.
- That a team of three to five people be identified and work between the Consultation as a review team. Individuals could submit their handbooks, manuals and resources for peer review.

At present three persons have indicated a desire to be contacted: Sam Johnson, Boston University - [sjohnsn@bu.edu](mailto:sjohnsn@bu.edu) Don Byker, Calvin Theological Seminary – [dbyker@calvin.edu](mailto:dbyker@calvin.edu) and Richard Cunningham, Seattle University – [rdick@seattleu.edu](mailto:rdick@seattleu.edu)

- Two difficulties were noted:
- Limited time for presentations – 90 minutes was not enough
  - Logistics – getting manuals to the reviewers was difficult
  - At future Consultations make greater use of internet connections, CD’s, storage devices, and LCD projection to “show” manuals to the audience. Participants in this working group affirmed the value of being able to view two of the six manuals on screen.
- It may be helpful for this working group to consider providing theological schools and seminaries with a recommended copyright policy for use in writing, reviewing, updating, and rewriting manuals, handbooks and resource or course-pack materials.

### **Leadership Review Questions: Parts I and II**

Prior to the presentation the leadership recommended the following key questions be asked when a) review your own manual and b) reviewing the manual of a peer.

#### **Part I. Program and Manual**

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- Since the manual fits into a program, what is the totality of your program and how does the manual fit into it?
- What is the purpose of your manual?
  - A conveyor of information
  - Legal document of expectations, requirements, and processes

- A document where everyone in the program has the same information and facts to minimize miscommunication and confusion and can serve as a reference point when there is different understandings about the program.
- Helps the administrators of the program become clear about the program through the process of developing and writing the manual
- For whom is the manual written?
  - Administrators of the program
  - Students
  - Faculty
  - Supervisors
  - Lay intern committees
  - Denominational officials
  - General public
  - ATFE colleagues who seem not to have enough things to do

**Part II. Things to examine when reviewing the manual -** [use the following as a checklist in reviewing the components of your manual]

- Ease of understanding and use
  - Presentation
  - Organization
  - Writing
- Overall Layout & Design
  - Can you find things quickly?
  - Is it intuitive?
  - Table of Contents – Usability
- Organization
  - Categories – moving from broad to specific
  - Does it flow logical?
  - Is there continuity
- Scholarship
  - Does the content present material that is academically rigorous?
  - Is there a link between the theological knowing and the practice of ministry?
  - Are theologians and practitioners cited and properly footnoted?
  - Is there a bibliography?
- Course Description [Is the course or courses listed in the manual?]
  - Title
  - Credits / hours
  - Purpose
  - Concepts defined
  - Goals
  - Schedule
- Competencies Defined
  - Descriptors
  - Personal
  - Professional
  - Theological
  - Relationships
  - How will competencies be assessed?
- Expectations / requirements

- Documents / papers
- Process
- Guidance
- Helps
- Grading
- Peer evaluation
- Self Feedback /Evaluation
- Theological Reflection
  - Definition
  - Readability
  - Role of experience
  - Accessing theological understanding
  - Hermeneutics
  - Interpretation
  - Scripture
  - Tradition
  - Making meaning
  - Texts
- Pedagogical Approach
  - Learning theory
  - Ecclesiology
  - Reflective practitioner
  - Peer group – learning
  - “call” to ministry
  - Family of origin – personal story / myth
- Role of Faculty
  - Leadership style
  - Approachability / hours / phone / e-mail
  - Grading policy
  - Teacher
  - Leader
  - Facilitator
- Internship
  - How attained
  - Who reports to whom?
  - Feedback or evaluation -
  - Problems
  - Job descriptions
  - Timelines
  - Approvals – school / denomination / site
- Problem Resolution
  - sexual harassment
  - conflict between ...
  - physical abuse – pastoral response
  - resolution process
- Denominational involvement
  - required documents
  - role / rites
  - formation
- Ethical Relationships

- dual roles
- friendships
- dating
- power dynamics
- authority
- Design of internship described
  - local teaching parish
  - focus on local congregation
  - focus on multiple ministerial settings
- Formation
  - How does the denomination or tradition use field education as a means to develop and encourage the formation process?
  - What are the formation elements?
  - Is a spiritual advisor or director involved?
  - What does the formation process say about “call” to ministry
- Legal documents and forms
  - Documents
    - legal – hold harmless agreements
    - permissions
    - ecclesial authorizations
    - remuneration
  - feedback / evaluations
  - assessment
  - end of class evaluations
  - awareness of manual as potential legal document in ways not intended
- Multi-cultural
  - How does your manual present issues of culturally diverse communities of faith?
  - What specifically does the manual do to help students address multi-racial differences?
  - What in your manual fosters mutual exchange of gifts across ecclesial and theological traditions?
- Clinical Pastoral Education [CPE]
  - How is CPE related to your program?
  - Are credits given?
  - What happens to your formation process if student takes CPE?
  - How is your process distinct from CPE?
- Resources
  - Bibliography
    - Is the Bibliography broadly representative of authors in pastoral ministry?
    - Are multi cultural authors included?
    - critical issues
    - self assessment
  - contact information