



**ATFE**

Association for  
Theological Field Education

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**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS  
ADULT DEVELOPMENT**

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# Leadership Development as Adult Development

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# Context and problem

- I am a theological field educator: emphasis on theological reflection as a method for reflective practice (Master of Pastoral Theology Program)
- **Problem :**
- 1. Some learners more capable than others of reflecting on their pastoral practice. Why? What is going on?
- 2. My conceptual tools for assessing and supporting learners in their development were inadequate. What should I/we do?

# Steps taken (1)

- **Since 2001**, I am immersed in theories and practices relating to adult development and transformational learning (ex. Robert Kegan, Lisa Lahey, Jack Mezirow, Donald Schön)
- **Since 2007**, I am immersed in the Constructive-Developmental Framework (CDF) authored and taught by Dr. Otto Laske ([InterDevelopMentals.org](http://InterDevelopMentals.org)) that has allowed me to gain an even clearer understanding as to the nature of the problem itself as well as work with educational strategies to respond to the problem

## Steps Taken (2)

- **In 2010**, I surveyed other theological field educators (ATFE members) to determine if they were facing similar challenges and if so, to see how the CDF could provide an adequate method for re-framing and responding to the developmental issues TFE's encounter.

# Hypothesis (1)

- The goal of pastoral leadership education is to equip adult learners for effective pastoral leadership
- In order to meet this objective, formation must provide a space to acquire skills and competencies, and attend to the developmental attributes of the adult learners
- Although pastoral leadership education has always attended to « adult » development, the link between the two remains implicit

# Hypothesis (2)

- The Constructive-Developmental Framework (CDF) as an approach to adult development offers TFE's
  - a conceptual framework for making this connection explicit and understanding behaviors and concerns that point to developmental needs
  - A new perspective to thinking about attending to learners' developmental needs in ministry formation

# On-line Survey of Theological Field Educators (ATFE)

Sent: 100 invitations through ATFE mailing list to participate in on-line survey

Respondents: 30 that include several denominations:

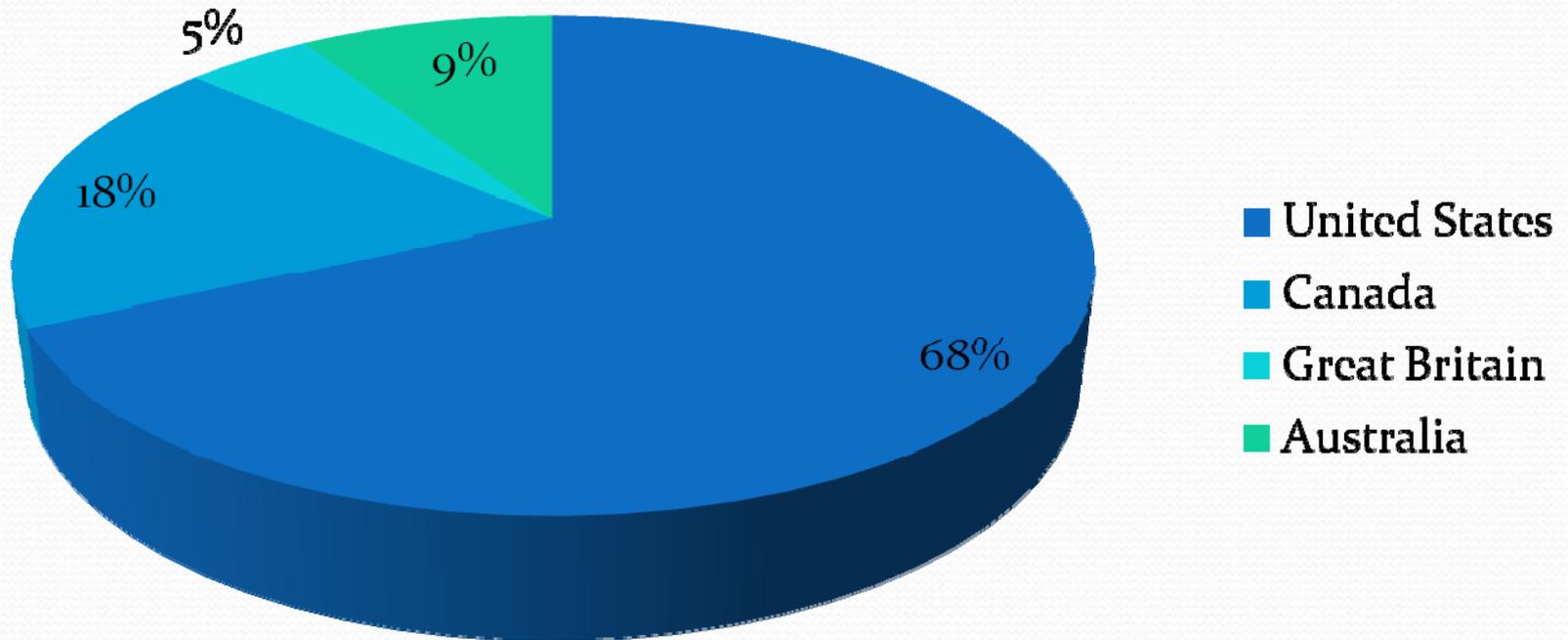
Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal

- United Church of Christ, Anglican
- Lutheran, Unitarian, Unitarian,
- Methodist , Presbyterian,
- Disciples of Christ, Uniting Church of Australia
- Church of Scotland , etc.....

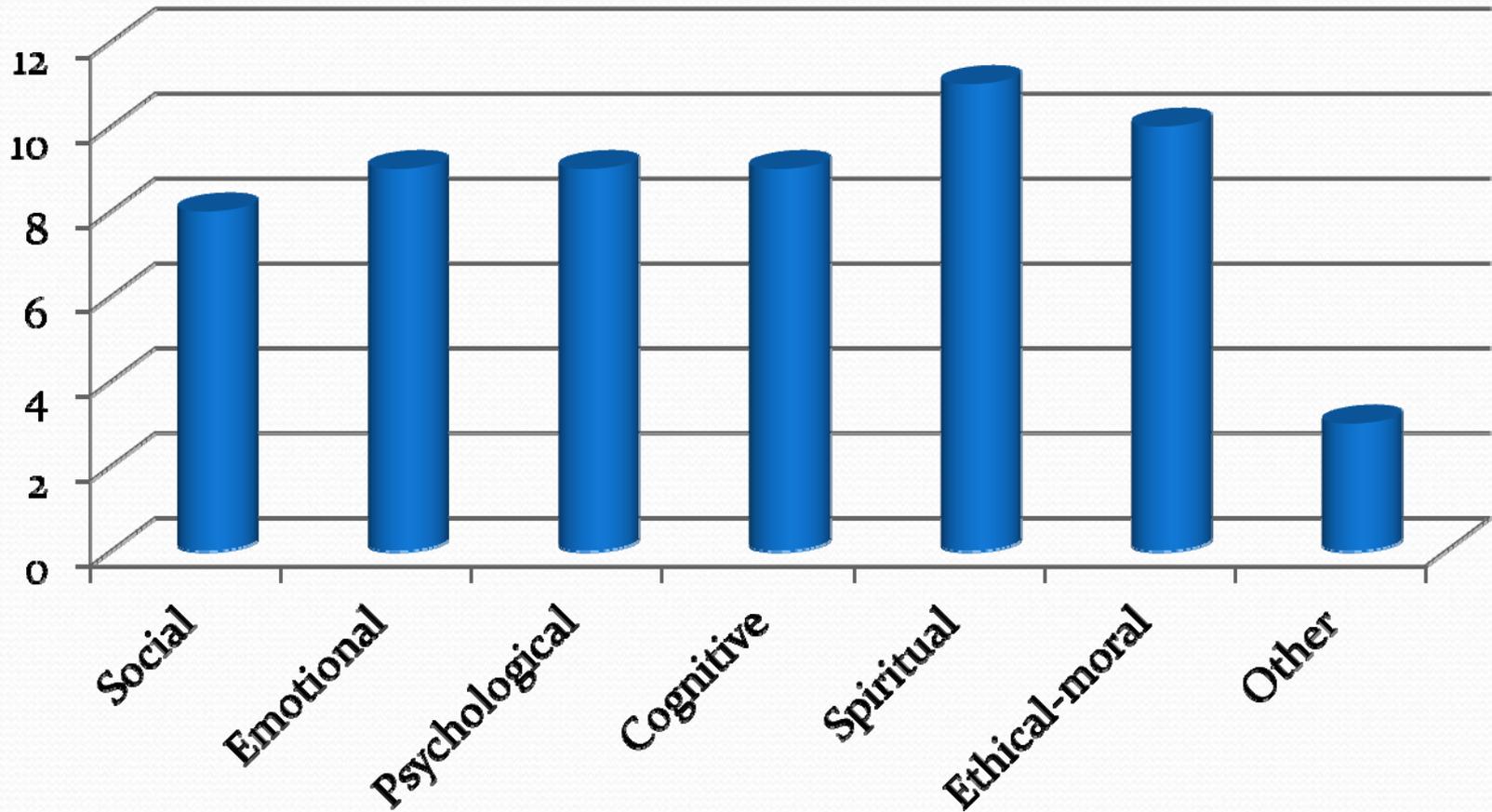
Most theological schools are inter-denominational

# Geographical location of respondents

**Location of school**



# Question: In your experience, what are the most pressing developmental needs for candidates in ministry?





**Question: Give examples of how learners demonstrate the developmental needs in the areas they identified.**

# Social Developmental needs are evidenced by:

- Lack of self-awareness as to impact they have on others
- Patterns of relationships that 1) polarize others; 2) avoid or heighten conflict; 3) infantilize congregations and keep them dependent upon the pastor
- Unable to work with others
- Unable to read situations and respond appropriately
- Little or no initiative

# Emotional needs are evidenced by:

- Anger issues
- Lack of self-understanding
- Inner self in shambles
- Little self-awareness, little sense of emotional or physical boundaries
- Dependency issues, ex. struggling to take responsibility for own learning (particularly with persons from other cultures)
- Lack of comfort with women (often with learners from non-western cultures)

## Psychological developmental needs are evidenced by:

- Difficulty in adapting to the dynamics of new environment; ex. Movement from regularity of work hours to the unpredictable nature of ministry
- Difficulty in letting go and crossing into a different educational or cultural milieu
- Struggle to manage time and finances
- Addictive need for affirmation for performance
- Lack of self-awareness
- Depression and woundedness

# Cognitive developmental needs are evidenced by (1):

- Lack of knowledge and lack of ability to integrate Scripture into ministerial practice
- Limited intellectually (plagiarism as means for meeting course expectations)
- Difficulty understanding assignments
- Lack of mental templates to reflect upon what they already know and are learning
- Lack the understanding of how Christian worldview reframes and interacts with own economic, political and sociological environment

# Cognitive developmental needs are evidenced by (2):

- Dogmatism and literalism
- Confusion and ambiguity
- Lack of theological clarity
- Poor change management skills
- Lack of empathy for another's situation or position
- Inability to analyze a contextual problem

# Spiritual needs are evidenced by:

- Pragmatism: priority given to performance, the need for getting an education, a job and title rather than growing into relationship with God
- Lack of trust in the vocational call
- Lack of relevance of gospel as it relates to their own self-worth
- Lack of prayer, lack of dependence on God
- Superficial spiritual “activities”
- Lack of habit of spiritual disciplines

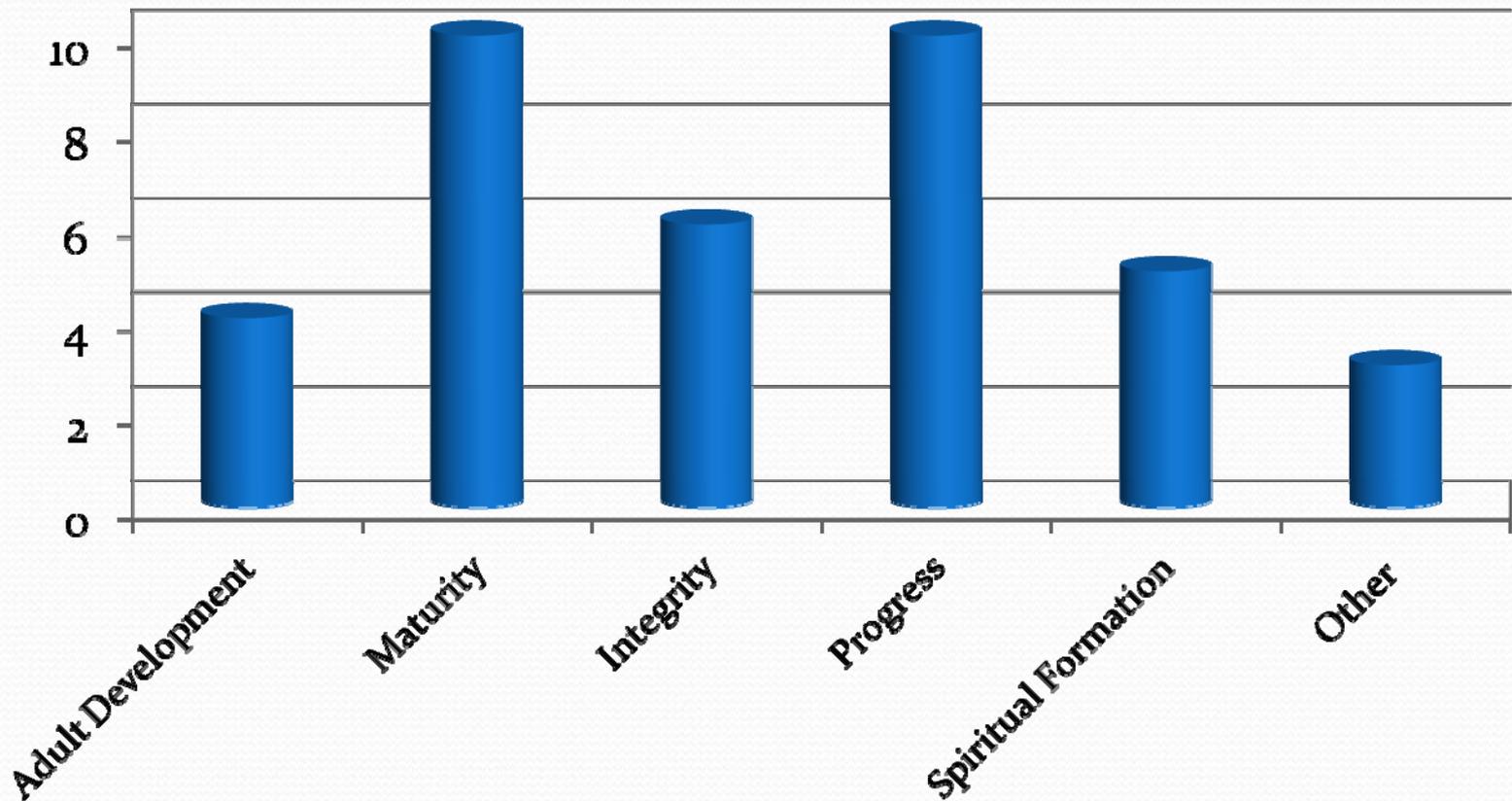
# Moral-ethical developmental needs are evidenced by:

- Lying
- Sexual morality
- Lack of conviction
- Cheating and plagiarism
- Boundary issues and dual relationships
- Little clarity about being more “ethical”
- Difficulty articulating rationale behind actions and beliefs

# Other urgent developmental needs:

- Theological
- Leadership
- Psycho-sexual
- Vocational call
- Identity
- Acculturation
- Integration

# What other language or terms do you use to refer to students' development in your program?



## Regard reference to the use of “adult development”, in the comment box:

- Some respondents indicated « adult development » as important
- Others indicated that they avoid using that terminology as they already consider the learners to be adults.
- Others avoided the term completely without explanation

# Question: “In your experience, what is the connection between a student’s developmental level and his or her capacity for theological reflection?” (1)

- There is a mutual relationship between the two that can either be positive or negative
- In order to do theological reflection, learners need to have attained a particular level of maturity
- “I think it also has to do with personality, time and how someone is "wired."
- “Where students are more able to critique themselves and their practice of ministry....., they are more able to do theological reflection.”

## Connection between a student's developmental level and his or her capacity for theological reflection?" (2)

- “Students who have integrity and who are self-aware typically are able to provide superior theological reflection.”
- “[The connection between the two] is critical. The ability of the student to reflect theologically is essential. The [theological field] education course becomes the crucible where students integrate personal, professional and theological understandings.”

# CDF: A constructive-developmental approach to adult development

- Constructivist: based on the notion that all humans construct their own perspective of reality according to their level of social-emotional and cognitive development at the *current* moment
- Developmental: found in the adult developmental theories of Piaget, Kegan, Kohlberg, etc. Humans develop (ontic) by stages or phases throughout their lives according their experiences and potential, and not their age

# CDF: Distinguishes between two types of development

- Agentic development: a horizontal development that takes place through effort (either ours or others); acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies; increasing what we *have*
- Ontic development: a vertical development that takes place through time; who we *are* and who we *are becoming*

# Theoretical Foundations

- Social-emotional development (Kegan/Laske)
- Epistemic position (King & Kitchener)
- Cognitive development: dialectical (Basseches)
- Theory of capacity for logical reasoning (Jaques)
- Theory of psycho-genic needs (Henry Murray)
- Organizational climate analysis (Morris Aderman)
- Developmental hermeneutic (interview & interpretation) Schein and Laske

# Learning from a developmental perspective

**Competencies:** « what » we acquire (skills, knowledge)

**Capacity:** Psychological profile (subjective needs personality, disposition, holds competencies in place)

**Capability :** Level of social-emotional and cognitive development  
Grounds capacities and competencies and determines how they are used

# Socio-emotional development

- Stage 2: Self-centered: view of others as instruments for own needs
- Stage 3: Dependent: own beliefs are influenced by expectations others (real or imagined)
- Stage 4: Independent: autonomous decision maker; respect for beliefs of others
- Stage 5: Inter-independent: active agent in constructing and deconstructing own value system in partnership with others

<b>Social Emotional Orientation</b>	<b>S-2 Instrumentalist</b>	<b>S-3 Other-Dependent</b>	<b>S-4 Independent</b>	<b>S-5 Inter-independent</b>
<i>Primary Focus</i>	Self	Other	Self	Other
<i>View of Others</i>	Instruments of own need gratification	Needed to contribute to own self image	Collaborator, delegate, peer	Contributors to own integrity and balance
<i>Level of Self Insight</i>	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
<i>Values</i>	Law of Jungle	Community	Self-determined	Humanity
<i>Needs</i>	Overriding all others' needs	Subordinate to community, work group	Flowing from striving for integrity	Viewed in connection with own obligations and limitations
<i>Need to Control</i>	Very High	Moderate	Low	Very low
<i>Communication</i>	Unilateral	Exchange 1:1	Dialogue	True Communication
<i>Percentage of Adult Population in Western Society</i>	Less than 10%	55-60%	20-25%	Less than 10%
<i>Examples of developmental needs demonstrated</i>	Lack of self-awareness and empathy, patterns of relationship that heighten conflict, lack of emotional and physical boundaries , may polarize others (because of own neediness )	Relationships that keep others in a dependency mode, inability to take responsibility for one's learning, boundary issues in dual relationships, poor change management (because of need to please or fit in)	Lack of empathy, may be defensive and polarize people, poor change management skills (because of danger of imposing own values on community)	

# Eras of Cognitive Development

- Common Sense (0 – 10 yrs)
- Understanding: does not *see* contradictions (10 to 25 yrs)
- Reason: logic; sees but does not tolerate contradictions (adolescent and higher), not everyone reaches or surpasses this stage
- Dialectical(4 phases): integrates logic, welcomes contradictions as integral to reality
- Wisdom: a high level of cognitive fluidity; return to simplicity

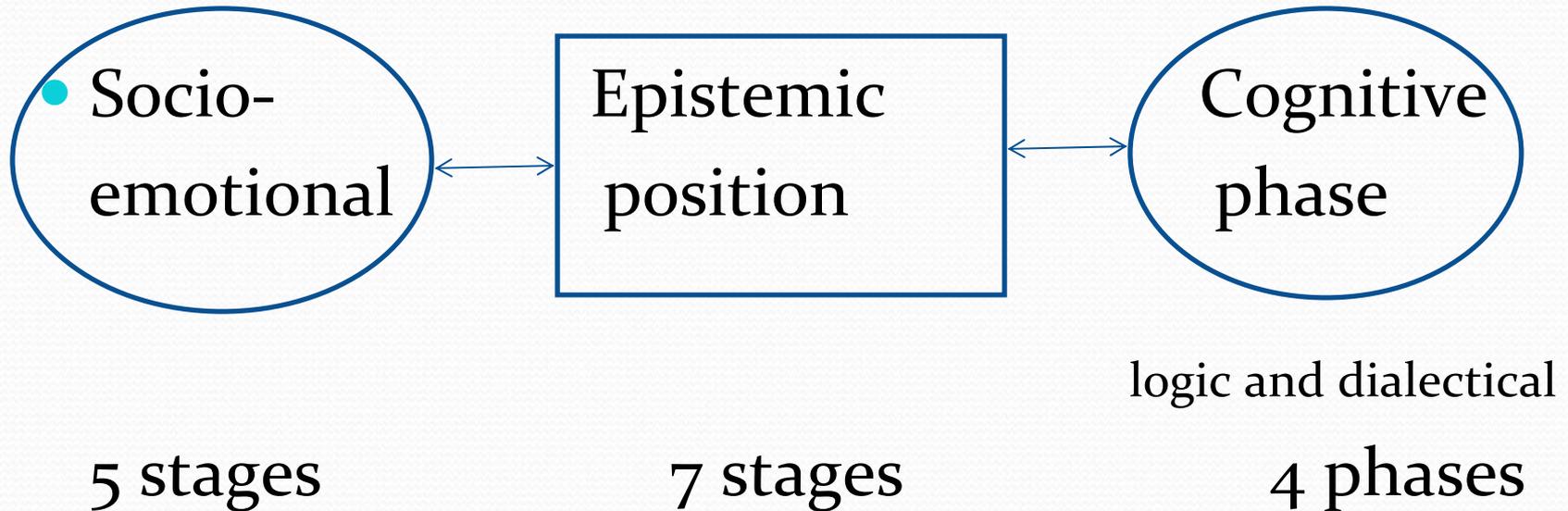
# Dialectical Thinking: 4 classes of thought forms

Class	Focus on Reality
Process	Emergence, what is in motion, novelty from void
Context	Stability, what makes up the big picture
Relationship	Totality, what shares a common ground
Transformation	Systems in transformation, what is mutually intertwined, inter-dependent and evolving

# Epistemic Position

- Defines a person's conception of the nature of knowledge and truth
- Reflects the social-emotional stage in the cognitive domain, underlining our social-emotional attachment to *where* and *how* truth is to be found
- Mediates between social-emotional stage and phase of cognitive development

# Epistemic Position as mediator between social-emotional and cognitive

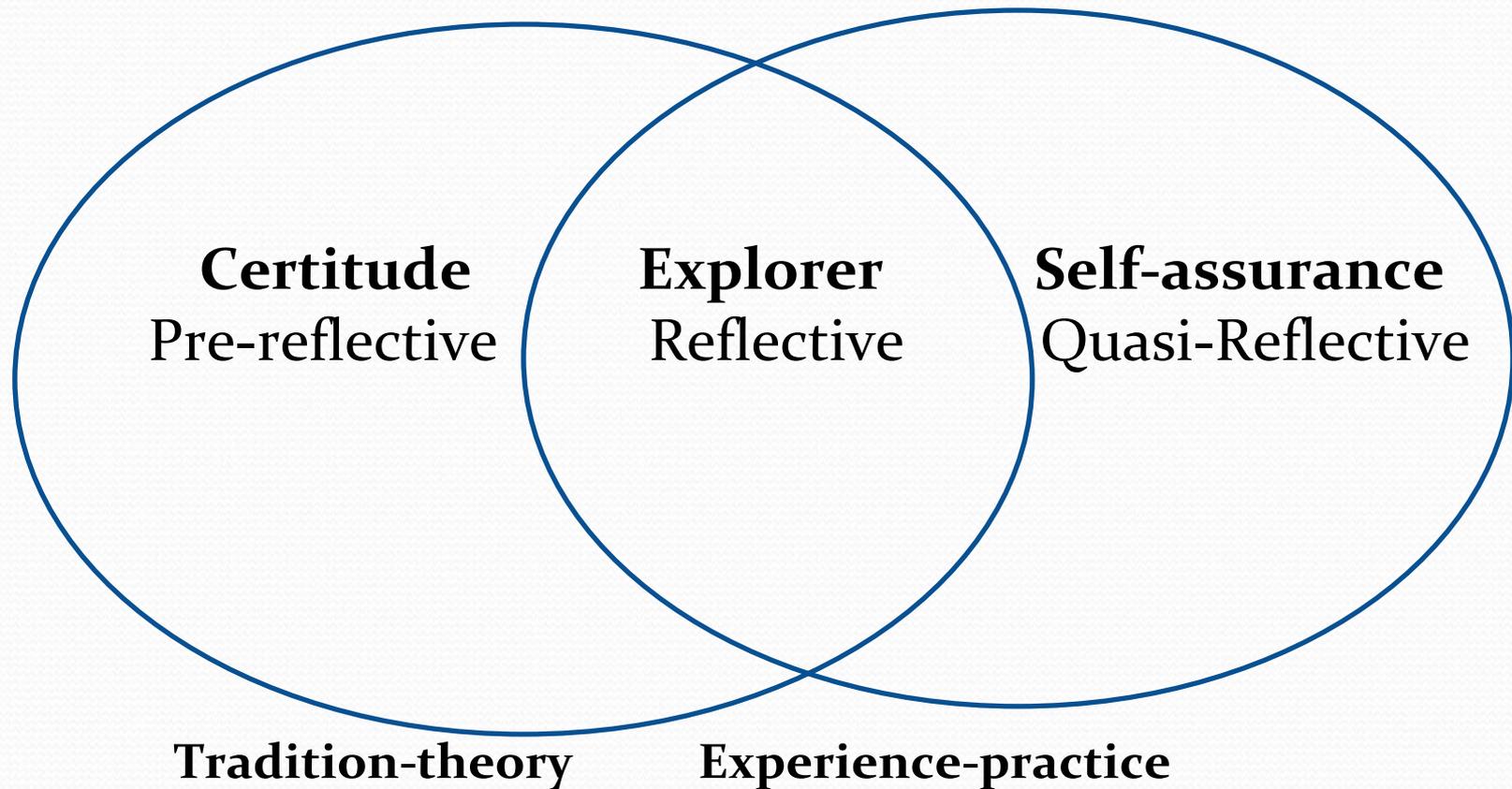


# Epistemic Position as mediator between social-emotional and cognitive

Social-emotional stage (denotes transitions)	Epistemic Position	Era of Cognitive Development
2 to 2(3)	3	Understanding: no evidence of dialectical thinking
2/3 to 3	4	Reason: Phase 1: weak evidence of dialectical thinking (<10 CF)
3(4) to 4(3)	5	Phase 2: (>10<30 CF)
4 to 4/5	6	Phase 3: (>30<50 CF)
5/4 to 5...	7	Phase 4: (>50 CF) moves from Reason to Wisdom

# Theological Reflection and Epistemic Position

(Killlen and de Beer, p.17)



# Epistemic positions 1 to 3:

## Pre-reflective thinking

- Learner seeks **certitude** through reliance on a given set of knowledge and « rules » that are available and verifiable to direct lives clearly and effectively
- Effective in dealing with **well-structured problems** that can be described and resolved with a degree of completeness
- **Deductive thinking skills** with little or no ability to take into account the context or practice in attempts to solve the problem
- Dogmatic, literal thinkers

# Epistemic Position 4 and 5

## Quasi-reflective Thinker

- Learner seeks certitude through self-reliance and tradition only serves to support what he/she already knows and thinks
- Inductive thinker : Self-Assurance; confident that what he/she knows can be justified by own frames of reference
- Subject to the limits of his/her embeddedness in family, culture and tradition which he either denies or of which he/she is unaware
- *Confusion, ambiguity, lack of theological clarity*

# Epistemic Positions 6 and 7

## Reflective Thinker

- Learner engages the tradition in conversation with experience in order to let wisdom emerge in his/her life and ministry
- **Exploration** as a search for knowledge and truth is faithful to the fullest reading of tradition and experience.
- Necessary position for responding to **ill-structured** problems (complex and uncertain, only partial knowledge)
- Knowledge is viewed as outcome of a reasonable inquiry; decisions justified on the basis of a variety of interpretative considerations, including the weight of evidence and the explanatory value of interpretations.

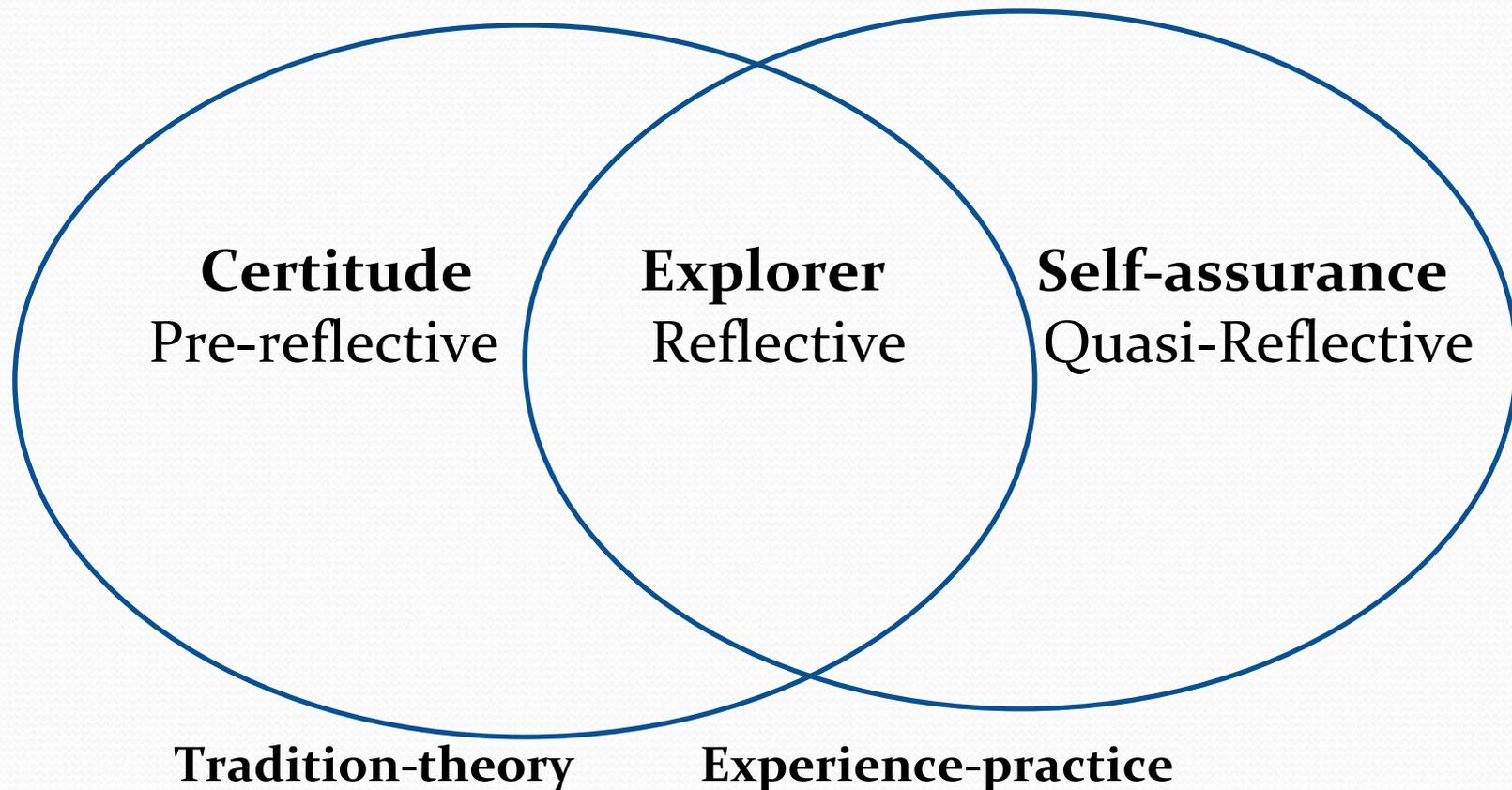
# Reflective Thinker (EP 6 and 7)

At this Epistemic position, learner can:

- *understand how Christian worldview reframes and interacts with own economic, political and sociological environment*
- *Engage in TR as they are able to critique themselves and their practice of ministry*
- *Have (therefore no longer subject to) the “mental templates” to reflect upon what they already know and are learning*

# Theological Reflection and Epistemic Position

(Killlen and de Beer, p.17)



# CDF as heuristic tool for re-framing developmental needs

- Re-frames what is often “intuitive” knowledge into conceptual frameworks to understand the hidden dimension to developmental needs
- provides a basis for assessing developmental profiles for learners
- Posits cognitive as the motor for integral development (direct relationship between *how* you think and *how* you act)
- Proposes educational tools for cognitive/integral development

# Theological Reflection and Cognitive Development

- Know the dynamics and goals of adult development
- Become dialectical thinkers
- Learn to use the 4 classes of Thought forms (28 TF's) in your interactions with learners (in written comments, case study presentations, etc. )
- Use cognitive tools in the form of questions « Mind Openers » to develop cognitive fluidity

# Conclusion

- An explicit connection between adult development and ministry formation will avoid reducing formation to the acquisition of competencies
- CDF offers an adequate frame for TFE for re-framing development issues and needs as well as the educational strategies for developmental learning
- CDF (as a scientific tool) although adequate is unable to fully explain the complexity and dynamism of the human person

# Continuing research:

Invitation to colleagues in theological field education to join in continuing research in *how* the CDF can offer a new perspective to how we think about attending to developmental needs in ministry formation

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# Additional Information

- The results of this study and a similar presentation of the material will be available in the Reflective Practice Journal Volume 31, 2011. You may access this journal through <http://reflective-practice.org/home> and look for Volume 31.