

MURIEL I. ELMER and DUANE H. ELMER



The Learning Cycle

Insights for Faithful Teaching from Neuroscience and the Social Sciences

ENDORSEMENTS



The Learning Cycle

Insights for Faithful Teaching from Neuroscience and the Social Sciences

Available April 21, 2020 | \$22, 240 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5383-0

With insights from neuroscience, educational psychology, and learning theory, veteran educators Muriel and Duane Elmer provide a holistic model for how learning takes place. Their learning cycle moves beyond mere recall of information to helping learners value and apply their learning in ways that are integrated into behavior and practice.

From Habit to Character

"In an unpretentious, transparent, conversational manner, Muriel and Duane Elmer both warn and instruct. Traditional, truncated 'talking is teaching' approaches to education are not merely inadequate, they can be spiritually malignant or even lethal. *The Learning Cycle* blends biblical insight, educational theory, and research into an accessible and powerful conceptual framework that has revolutionized my teaching and can do the same for yours."

—Ralph E. Enlow Jr., president of the Association for Biblical Higher Education

"In our training course to help camp leaders create their own Bible study curriculum in Latin America, we discovered very few resources to help people apply Scripture. The Elmers' learning cycle revitalized our 2020 version of both teacher and student editions. Their book provides abundant insights for helping people obey truth, whether found in God's Word or any subject matter. Driven by a passion to close the gap between hearing and doing, the Elmers include practical strategies like asking students to do a *barrier analysis* by asking, 'What obstacles might you encounter if you obey this truth? How can you prepare to overcome them?' Their style of writing engages the reader, intertwining deeply personal experiences with insights from brain research and the social sciences. This book also crosses cultures perfectly."

—Lisa Anderson-Umana, director of leadership development with Christian Camping International, Latin America

"I am very pleased you are holding *The Learning Cycle* by Muriel I. Elmer and Duane H. Elmer in your hands. My guess is you are a teacher, whether in a formal vocational setting, or as a parent, Sunday school teacher, or business leader. You know that the operation of teaching and mentoring is a complex one. How does one person ever hope to communicate with others given the challenges and influences each listener has pressing in on his or her heart and mind, and so conditioned by culture and circumstance? Drs. Muriel and Duane Elmer bring decades of study and experience to help readers of this book learn to be maximally effective in the high and holy craft of teaching. They model these things in their own lives. I know. I've worked with them in the past and have seen firsthand how effectively and empathetically they nurtured their students across a wide range of crosscultural settings. In fact, I have been a beneficiary of their work. I recommend this book to you knowing that they are the 'real deal,' and their book will inspire you to reach your students in an effective way."

—Jerry Root, author of *C. S. Lewis and a Problem of Evil*, professor at Wheaton College

"Duane and Muriel Elmer are extremely gifted at helping ministry leaders grow to their full potential. This resource is practical and truly transformational if you apply what they are suggesting. My own ministry has been forever shaped by their insights. I'm so grateful that they have made this resource available so many more people can benefit from their experience and wisdom."

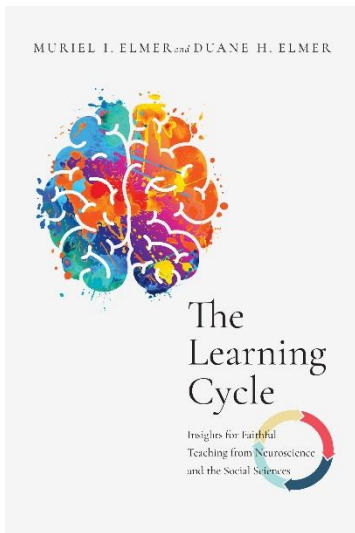
—Mary T. Lederleitner, author of *Women in God's Mission and Cross-Cultural Partnerships*



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“Muriel and Duane Elmer have been trusted wise guides to teachers, shepherds, and leaders around the globe for many years. The love of God and his kingdom fuels their endeavors, including this volume. *The Learning Cycle* is a culmination of their life’s work, sharing the wisdom they have gleaned from years of study, teaching, and service. A must-read for Christian educators.”

—Deborah Colwill, associate professor of educational and leadership studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“*The Learning Cycle* provided the foundational principles for training and motivating twenty-one hundred Rwandese church members and over a thousand short-termers from Saddleback and also undergirded the strategy for change that made their Western Rwanda HIV Initiative so successful.”

—Gil Odendaal, former global director of the HIV/AIDS Initiative at Saddleback Church

“In the recognition of common grace, this book blends current research in social sciences and neuroscience with decades of teaching experience and theological reflection as it seeks to help Christian practitioners understand how to improve their teaching. It will be especially useful for theological educators who tend to have had little exposure to this kind of educational training and wish to develop as reflective practitioners. It was especially encouraging to see the final chapters on the topics of habit and character.”

—Marvin Oxenham, director of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education Academy

“Why is it that the vast majority of what we are taught is soon forgotten? Why is education most often ineffective? Why do we assume that emotions are divorced from cognition? The Elmers make a strong case for teaching that leads to deep learning because it is initially meaningful and continues through the learning cycle toward the full development of the learner. They uniquely make the case for life-changing learning, supported by recent research in neuroscience, the social sciences, Scripture, and their own compelling stories as teachers. My hope is that this book will stimulate a gracious revolution of transformative teaching for thousands of educators.”

—James E. Plueddemann, author of *Teaching Across Cultures*, former director of SIM International

“If you want to critically reflect on how your teaching may lead students toward integrated life learning, the Elmers are here to help. They offer practical research findings and application within this renewed presentation of the Learning Cycle certain to elevate any Christian educator’s craft.”

—Michael A. Ortiz, international director of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, associate professor of intercultural studies at Dallas Theological Seminary



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“The publication of *The Learning Cycle* occurs in the context of challenging times for education and educators. Around the world, some question the value of education; others demand tangible results from educators and their institutions. With this current reality facing education, it is propitious for teachers to consider the nature and purpose of teaching and learning. Should teaching limit its focus to the transfer of information, insights, and knowledge to students, or should it seek to achieve transformed habits of thinking and doing in learners? *The Learning Cycle* by Muriel Elmer and Duane Elmer is a substantive resource for educators wrestling with this question. It is required reading for anyone longing for teaching and learning to produce more than recall of information or mastery of insights.”

—Tite Tiéno, dean emeritus, research professor of theology of mission, and Tite Ténou Chair of Global Theology and World Christianity at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“If you are an educator who cares that learners live out the truth you teach, this book is for you. Whether you teach as a pastor, teach children or adults, in Christian higher education or theological education—anywhere people want to learn—this book shows how your teaching can lead to the goal you so much desire. What sets this book apart are the learning tasks the authors provide at the end of each level of the Learning Cycle, providing a promising pathway to becoming a more skillful teacher.”

—Miriam Charter, retired associate professor of intercultural studies at Ambrose University, former director of PhD in Educational Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“From their vast personal experience as educators to the current science of neurobiology and educational psychology, the Elmers unlock the mystery most teachers face in the classroom—student transformation. Focusing on how learners learn rather than how content is delivered, the Elmers walk the reader through steps assured to foster the renewing of the whole person. This book is a must-read for any serious educator who is committed to students’ holistic transformation.”

—David Sveen, president of the Domanada Foundation

“Duane and Muriel Elmer’s passion for transformative and lifelong learning is prudently interwoven in their version of the Learning Cycle as clearly delineated in this book. It is noteworthy that *The Learning Cycle* includes the affective side of learning, the intentional naming of barriers to learning, and the integration of God’s Word to life, critical stages that are missing in other versions of the Learning Cycle. I was introduced to the framework when I was their student and found it to be very helpful when explaining the how and what of transformative learning. I have used it since in my teaching opportunities, incorporating it in curriculum discussions and in teachers’ professional development workshops both in the theological education and the local church. Every time it is offered, the Learning Cycle brings the ‘aha’ of discovery. My sincere appreciation to Duane and Muriel Elmer for now putting the framework in a book so that more educators can benefit. I highly recommend this book and this valuable educational framework!”

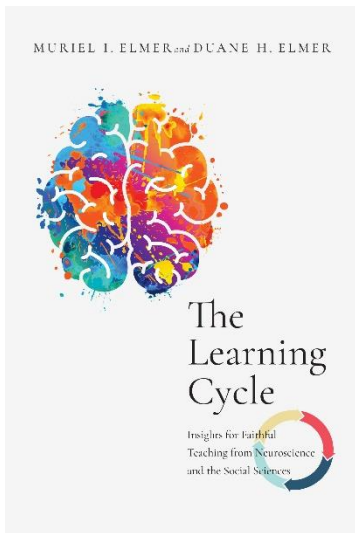
—Joanna Feliciano-Soberano, academic dean at Asian Theological Seminary, Overseas Council regional director for Southeast Asia



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“Muriel and Duane Elmer have combined insights and lessons from their distinguished careers as teachers with some of the most current findings from neuroscience to produce a book that helps the reader become a better educator. They do so in ways that promote better cognitive understanding, changes in behavior, and growth in Christian maturity. Written in a relatable style and incorporating stories from their experience, they explain and illustrate how we can all become more effective in teaching for life change.”

—Evan Hunter, vice president of ScholarLeaders International

“From more than fifty years of shared teaching wisdom and experience, Duane and Muriel Elmer take us inside the Learning Cycle to expand our understanding and expertly unpack its implications for all of us engaged in the educational enterprise. Along the way, they offer tested insights from the social sciences and those freshly available from the exploding field of brain science. This is an *essential* read for novice and experienced educators alike.”

—Dave Conner, director of talent development at Duke University

“*The Learning Cycle* is a marvelous integration of recent medical understanding of how the brain works and what that means for teaching and training. Building on eight decades of teaching, Duane and Muriel Elmer provide this insightful guide in which they wonderfully demonstrate a deep understanding of the craft of teaching and a commitment to continual growth as they practice the craft. This will serve as an excellent tool to use with anyone serving in a teaching or training role—in ministry, business, education, and the like. I am already utilizing insights I gained to improve my own teaching and training, and offer my highest commendation for their work. Two thumbs up!”

—Scott Moreau, academic dean and professor of intercultural studies, Wheaton College Graduate School

“I received this book as I was leaving to teach Majority World pastors and missionaries. My new minilectures with open-ended questions were met with joy! But it wasn't until the groups shared that I realized the level of openness, transparency, and integration of the material taking place. The Holy Spirit was working, and conclusions were reached beyond what I had even suggested. It was worth changing my ways. Thank you, Muriel and Duane, for providing this resource that will help us good teachers and professors become much more effective. The material is engaging, providing the right amount of brain research to convince while showing us how to make the necessary practical changes to accomplish our goal as teachers—transformed students.”

—Ron Kuykendall, St. Andrew's Church, Gainesville, Florida

“Elmer and Elmer are experienced educators who have learned all the steps and approaches that are essential to transformative teaching, and they share them here, clearly and winsomely. *The Learning Cycle* is a terrific resource for any educator who wants to remember that great teaching is always about teaching the whole person, not just an academic subject.”

—Christina Bieber Lake, professor of English at Wheaton College, author of *The Flourishing Teacher*



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