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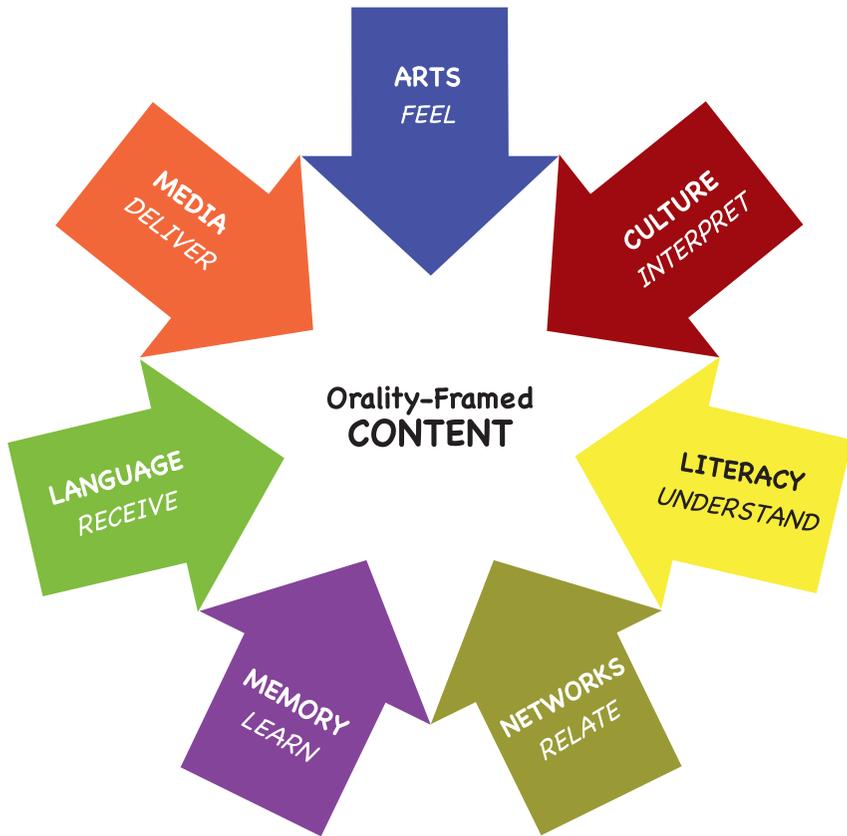
The Word Became Fresh



The Seven Disciplines of Orality

**Madinger • Snead • Gravelle • Moon • Getz
Handley • Logan • Swarr • Koch • Williams • Rye**

SEVEN DISCIPLINES OF ORALITY: A Holistic Model



Courtesy of Dr. Chuck Madinger who leads Global Impact Mission and serves on the International Orality Network's Leadership Team facilitating the Research Task Force.

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Cover Photo

Uniskript can be traced back to 1446 when King Sejong launched the Korean alphabet which triggered a literacy revolution in Korea. In 2002 Korean linguist Dr. Kim Cho shared her doctorate discoveries on the ancient alphabet at the University of the Nations. The basic idea was then further developed by a team of innovators from the University of the Nations. As a result, the letters were redefined and a technique created to generate new alphabets that are both attractive and relevant.

The art—visual and font creation—is all derived from within the culture, thus providing greater opportunities for natural embracement than an alphabet that might be imported from outside of one's culture.

As we watch the development of Uniskript, which had its roots in a phonic system from the mid-1400s, we are reminded just how much the digital era is mimicking and borrowing from the pre-Gutenberg era.

Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.
All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you, Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.
For you are great and do marvelous deeds;
you alone are God.

Psalm 86:8—10 (NIV)

Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh

Orality Journal is the journal of the International Orality Network. It is published online semi-annually and aims to provide a platform for scholarly discourse on the issues of orality, discoveries of innovations in orality, and praxis of effectiveness across multiple domains in society. This online journal is international and interdisciplinary, serving the interests of the orality movement through research articles, documentation, book reviews, and academic news. Occasionally, print editions will be provisioned. Submission of items that could contribute to the furtherance of the orality movement is welcomed.

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Editor's Note

Samuel E. Chiang

More Textual / Digital Possibilities Please

When my family moved to Canada as immigrants, I was in my early teens and I knew only the Roman alphabet and seven English phrases that my grandfather had taught me. On the UNESCO “illiteracy to literacy” continuum, I fitted nicely into the illiterate category as a young immigrant in Canada. On the orality continuum (see Lovejoy 2012), which includes learners from those who are exclusively oral to highly textual/digital, and who by necessity or by choice prefer to learn in an oral manner, I was and still am an oral preference learner.

As an eager immigrant, I sought to learn English with gusto. But the Roman alphabet for the English language seemed arbitrary to me, and spelling of words did not always make logical sense. It was bad enough that I could not exercise intuition in the language acquisition effort, but I was lost because logic could not be readily applied to make words and sentences. I wished there was some way in which I could see the link between sound, symbols, and the writing system, so that I could progress along the UNESCO literacy continuum a little quicker.

Decades later, I believe there is now an in-between system which will move people more quickly into textual and language acquisition. The developers of this innovative system call this Uniskript[®].¹

While working on her doctoral studies in linguistics, Ms. Sek Yen Kim-Cho discovered the applicability of the Korean *Hangeul* alphabet system (see <http://sejong-nurigle.com/>). This system was developed by King Sejong (1397-1450), and put into place in 1446 for the Korean people (see page 3 of http://sejong-nurigle.com/uploads/14_Nurigle_Project_Proposal.pdf). Innovators used the principles of the *Hangeul* system and developed Uniskript.

Uniskript is developed from a set of proto-symbols: a rectangle representing the lips; a triangle representing the tip of the tongue; one to three lines representing how wide the mouth opens for the generation of vowel sounds, and so on. Whereas the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA,

<http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/>) covers all phones (the sounds possible within human language), Uniskript² is fitted to each language as it is developed, only covering the relevant phonemes (sounds possible within a *specific* language).

The difference between the Roman alphabet and Uniskript may be comparable to that of varying symbols used on public restrooms. Consider two washroom doors, the symbol ♂ on one and ♀ on the other. Most people will consider it common knowledge that the first symbol signals male gender and the second signals female gender, but these signs are completely arbitrary and perhaps difficult to remember. In fact, these symbols are created based on a high acquisition of literacy skills. On the other hand, one door with the icon of a man and another door with the icon of a woman in a skirt would be more intuitive (across *most* cultures), because the symbol corresponds directly to what it represents.

Uniskript is not meant to replace any already-existing alphabet; it is simply meant to introduce literacy in a variety of settings.

What Are the Applications of Uniskript, and Where Is It Going?

The innovators are already launching test trials, academic experiments, and scalable study groups to implement Uniskript into different domains. Consider the following.

Reading. Uniskript can be used as an introduction to reading, because it helps people see the correlation between symbol and sound. Uniskript teaches symbols (icons) that correspond to symbols (phones) in a way that makes sense. This process is called *iconophonological* or *icono-feratural*. Uniskript is unique in that a visual translates directly to sound. Furthermore, the art—visual and font creation—is all derived from within the culture, thus providing greater opportunities for natural embracement than an alphabet that might be imported from outside of one’s culture. The implications for oral preference learners are huge, including those who are highly textual/digital.

Children. Children sometimes have difficulty learning to read because the Roman alphabet is arbitrary, providing no intuitive connection between sound and symbol. Uniskript can accelerate the reading process by making

a clear visual representation of how and where sounds are made. Children then understand how an alphabet represents sounds. Can we dream of what might be possible with biblical literacy?

Dyslexia. Current focus group studies and trials in the English language, it is already demonstrating that the deployment of Uniskript as a tool to introduce the concept of an alphabet to a child produces different outcomes. The alphabet avoids any mirror images that might create confusion as to what sound is meant to be produced. More scalable studies are now underway to see how individuals with dyslexia will function better with Uniskript.

Apraxia. Speech therapists handling cases of children apraxia (difficulties in handing motor movements involving facial muscles) and adult apraxia due to trauma are teaching patients how to speak through Uniskript.

Deafness. The advancement of technology is so great that hearing devices implemented into the ears can now help people who are born deaf to “hear”—but how do they pronounce words after years of inactivity in the muscle formation of sounds and words? Uniskript is deployed to help formerly deaf people to recognize facial muscle formation and how sounds can be made and words can form.

Lack of space precludes me from discussing the Uniskript digital input system, and ultimately, the Uniskript contribution to shell books (www.shellbooks.org) through crowd-sourcing.

This fledging system will need to be reviewed by many others (an intensive process which has already begun), and if proven fruitful, will take time to gain acceptance. If this happens, it may present a fresh hope for the 1.6 billion adults who are excluded from the opportunity of reading scripture for themselves.

As I watch the development of Uniskript, which had its roots in a phonic system from the mid-1400s, I am reminded just how much the digital era is mimicking and borrowing from the pre-Gutenberg era.

This issue of the Orality Journal is a special one; not only do we celebrate our one-year anniversary, but also the articles are keyed off from the anchor

piece by Chuck Madinger. He provides both scale and scope of coverage in “A Literate’s Guide to the Oral Galaxy.” Then, we include an aspect of each of the disciplines of orality—culture (Snead), language (Gravelle), literacy (Moon), memory (Getz), networks (Handley), arts (Logan), and media (Swarr, Koch, and the ION Audio Scripture Engagement team). Keith Williams was gracious to provide digital and mobile interests and implications for oral-preference learners. Tara Rye provided reviews on two excellent books that are now being translated into multiple languages.

As promised in the last issue, the labs on adaptive changes are here—in print, it is covered by Joe Handley (covering network and participatory learning in leaders development), and online, the blog (www.oralicity.net/blog) by Jennifer Giezendanner (describing the acceptance process of Bible storying in a cross-cultural organizational environment).

Finally, we are in for a special treat, as each of the writers of the “Seven Disciplines of Orality” are also the presenters at this year’s ION conference. What they have written is also mediated audibly into what they shall say and what we shall hear.

On the Journey Together,

Samuel E. Chiang
From Johannesburg, South Africa

- ¹ The developers of this system have filed patents globally.
- ² A simplified description of the process for developing Uniskript for a language involves a few steps: 1.) First, the phonemes of a language must be determined; if certain phonemes do not exist within a language, there is no need to develop extra symbols for it. 2.) A team is sent to collaborate with indigenous speakers of the language in order to determine how the proto-symbols may be adapted in a way that is relevant to their culture and art—sometimes images and shapes that are significant within a culture may be incorporated into the Uniskript alphabet. This creates a connection between the people and this new alphabet as well as the shape of the symbol and the mouth. 3.) Once symbols are decided on, an artist finalizes them, ensuring their aesthetics. 4.) A font is developed.

Reference

Lovejoy, Grant. 2012. "The Extent of Orality." *Orality Journal* 1(1): 11-39.



A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy

Charles Madinger

Chuck Madinger has spent 27 years in missional vocational ministry and serves universities and seminaries teaching in the US and abroad. He has launched three mission and consulting organizations, helping to reach the Oral Majority with partners in over 20 countries, and is now completing a second doctorate in communication at the University of Kentucky.

A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy | Part 1

Thomas Cahill described a few eras as hinges of history when doors opened that changed the course of the world—like the epic of *The Gifts of the Jews (How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels)* or *When the Irish Saved Civilization*. It's not like the world was transported (beamed over) to a new era. That took some time in the making. What was certain was that no culture would go untouched by these cataclysmic changes. Some eras were more than hinges. They were more like portals from one galaxy to the next, where those drawn through the gateway could never really come back.

Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg (now you know why we know him by last name only) gets credit for opening one of those portals from a world where in the 15th century more than 90% of the people on the planet could not read, and only the wealthy possessed the works

of art we now call books. That portal took us into the Gutenberg Galaxy (McLuhan 1962) and a world defined by textuality. But as Thomas Pettit describes, it was more of a “Gutenberg Parenthesis” or an interruption in the broader arc of human communication. He says that we are now, via the discursive architecture of the web, slowly returning to a state in which orality—conversation, gossip, the ephemeral—defines our media culture (Garber 2010).¹

It led to a world of the Digital Galaxy, and left us with the challenge of sharing a planet where people function in all three dimensions: orality, textuality, and digitality. The digital age was exemplified in Jonah Sachs' *Story Wars* this way: “Ideas today are never fixed: they're owned and modified by everyone. They move through networks at the will of their members and without that activity, they die.”² Curiously, Sachs doesn't see this as a new

phenomenon, but rather a return to the good old days, when stories were passed from one person to the next in the grand oral tradition. “In the broadcast era, access was power. And we developed all these bad habits when distribution was in the hands of a few. But now storytelling matters again” (Barrett 2012), and it’s coming digitally through Facebook to Ning.

Please, hear this article, do not simply read it. The style even betrays my academic fraternity, so don’t look for or take up the word-smithing tendencies that I normally do when reading a journal, because this is not intended to be an academic stake in the ground that once and for all defines orality for the missiological world. It’s not a theological apologetic for the eternal nature of God and our image-bearing dynamic of language producing, culture generating, speaking things into existence that were not before. It’s not a promotion of orality-framed methodologies like Bible storying, audio, or visual recordings. Finally, it’s not a prescriptive for engaging the Holy Spirit in our call to persuade the world to conversion and spiritual formation processes.³

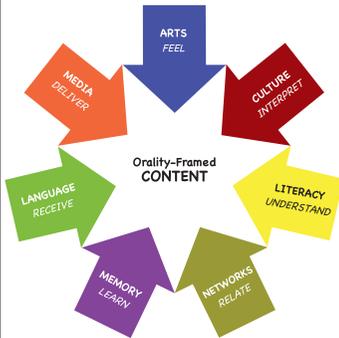
What the next few pages are meant to be is a call for further

thought, reflection, and research. The Holistic Model of Orality (see box on right) is not meant to be a formula or even a formal theory. The disciplines simply describe and relate to true research and the academic disciplines that should *inform and guide the steps* of our missiological strategies and any program or curriculum we hope to use among oral-preference learners as we move through the next portal into the digital age.

For now, let’s take a mental voyage to West Africa to work on a project with seasoned media professionals. Here you are working to produce a major program addressing your key subject matter. The group already understands their task of developing the agreed upon 13 episodes, and begins their conversation around the table.

“OK, let’s get to writing some scripts, and then start revising them together,” says one of the university-educated media specialists. The veteran called in to supervise the project stops them and redirects the process. “No, don’t leave yet. We need to stay at the table together and talk through each episode. Then, you can go write it down.” That’s another process—one driven by orality, not textuality.

Orality is simply the ways and means of communicating orally with either a preference over textuality (print) or to the exclusion of it. In purposes of mission, orality can be defined as “a complex of how oral cultures best receive, process, remember, and replicate (pass on) news, important information, and truths.”



How will our audience interpret the information we need to communicate? Who are they, and what makes them, and us, different? (**Culture**) How will they receive this information as relevant and applicable? What makes the good news good news to this people?

How will they readily receive the information as friendly? (**Language**) Does this sound like us, or is this another outsider?

Will they personally understand the information and terms? (**Literacy**) All too often, we want others to learn and use “our terms” so that “our message” gets traction using our well thought jargon rather than the colloquial terms of the grassroots.

What validates the message spreading it to a larger audience? (**Networks**) When working in primary oral cultures, who passes on information is more important than the information itself. How does that information travel through a village in order for it to be embraced, and how does it best move on to nearby neighbors?

What makes this information stick in the minds of the receivers, and will real learning take place? (**Memory**) The tools of cognitive psychology open passageways to store information or messages when we simply follow those learning paths.

How is the information packaged? (**Arts**) Most people remember a good story; they can chant back musical lyrics and sound bites from fifty years gone by, and turn on a sensation by watching a dance, or feeling the beats of drums can deliver a consistent message repeatedly so that oral learners often are transported into action.

By what method(s) is the message delivered? (**Media**) Nothing replaces the medium of face-to-face communication, but audience context, size, and channels have definite impacts on oral-preference learners and oral tradition cultures. **Mass Media** (large numbers of people massed together) creates a clear channel to send information, but lacks affinity, accountability or continuity for community action. **Collective Media or Meso Media** (seminars, conferences, church, or mosque gatherings) assemble people with greater affinity and some degree of accountability, but usually fall short of collective decision and action. **Micro Media** small face-to-face gatherings of connected people memorize whole sections after three repetitions. When all three forms are used in collaboration (mass, meso, and micro), the probability of transforming knowledge, attitudes, and practices increase dramatically.

These media professionals are no different than your mission organization, Bible school or seminary, or church with oral-preference learners. We have great messages, training, and programs, but we begin by processing in ways and means that make more sense to us than to our target audiences.

The veteran understands something that most of us don't: before composing and writing takes place, language and text are first oral. Jack Goody explains it this way: "The written word does not replace speech, any more than speech replaces gesture" (Goody 1968, 15-16). Walter Ong says, "Oral expression can exist and mostly has existed without any writing at all, writing never existed without orality" (Ong 1982, 8). Writing down our thoughts is important, but what precedes the writing is more important than the writing itself, and that is especially critical when working with oral tradition cultures and oral-preference learners.

What Is Orality—and Why Is It Important?

The dictionary states that orality is a reliance upon spoken, rather than written, language for communication. For our purposes in mission, orality can be defined as "a complex of how

oral cultures best receive, process, remember and replicate (pass on) news, important information, and truths" (Madinger 2010, 204). This explains why two of my heroes in the faith, Ray and Effie Giles, saw only modest growth in their early work in Ethiopia (using somewhat modified literate ways and means) until a young farmer took the gospel message he heard in the Sunday teaching and started singing it out in his field. When he returned to the assembly, the whole congregation sang it with him and learned it so well that other villagers heard the message and believed. Other villages heard the message in its "new song" and believed. A movement was born.

Why the term "orality"? Orality has been around for centuries, and used throughout multiple disciplines of study, but it's unfamiliar to a lot of people. It is similar to how we became accustomed to using the word "cancer", which Hippocrates coined around 400 BC from the Greek word for "crab" to describe ulcerations and growths—carcinomas and carcinoma.⁴ Cancer is a term used across every discipline. Orality enjoys that same broad use across disciplines.

Orality, as a topic of discussion and debate, played on the stage

as early as when Plato argued for moving completely to textuality, and Socrates insisted on the value of what we now call oral literature passed down in songs like those of Homer (e.g., the Iliad, with famous metered lines like, “Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth”). Old and New Testament scholars have long emphasized the oral nature of scripture and its teachings. The Bible as we know it did not even exist for the masses until the last 300 years or so, and the “first churches” passed along the stories and apostolic teaching primarily by orality, not textuality (the “early churches” had used both the oral and written approaches).

As a complex⁵, orality is an orientation of oral-preference learners, not just for oral tradition or non-literate cultures. We can frame that in a number ways:

- Reading literacy, where people range from non-readers/writers to proficient
- Ong’s *primary orality*, where aboriginal peoples still function

with no written language, and *secondary orality*, where electronic text and communication media emerge from reading literacy skills

- In more anthropological terms, as oral tradition cultures juxtaposed to lettered tradition cultures (see Figure 1), as will be discussed in the descriptive discipline of literacy

LETTERED CULTURES		ORAL CULTURES
Literary	COMMUNICATION	Oral
Institutional	LIFESTYLE	Communal
Individualism	TIME AND SPACE	Individualized Groups
Deferred	GRATIFICATION	Immediate
Linear	LIFE PERSPECTIVE	Circular
Individually Oriented	LEARNING PATTERNS	Group Oriented
Word is not the “thing”	LEXICON	Word is the “thing”
Figure 1. Tendencies ⁶ of Oral and Lettered Cultures. Adapted from Parker (1980, 45-48).		

Neither a dialectic nor about literacy vs. orality. We often hear of orality and textuality/literacy pitted as two contradictory concepts that only offer their solution, but neither orality nor literacy should be positioned in that manner. The thing itself, the sounded word that represents it, the technologies that archive it (from pictures to text), and our capacities to record it are part of the whole. Recapturing

orality is not a mandate to abandon or neglect literacy, but simply a description of another piece of the same puzzle. The literacy vs. orality is a biased and unhelpful dialectic when it comes to relating to a broad spectrum of people in oral or even highly textual societies.⁷ In fact, the orality movement explicitly calls for more efforts in teaching people how to read so that they can more clearly interact with the historically revealed word of God. At the same time, we realize that it typically takes 120 years for a primary oral culture to arrive at 30% literacy (Slack 2003). So what do we do in the meantime? And what of the fundamental characteristic of our being made in the image of a God who simply speaks to create things that were not there before? Missiologically, those who promote orality also call for teaching literacy, the need for all believers to be able to connect with the written historical word, and training leaders who can rightly divide it.

Not exhaustive. The disciplines that Ong referred to and I expanded with the Holistic Model by no means represent a static or exclusive taxonomy of characteristics or categories. Others may be even more applicable. Some may not be as relevant as others to a given

field of ministry. We know it is a good starting point, but experts in these and other disciplines must weigh in to help us design better tools and processes for reaching oral-preference learners. We also recognize the highly literate nature of the model, but view it on the same continuum from primary orality to high textuality, and it helps us conceptualize, plan, and act.

A frame to inform our strategies and instruction. The descriptive disciplines noted in Part 2 of this article and the related research disciplines intended to help teachers and practitioners fit their message and ministries to the oral-preference learners among whom they work. To the degree which we are willing to allow those disciplines to shape the message, program, or curriculum at hand is that which we allow our target audience to receive, process, remember, and pass on that message. Not only is this biblically and theoretically grounded, but I know from experience. We field tested it with three million people in Afghanistan, 750,000 in Sudan, over one million in East Africa, and another one million in Nigeria.

The problem is that we lived immersed in the literate/Gutenberg Galaxy for so long that we lost

our ability to *intentionally relate* to the Oral Galaxy that first defined us. Now we must move back in time in order to move forward into that next galactic experience of digital realities. Our unconscious textuality bias so dominates our missiological and pedagogical theory and practice that it suffocates any breath of air that our oral tradition partners and oral-preference learners might take on their own. We eliminated icons from the Eastern Church, physical gestures from the Latin Church, rhythm and drumming from African cultures, and the ties to our ancestors from our Asian brothers and sisters.

Why Is Orality Significant?

At least 80% of the world cannot or will not hear and understand our message when we communicate in literate ways and means. These people function as *oral-preference learners*. We can frame that in terms of reading literacy, Ong's primary orality and secondary orality categories, or in more anthropological terms as oral tradition cultures juxtaposed to lettered tradition cultures (Parker 1980, 3).

In light of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals promoting literacy, 80% sounds

high, but consider the massive growth of urban slums, where we find the lack of education among parents, young children, and orphans, and the decreased value of reading and writing. Canada alone will see a 25% decrease in reading skills by the year 2031.⁸ That goes along with the findings of James Slack (2003), who said that 20 million people are added to the ranks of the functionally non-literate every year, so that by the year 2050 there will be more functionally non-literate *people* than there are people living today.

This ranges from groups like the Kambari of northern Nigeria, who in one village surveyed only five people out of 200 (2.5%) who had any literacy skills at all. Or take Saudika, an Afghan who now lives in my hometown working in an Italian restaurant. She is the daughter of a wealthy merchant who educated her in English as much as possible during the era of Taliban dominance, and who before escaping to the U.S. through Pakistan had already born two young daughters. Once settled in her new home, her younger daughter developed an ear infection that required medical attention. When the doctor prescribed the antibiotic drops, she heard the pharmacist's directions, but the

dosage said “one *dropper*, three times per day.” She put one *drop* in the ears three times a day, resulting in total deafness from lack of treatment. She is not illiterate. She simply did not understand what she read, and the consequences will last a lifetime and beyond.

Now translate that to our sharing the good news. When our audience cannot receive and process the message the way we do as literate thinkers, they grow deaf to the message. We have the prescription, but it is not followed for lack of appropriate directions. *What is at stake?* We teach in our Bible schools and seminaries exclusively from our Textual Galaxy with residents of the Oral Galaxy, and our students model our text preferences and fail to connect with their own people.

We use evangelistic and discipleship methods designed for text-oriented learners, with Western worldviews, and we make converts who rarely find transformation in their own worlds. Those are negative realities, but now translate them into positives. Training Oral Galaxy residents using the principles and methods from their part of the universe while introducing them to the Textual Galaxy is seed planted in good soil. It yields a crop 100 times over.

They don’t hear or understand our message when we communicate with literate ways and means.

“Ways and means” often carries the meaning of the resources and methods of working especially with budgets. The ways of collecting revenue, and the means of distributing it. When we use those terms in communication, we are saying that there are *resources* (ways) we have of packaging our message, and *methods* (means) of delivering them.

Our *resources* (ways) for our programs come in the content we develop to reach people with the good news or help them grow in it. That content must connect with the real needs of the audience and how scripture applies to those needs from their perspective. The seven descriptive disciplines of orality (see Part 2 of this article) lead us to better *package* that message (*ways*) with cultural sensitivities (*culture*), put it in terms the audience can relate to and understand (*language* and *literacy*), use mnemonic tools to make sure the truth sticks (*memory*). We *deliver* the message (*means*) through locally-practiced *arts*, by *networks* of trusted relationships, and *media* forms that reach as far as we can and as deeply as possible.

A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy | Part 2

We argue in this journal that the degree to which we frame our message for oral-preference learners and oral tradition cultures is the degree we allow that audience to receive and process the information for the Holy Spirit to bring deeper understanding and conviction. This is the foundation of the descriptive disciplines that follow. The more our audience understands, the more scripture does his work. As Professor Russell West of Asbury Theological Seminary explains,

God could have used mathematics to communicate his message to the world, and many of us would get it. The rest of us would simply have to say, "I guess that's just not for me." People might come to the faith because they feel the love of those converted through math, and they might even begin to understand some of it on an elementary level.

But, God did not use math symbols and equations. He used language symbols and utterances. He spoke through the prophets and his son (Heb. 1:1-3). Before he wrote the commandments in stone, he spoke in Hebrew to a prophet from the tribe of Levi.

The Complex of Descriptive Disciplines of Orality

The intent of this model is for academicians and practitioners to meet on common ground that may not precisely describe either side of the coin. Take the categories and seed thoughts from Appendix 1, and begin examining your ministry, programs, and instruction. Appendix 2 provides some definition and examples of theories. Let me take some time to explain the categories in Appendix 1.

Descriptive Disciplines (informative) aid us in defining the guiding principles of orality in practice by informing, describing, and helping us conceptualize orality. They are built on relationships with other disciplines in more general terms that help us get our mind around something very complex, yet very simple.

Research Disciplines (normative) give us the theoretical foundations and rules of engagement when it comes to the field of study. There are usually several research disciplines within each descriptive. Here is where we are woefully negligent in our field work of mission. For decades, SIL/Wycliffe and others have spoken into the issues of language and literacy.

Christian anthropologists and some theologians attempted to guide us through the landmines of contextualization and analyzing social networks before beginning our work. The arts and media ministries touch hearts by the millions, but we relegate them as an “add-on” to our grand curricula or programs. People who know education try to help us understand the ways people learn and how to create healthy learning environments, and we somehow dismiss that as not allowing the Holy Spirit to take our content and do something miraculous.

The point here is that as we integrate the disciplines of orality, we will design, implement, and practice better mission strategies among oral-preference learners and oral tradition cultures.

Issues are the cascade of questions that must be answered if we are to reach oral-preference learners. Each research discipline would look like an *information tree* informing us of a series of questions that lead to a series of questions that lead to questions until we are satisfied our message or program completely connects with our audience as best we can. Orality is the trunk, and the seven descriptive disciplines are the limbs informed by the branches of research disciplines with multiple factors represented by twigs that ultimately bear fruit.

Use media as a limb from the field of communication. The research disciplines branches within media could include mass, meso, and micro-mediated applications. Let’s say we want to micro-cast a specific message to a group with high affinity and high accountability, so we begin in that part of the information tree with questions like:

- What groups of five to ten people already naturally gather to share information or entertainment?
- Do we want to form new groups that also share a lot in common and are accountable to one another living among our target audience? Of those groups, who needs our message?
- Are there clear leaders of those groups (may well be unstructured and unofficial, but others look to for direction)? How often do they meet? Where do they meet? Do we know a gatekeeper in the group?
- How do we deliver the message and with what small media technology (cassette, DVD, VDC, MP3, MP4, community radio, etc.)? Who owns the technology? Who is responsible for the technology?
- How do we close the information loop so that we can evaluate the program?

Biblical Examples reinforce our efforts and give precedence for producing strategies and instruction with a view to how God designed us and the principles behind the methods rather than the example itself. If we hope to embed something in the memory of our group or movement, look to the example of God telling Moses, “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites so that it may be a witness for me against them” (Deut. 31:19). Later, we see a story that permeates the whole culture as with Saul and David:

The women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands...
(1 Sam. 18:6-7)

A succession movement had begun.

Theoretical Grounding lies behind all scripture and every good practice. The key is not necessarily reproducing practices (development projects, Bible story sets, schools, community health evangelism plans, etc.), but knowing more of why they succeeded.

Following through with our example of the Song of Moses and Miriam, God knew that he could tell the people, “You need to be faithful, or you’ll face dire consequences.” But in a song we bypass logical, straightforward arguments and go right to the heart of things. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Cacioppo, Feng, Petty, Rodriguez, 1986) of psychology reinforces that and helps find creative ways of engaging a message to avoid distractive thoughts. We process messages either through a direct processing route or the peripheral route. Direct route processing calls for an argument. Peripheral route processing goes around the argumentation to a deeper place in the heart for association. It can be used or abused so that people don’t think. They act, then think about it later and longer.

Developing more effective training and memorable learning experiences are also aided by the *Social Cognitive Theory* (formerly social learning theory of Albert Bandura) that guides us into developing ministry where people learn from and with the experiences of others. Participatory communication theories show how to get people in the grassroots to define the key issues they face, how to address them, and how to decide on their own solutions.

We need the insights of Lev Vygotsky's and his *Zone of Proximal Development*, which shows how people learn when one who has less experience looks to one who has more, or Jerome Bruner's *Scaffolding Theory* (Wood, Bruner, and Ross 1976, 90), which helps us take people from where they are in their understanding, attitudes, and behaviors to move them to the next level. The point is that grounding theories keep us focused on the essentials of how God put us together, and our missional community needs outside voices speaking into our processes and strategies if we are to get better at our work.

Applying Orality to Work in the Field or Classroom: An Example

Through the degree to which we allow these seven descriptive (and other research) disciplines to inform and guide our strategies and instruction, we will find greater impact. We need to act as if we had a 7-person design team representing each discipline that would help our planning processes. The more questions they ask that guide us with good counsel, the better we'll connect with our oral-preference learners. Many of us spent anywhere from four to 12 years or more in formal higher education seeking others to train us for ministry and mission. Do

we now really believe we have all the answers? Ask more people with experience, get more answers to the right questions, and give your audience a better chance to really hear and understand your message.

Let's go back to our West African planning session of media specialists, and practice with those living in an Oral Galaxy. We're going to frame an entire program for an oral-preference learner audience of widows trying to learn entrepreneurial skills. We begin the storyboard for each episode, charting it on the whiteboard with a decision tree.

For the culture, we select the Hausa tribe and examples from some female heroes of the faith in Kaduna State, among the sub-tribe of the Nikyop ("Let's reason together"), and is one of the dialects heard in the closest major town of Kafanchan, "Kafa uku" (meaning, Three Legs). The network relationship we'll go through is with Hosea-David, the district head, living in the village of Ambam, along with the elders of that particular village.

We'll be using testimonies of successful regionally-recognized Christian business women, and capturing some of their messages in song. The women of the village will

learn and perform these together. Mnemonically, we'll add motions to the songs to aid the women in remembering the words about running a business by biblical principles and accurately passing them on to the next village.

To keep the biblically-grounded message consistent and to ensure they answer application questions we raise about the messages, we'll be using a small media player with internal memory for the recorded Bible translation in their heart language and an SD Card for the modular sessions on how to start and grow a micro-enterprise. The end goal is to ensure the widows have long-term income and renewed status in the community, and that they will learn the program well enough to take it to a nearby village with many Muslim women to start the program there. The small listening groups with Bible-centered messages may begin a whole church-planting movement.

Conclusion

For too long, we've lived in the Textuality Galaxy with little regard for the "deeper magic"⁹ at work among us in orality. It existed before the universe, and will go with us into eternity (Rev. 7:9-10; 15:3ff).¹⁰ Again, this message is not a call away from literacy, but a call to embrace

the totality of who we are as oral creatures, especially as we reach out to oral audiences. Having lived with textuality for so long, relearning our orality roots may take some intentional efforts. You'll go through that same learning curve from mechanical, to awkward, to novice, and eventually to unconsciously integrating orality with expertise.

This is a call for remembrance, reflection, research, and response. Some of us remember the days before the Sputnik, the Russian space program that put the first person in space, the Apollo program that took us to the moon and bred microwaves, Velcro, shrinking computer technologies, and new languages of the emerging Digital Galaxy. We were out of this world focused on new galaxies, but most of the next generations will never go there or even think in digital terms. They still live in the Oral Galaxy, with primary orality or oral tradition cultural values and practices.

Reflect on it. Living in the Oral Galaxy is not a bad thing, it's just a reality. Others moving into the Digital Galaxy do not remember what the world was like back then, but by a combination of creation design and the end of modernity, set out into the new galaxy with

a preference for oral and visual packaging (ways and means) of their information and learning.

How do we capture the best of how God made us as oral communicators and bring it with us in the new world? How do we connect with those who may never launch out to the new galaxy since they have to leave previous ways and means of learning and communication preferences behind?

Research! Don't just talk about, and don't just give your self-evaluated anecdotal evaluations and reports. We desperately need biblical scholars to drive the theological pilings in the ground, strengthening the foundation. We need experts from each of the research disciplines to inform and correct our novice notions of what they are spending their careers practicing. We need mission organizations and churches brave enough to put their work under the research microscope and do some pure qualitative and quantitative investigational labor. We must have collaboration and cooperation among schools, seminaries, funding partners, and the mission force to do any of this well. Who is training the new cadre of workers who eat, breathe, and think in digital terms? Who

trains leaders to connect with the grassroots in a purely orality-framed perspective, and not just methodologically giving them bible story sets to implement and diffuse.

Respond. Make some concrete plans, and let us know through the International Orality Network what your plans are for present and future work.¹¹ Get to International Orality Network-type events, read (yes read—you live in the Digital Galaxy), and publish new examples of how people practice orality—what principles seem to make it click in that context, and what might be generalized from those experiences. We need seminaries and Bible schools who will rethink their curricula and accreditation to find ways of training oral-tradition-background students beyond the constraints of textuality so that they can actually relate what they learned back home in an orality context.

The hinge is swinging. As you enter, how will you keep connected with the Oral Majority? What will you do differently to adapt to the new Digital Galaxy? What will you do to take the best of that new world to those who cannot get there yet?

Appendix A

Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
CULTURE	Cultural Anthropology	How do we make sense of this for our world?	Acts 14: healing at Lystra Acts 15: beyond Judaism	Performance Theory
	Theology	The nature of God as one who speaks, and that image of God in humanity.	Colossians 1:9-23	
LANGUAGE	Socio-Linguistics	How does our society shape the way we use our language?	John 19:26-27: "Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'" Regional proverb spoken with meaning	Speech Act Theory
	Applied Linguistics	Factors of language learning. How does a language move to scripted technology? Discourse Analysis	Acts 17:16-34: Athens	Direct Method (For Language Learning)
	Semiotics	The use of symbols, signs, metaphors, etc. The meaning of words in their context	The Lord's Supper and baptism John 6:41: "I am the bread that came down from heaven."	Triadic Signs Model of Text Comprehension
	Lexicography	Mental Dictionary: "What does that word really mean for this people?"	John 1: THEOS	Modern Theory of Lexicographic

Appendix A Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
LITERACY	Language Arts	What is the value of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing among this people?	Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it.”	Socio-cultural Model
	Education/ Literacy	How do we contextualize and understand what we read/hear?	2 Peter 3:15-16: “...He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.”	Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky) Interactive Theory
MEMORY	Cognitive Psychology	How the brain receives, stores, and retrieves information	Deuteronomy 31:19: “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites so that it may be a witness for me against them.”	Elaboration Likelihood Model
	Educational Psychology & Behavioral Psychology	How we learn and respond in the most productive learning environment?	Acts 10: Why did Cornelius and his household needed to hear and respond collectively? Matthew 13:3: “He told them many things in parables”	Social Learning Theory Participatory Learning

Appendix A

Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
NETWORK	Sociology	How people function together	Mark 2:13-17: Jesus calls Levi, who then brings him to a gathering of his friends.	Socio-Ecological Model for Behavior Change Participatory Communication
	Network Analysis	The ties of social relationships		
ARTS	Performing Arts			
	Ethnomusicology	How does a culture embed its values in music?	Exodus 15:19-21: "Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.'"	Rice: Three Dimensions of Ethnomusicology
	Vocal Instrumental	How do we express ourselves emotively?	Psalm 150	Evolution of Music
	Dance	How do I "become" the message?	Jeremiah 31:13: "Then will their maidens dance and be glad." 2 Samuel 6:14: "David danced before the Lord with all his might."	Performance of Unity
	Narrative, Proverbs, Parables, Folktales, etc.	How do we relate truths in forms connected with life experiences?	Acts 7:1-50: Stephen's "Story of Our Fathers"	Acts 7:1-50: Stephen's "Story of Our Fathers"

Appendix A Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
ARTS	Visual & Graphic Arts			
	Sculpting	What can we make to represent the truth we know and cannot see?	Exodus 35:30: “Then Moses said to the Israelites, ‘See the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Jur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze. To cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship.’”	Religious Aesthetics
	Architecture	How might our buildings reflect our culture and values?	1 Chronicles 28:11: “Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement.”	Art and Worship
	Photography/ Digital Design	How do we preserve the images of our culture?	Revelation 1:11-12: “Write on the scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches.” . . . “I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me.”	Christian Contemplative Practice
	Painting			Moral Foundations of Aesthetic Judgments

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Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
ARTS	Decorative Arts			
	Jewelry		Exodus 39:8: “They fashioned the breast piece – the work of a skilled craftsman.”	Form and Function
	Clothing/ Fashion	How do we express our identity through what we wear?	Exodus 39:1: “From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary. They also made sacred garments for Aaron, as the Lord commanded Moses.”	Fashion Code Theory
	Martial Arts	How can we use body movement to reinforce knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors?	By design	Brain based learning theory
MEDIA	Communication			
	Mass Media	Reaching large numbers of people with a message	Sermon on the Mount. “You have heard it said....but I tell you. . .” Joshua 8:34: “There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and the children, and the aliens who lived among them.”	Agenda Setting Message Framing

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Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
MEDIA	Meso-Media	Reaching a middle-sized group with a message	Matthew 4:21: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues. . .”	Interaction Process Analysis
	Micro-Media	Reaching a small group with a focused message	Matthew 16:13: “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’”	Participatory Communication

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Agenda Setting	We have the ability to affect how people think about a topic, help organize it, and tell others what to think about. What are the important issues to talk about? Through repeated exposure to a message (priming), the public agrees with that agenda (public agenda), which may then lead to setting a policy agenda and ultimately cultural change. www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLqOIeS6gX8
Brain-based Learning Theory	Orchestrated immersion, i.e., creating learning environments that fully immerse students in an educational experience. Relaxed alertness, i.e., trying to eliminate fear in learners, while maintaining a highly challenging environment. Active processing, i.e., allowing the learner to consolidate and internalize information by actively processing it. www.funderstanding.com/brain/brain-based-learning/#sthash.D0JsA8Ry.dpuf and www.ascd.org/publications/books/104013/chapters/movement-and-learning.aspx
Direct Method	Language is best learned by directly listening to and engaging in conversation versus learning grammar and vocabulary in rote exercise (Brown 1987). www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvtR0WI4ukc
Elaboration Likelihood Model	Persuasion can change or form attitudes via one of two routes: the Central Route (high elaboration) processes arguments with careful scrutiny, while the Peripheral Route (low elaboration) relies on credibility of the message and its presentation, as well as internal connection with it (Petty and Cacciopo 1986). changingminds.org/explanations/theories/elaboration_likelihoold.htm
Evolution of Music	While much of this field is Darwinian, it does speak to the place of music in cultures through the ages. "Today, music still serves the function of demarcating personal and group space, creating social cohesion, arousing to action and just pure enjoyment. Because of its ability to reawaken and allow us to re-experience primeval survival emotions, music is also cathartic and therapeutic" (Levman 2000). evolution of modern music; Greece to Renaissance ; A digitoralist commentary
Formative Processes in Music	How people historically construct, socially maintain, and individually create music through analytic procedures (Rice 1987). www.eltingo.org/images/Theories%20of%20Ethnomusicology.pdf
Model of Text Comprehension	We create representations in our mind of new words (vocabulary) that relate to our own experiences. People who have a preconceived notion and need for that item better remember the word (Kintsch 1998). psycnet.apa.org/?fa=main.doiLanding&doi=10.1037/0033-295X.95.2.163

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Fashion Code	Davis concludes that it is better to consider fashion as a code and not as a language, but a code that includes expression of such fundamental aspects of an individual as age, sex, status, occupation, and interest in fashion (Davis 1992). angelasancartier.net/theories-of-fashion
Interaction Process Analysis	Here, we analyze the contributions of group members in four general categories: (1) social emotional positive contributions, (2) social emotional negative contributions, (3) attempted answers, and (4) questions. By analyzing each group member, we can determine how to better engage each person relationally or move toward a collective task.
Message Framing	This relates to Agenda Setting and how we structure and organize a message so that it gives cues about how to understand the content about any issue. We can show either flattering or complementary pictures of someone or something, our choice of language, or even tone of voice used to frame how others perceive them. www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPqA07apDsk
Form and Function	The form and function of jewelry in most cultures with long history helps identify not only the affiliation, but status role in the community. But for more than adornment, jewelry is wealth to be displayed or bartered. www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-jewelry.html#sthash.Dmd6UKqJ.dpbs
Generative Music Theory	There rules (a grammar) for generating music that include: (1) grouping structure, i.e., any contiguous sequence of pitch events, drum beats, or the like can constitute a group; (2) metrical structure, i.e., “Every beat at a given level must also be a beat at all smaller levels present at that point in that piece”; (3) the smallest level of beat defines the time span; and (4) there is a single event in the underlying grouping structure. electro-music.com/forum/phpbb-files/replygenerativetheorytonalmusic_156.pdf
Modern Theory of Lexicology	Dictionaries (even mental dictionaries) are utility products for collective understanding (Bergenholtz and Tarp 2003). The concept of dictionary usage, 130.241.35.204/ojs/index.php/njes/article/viewFile/231/228
Moral Foundations	Addressing the question of why the pursuit of truth is no longer acceptable in academic circles even though it has been intrinsic to the purpose of art at most times and in most cultures. Without the pursuit of truth, of some degree of knowledge of what is true and good, the humanities necessarily lack intellectual and cultural grounding and purpose (Pontynen 2006).

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Oral-preference Learners	These are people who “can’t, don’t, or won’t” read to receive information and truth. They may live in a literate culture, but cannot read. They may be literate, but will not read since they prefer electronic media sources with high use of audio and visual presentation. www.mnnonline.org/article/16415
Oral Tradition Cultures	Cultures from Appalachia and Native Americans to the Australian Aborigines that value oral forms of communication and information archiving over literate. Their use of narrative, proverbs, song, genealogy, visual art, etc. with collective memory and processing are highly relational even as textuality spreads to and permeates their societies. fds.oup.com/www.oup.co.uk/pdf/0-19-925778-7.pdf
Participatory Communication	Participatory communication engages the people we hope to help at a level where they aid in defining the issues and participate in the decisions for solutions. It differs from “diffusion type communication,” where we take our message to other, and get them to agree to our definition of the problems and embrace the solutions we provide. Transformation is much more likely when communication comes from the bottom up rather than top down. web.idrc.ca/openebooks/066-7/
Performance Theory	In an oral tradition we need to look at the non-literal meaning of the words as they are spoken or “performed”, and see the communication performance as an event rather than simply a technology (Bauman 1974). www.faculty.de.gcsu.edu/~mmagouli/performance.htm
Performance of Unity	The performance of art forms (in this case, dance) help define the collective identity of a cultural group (Mendoza 2000). books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=z_TsK7LKCi0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=Performance+of+unity:+dance&ots=cPfbL8XPFH&sig=wN254ri5jO_TuJ5KnSEoCtYAKOc#v=onepage&q=Performance%20of%20unity%3A%20dance&f=False
Social Cognitive Theory	Individuals learn from watching other people in action. Implications of this theory come into play when we reach people that others watch for an example. Cornelius was well respected, and his family followed what they saw in him (Bandura 1977). www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMBlwjEoyj4
Social Ecological Theory	In order to understand human development, the entire ecological system in which growth occurs needs to be taken into account from the person outward to those closest, to the community, to the culture, and the society (Bronfenbrenner 1977). www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html

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Sociocultural Model	Reading and writing as we learn language in a literate culture is an autonomous activity that produces cognitive skills. In an oral culture we learn in social environments dependent upon one another, and we produce social achievement (Goody 1984).
Speech Act Theory	When you state / say / utter something, the act of speaking those particular words within your culture makes a declaration. Jesus makes an utterance act: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” With your shared understanding of his words, he is now making a propositional act (he is sending you). The message is an “illocutionary act,” because it makes you interpret the offer as an invitation. If you accept and affirm this statement (even non-verbally), he completed a successful “perlocutionary act” by your acceptance. Here is where knowing culture is essential (Littlejohn and Foss 2011). https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/all-about-linguistics/branches/pragmatics/example-research-speech-act-theory
Textuality	The quality or use of language characteristic of written works as opposed to spoken usage (Oxford Dictionary). More so, it includes the very transition from hearing a word to recording it (Dressler 1986). Seven Standards of Textuality
Transportation Theory	The theory suggests that enjoyment can benefit from the experience of being immersed in a narrative world, as well as from the consequences of that immersion. Consequences implied by transportation theory include connections with characters and self-transformations (Green, Brock, and Kaufman 2006). onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00317.x/abstract
Triadic Symbols	A sign, an object, and a meaning—all three elements form a triangle of meaning. The sign represents the object, or referent, in the mind of an interpreter. A cross, the word itself (sign)—the word is not the actual cross, it merely symbolizes one (the object) that has a meaning of execution to the first-century Jew (Parmentier 1985).
Zone of Proximal Development	In order for learning to happen through social connect with three concentric circles, we begin with the learner and what he or she can do on his or her own without help. We have a learning goal of what he or she cannot yet do (outer circle). The middle circle represents what he or she can do with assistance and some direction (Vygotsky 1978). www.youtube.com/watch?v=rX8lRh1u5iE

ⁱReferences in this appendix are listed in the full reference list at the end of Madinger’s main article.

¹See Megan Garber in the web article, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2010/04/the-gutenberg-parenthesis-thomas-pettitt-on-parallels-between-the-pre-print-era-and-our-own-internet-age/>

²We need to constantly revisit this term and concept, and publish more research and practices that navigate this new course. See especially the Editor's Note from the first and second issues of the *Orality Journal*.

³For more on these topics, read some of the experiences of Jim Slack, Rich Brown, Wayne Dye, Avery Willis, Mark Snowden, Grant Lovejoy, and the new pioneers of this renaissance (bibleandmission.redcliffe.org/resources/bible-and-orality/).

⁴See example, www.bordet.be/en/presentation/history/cancer_e/cancer1.htm

⁵Think of a school campus, corporate office buildings, or industrial areas. Every building houses some type of specialized function, but they collectively produce something much bigger. As a complex, the disciplines of orality do just that.

⁶These are not *typologies*, but *tendencies* and *preferences* that can be culturally learned but affect cognitive development.

⁷James Gee (1986, 719) points out that rather than thinking in previous dichotomies of oral/literate, literate/non-literate, civilized/primitive, and restricted literacy/full literacy, we see literacy as necessarily plural. There are different kinds of literacy.

⁸<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/ccl/Reports/ReadingFuture/LiteracyLevels.html>

⁹Used in the sense of C.S. Lewis with reference to the plan set in motion before time began for Aslan to sacrifice himself and take on the guilt of one condemned. Similarly, God gave us a power to connect at a much deeper level that could lead to transformation of those redeemed.

¹⁰<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtRmWb1YhQE>

¹¹Please do contact us at c.madinger@gmail.com (research task force) or www.oralcity.net/contactus

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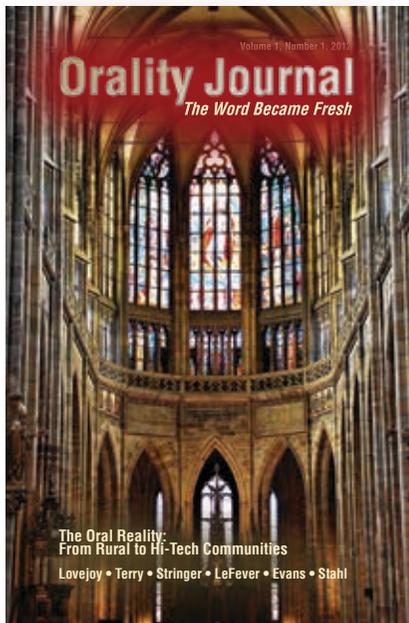
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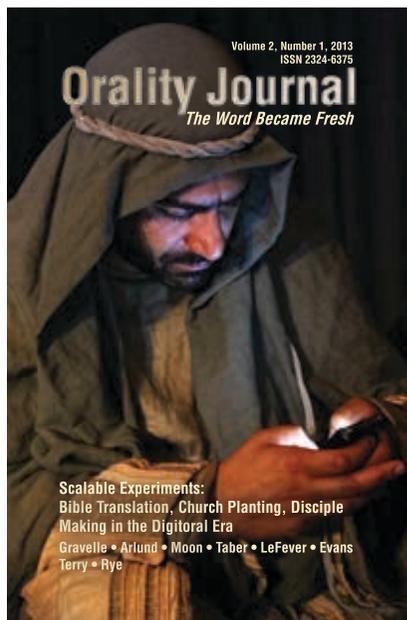
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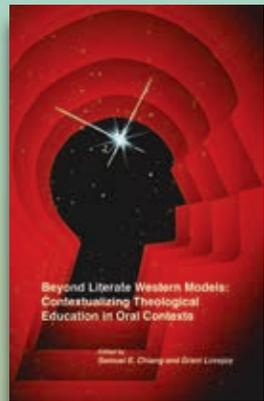
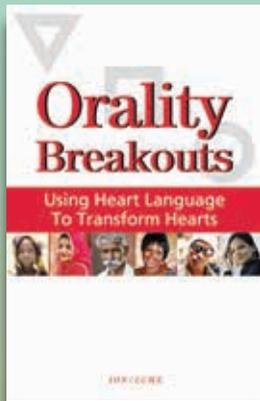
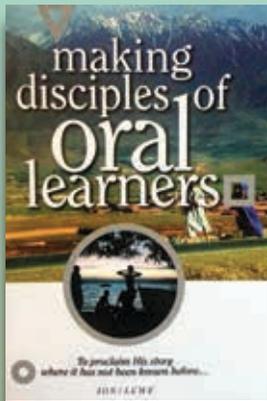


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