

# PREACHING AS CRAFT: TEACHING IMPLICATIONS OF CRAFT PEDAGOGY

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A couple years after my first children were born, I was commissioned (by them) to make two pieces of play kitchen furniture: an oven and a sink. I had never done any “cabinetmaking” before, but my brother and uncle are professional cabinetmakers. So I naturally said yes. Armed with my brother’s advice and plans from the internet, I undertook the commission, allowing a full month to cut and screw these miniature pieces together. Thus began what has developed into a hobby, passing quiet hours in a shop crafting small pieces of furniture for family and friends. A cabinetmaker’s trade – like a boatwright or a blacksmith – is a historically recognized craft, with a body of knowledge and skills, traditional materials and forms, and a set of tools and practices. Before modern production methods turned crafting into manufacturing, craftspeople were the makers of our decorative world. Even though few objects we buy today would be considered “crafted,” modern/postmodern people have taken up these ancient crafts as hobbies, and practice them—I believe—as small rebellions against a manufactured and easily disposable world.

Somewhere in the course of learning this cabinetmaking craft – and, mind you, in a very hobby-esque, garage-work sort-of-way – I began wonder if preaching is a craft like cabinetmaking is a craft? Preaching is often thought of and described as a craft, not least in the titles of books: *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators* by Haddon Robinson and Craig Larson, *Craddock on the Craft of Preaching* by Fred Craddock, *Preaching: The Art and Craft* by Walter Burghart; and *Broken Words: Reflections on the Craft of Preaching* by Paul Scott Wilson are just a few of the more recent and popular selections. The immensely popular website, [www.workingpreacher.org](http://www.workingpreacher.org), stores its weekly columns and letters to working preachers under the heading, “Craft of Preaching.” And when we homiletics and teachers of preaching speak of the process of creating a sermon, we often describe it as “crafting” a sermon. In a sense, the performative arts – like preaching and theater, a field which also uses the word craft with frequency – are borrowing this word from the decorative arts. Craft, in its common sense, refers to products or artifacts that are made with manual skill, such as glass, clothing, jewelry, or even beer. Yet those of us who engage in performative arts, even with its inescapable evanescence, also understand what we do as craft. Though it lacks the durability and materiality of other crafts, it is done with the physical skill of craftwork.

Indeed, the contentions of this paper are that 1) preaching is truthfully a craft; 2) an understanding of craft knowledge illumines the nature of preaching; 3) a vision of excellent proclamation is essential to learning the craft of preaching; 4) and modeling is an appropriate means of teaching preaching. To briefly develop these contentions, I will draw lines of

connection between craft and preaching, craft pedagogy and preaching, and craft teaching practices and the teaching of preaching. My purpose is to take seriously our description of preaching and look at preaching and the teaching of preaching from the perspective of a craft.

## Preaching and Craft

Is preaching a craft, and if so in what sense? The first step in answering this question is to come to a clear sense of the definition of craft, and this is not as easy as one might assume. Definitions of craft are often layered over with romantic nostalgia for a “simpler time” or “simpler ways,” and those definitions rarely hold up to scrutiny. The most famous example of such a fuzzy understanding is probably the Arts and Crafts movement of the early twentieth century, which produced outstanding examples of decorative art, but whose theorists (like John Ruskin) did not understand the process of making things and grossly denigrated the extraordinary craftspeople of the late-Victorian period. The one theorist who has brought the clearest thinking to the definition of craft, some say even rescuing the concept, was David Pye, who died in 1993, and for many years was professor of furniture design at the Royal College of Art in London. In the foreword to Pye’s 1968 book *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, the editor and woodworker John Kelsey writes, “Though first published in 1968, Pye’s analysis of workmanship remains the only useful framework we have. The reason is that Pye, unlike most other intellectuals who write about art, design, and craft, was himself a maker of things . . . Thus he not only had his hands immersed in the issues, he was able to formulate a set of definitions and truths that have eluded other intellectuals.”<sup>1</sup>

In the *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, Pye’s fundamental concept is “workmanship,” and he writes that, “workmanship of the better sort is called, in an honorific way, craftsmanship.”<sup>2</sup> He goes on to provide what has become his seminal definition:

If I must ascribe a meaning to the word craftsmanship, I shall say as a first approximation that it means simply workmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not pre-determined, but depends on the judgment, dexterity, and care which the maker exercises as he [or she] works. The essential idea is that the quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making; and so I shall call this workmanship ‘The workmanship of risk’: an uncouth phrase, but at least descriptive.<sup>3</sup>

The workmanship of risk is contrasted with the workmanship of certainty, in which the result is predetermined before any work is undertaken. This is the kind of work that exists in the quantity production of a modern factory. By virtue of this definition, Pye has avoided typical and problematic definitions of craftsmanship such as “made by hand” or “of higher quality.” Instead, the essential mark of craftsmanship is the risk inherent in the

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<sup>1</sup> David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (London: Herbert Press, 1995), 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

process of making: the end result is dependent on the “judgment, dexterity, and care” of the maker.

By this definition, preaching is clearly a craft. The sermon – not only the artifact of the manuscript or outline, but also the performance in the sermonic moment – is not in predetermined or guaranteed in any way. It is made and crafted by the workmanship of risk through and through, from the first exegesis of the text to the concluding words of the sermonic performance. The “judgment, dexterity, and care” of the preacher is essential at every step. The only thing I can think of approaching the workmanship of certainty in preaching are those churches who use video sermons, or perhaps preachers who purchase and preach the manuscripts of other “great preachers.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, understanding these two practices – both of which are perhaps more troubling for the homileitian than the average listener – in this light brings new insight to them both. Perhaps both video sermons and purchased manuscripts arise from a larger culture of manufacture, and a desire by both preachers and hearers for less risk and a more certain “product”?

Not only is preaching characterized by the workmanship of risk, it is also often marked by what Pye calls “free workmanship,” which takes craftsmanship to a higher level. In free workmanship, there are evident disparities (often intentional) and precise repetition is avoided. Pye offers woodcarving and calligraphy as two crafts in which free workmanship – subtle differences and disparities within an artifact and between artifacts – is prized. This is in contrast to regulated workmanship, in which the craftsman attempts to avoid disparities (someone might call them “imperfections”) through slow and careful work, or the use of guides and “jigs.”

In homiletics, extemporaneous preaching would lie on the extreme end of the scale of free workmanship. Two extemporaneous sermons on the same text, even preached on the same morning, would show numerous disparities between the two. On the other end of the scale, manuscript preaching is an example of regulated workmanship. The use of a manuscript for a preacher is like the use of a cutting guide for a cabinetmaker: it takes time to set up, but yields a more predictable and repeatable result. A preacher who goes into the pulpit with only an outline, or with a manuscript but intends and feels free to deviate from it, is working somewhere in between free and regulated work.

To conclude this use of David Pye’s work, let us return to the question: is preaching a craft, and if so in what sense? Pye has argued that craftsmanship is the workmanship of risk, and, even more purely, marked by free workmanship. Based on this theoretical framework, which is the best we have, preaching is indeed a craft in this sense: preaching is thoroughly the workmanship of risk, and it is often (in the case of

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<sup>4</sup> While this practice of preaching purchased sermons is not common among mainline churches, it has become more common among evangelical churches. For instance, both Saddleback Community Church and Willow Creek Association provide sermons and series of sermons for sale and use by preachers.

preaching without notes) more free than regulated. Thus, we homiletics are indeed being truthful when we call preaching a craft!

### **Preaching and Craft Knowledge**

If preaching is truthfully a craft, then it follows that the epistemology of preaching will share something in common with “craft knowledge.” Jeanne Gamble, who teaches in the Higher Education and Adult Development Unit at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, has explored carefully the nature of craft knowledge in order to refine vocational pedagogy. Her primary theoretical conversation partner is the British sociologist Basil Bernstein, and she augments and refines his theory through research study into traditional trade apprenticeship.

Bernstein says little about craft knowledge, but makes a passing comment in his discussion of types of discourse that provides Gamble the inspiration to probe its structure. As a sociologist focusing in education, Bernstein postulates two types of discourse: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal discourse is “common-sense,” and is likely to be, “oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts.”<sup>5</sup> Vertical discourse, on the other hand, “takes the form of a coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organized, as in the sciences, or it takes the form of a series of specialized languages with specialized modes of interrogation and specialized criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as in the social sciences and humanities.”<sup>6</sup> When he comes to briefly speak of craft knowledge, Bernstein writes that it is a, “modality of Vertical discourse and is characterized as a Horizontal Knowledge Structure weak grammar, tacit transmission. This knowledge structure is the nearest to Horizontal discourse emerging as a specialized practice to satisfy the material requirements of its segments.”<sup>7</sup>

This is the provocative insight produced by Bernstein’s analysis. On the one hand, craft would seem to be a form of horizontal discourse. Though it is highly skilled, it is also highly local and context dependent, is specific, multi-layered, and tacit. Nevertheless, Bernstein positions craft knowledge as a form of vertical discourse, which signals, in Gamble’s words, “the presence of a recontextualizing principle that comes from outside a specific object or context.”<sup>8</sup> The research question Gamble asks is, “Why is craft a vertical discourse when it seems to belong in horizontal discourse?” To answer this question Gamble moves away from Bernstein’s world of “words” and into craft’s natural world of manual labor, and she moves away from Bernstein’s theory to develop

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<sup>5</sup> Basil Bernstein, “Vertical and Horizontal Discourse: an essay,” (British Journal of Sociology of Education 20/2, 1999, 157-173), 159.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>7</sup> Jeanne Gamble, “Retrieving the General from the Particular: The Structure of Craft Knowledge”, p. 190. In: *Reading Bernstein, Researching Bernstein*, Davies, Morais, and Muller eds. (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 189-203.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 190.

an understanding of knowledge that does not, “evoke somehow a conception of deficiency regarding the absence of the spoken and written word in craft.”<sup>9</sup>

Gamble draws largely on the historical work of Alfred Sohn-Rethel and Edgar Zilsel to propose the following knowledge structure. She first divides knowledge into two types: general and particular, with craft knowledge on the particular side of the division. Using Zilsel, she then divides general knowledge into principled and procedural knowledge, and repeats the same division on the particular side. This division of particular knowledge into principled and particular correlates well with her research into a trade education, in which she observed apprentice cabinetmakers taught by an artisan-trainer in a trade school. She notes that in this trade school, apprentices are not students or learners, but “cabinet-makers-to-be,” and, “craft as pedagogized discourse and craft as practice are almost indistinguishable.”<sup>10</sup>

In a trade school for cabinet-making, as distinct from a factory, apprentices are expected to, “become adept in the full cycle of the production of a freestanding item of furniture: from rough sketch, to scale drawing to full layout; selection and lamination of wood to make pieces long enough and wide enough for particular items; production of every individual part; assembly and finishing; and, last but not least, cleaning up their work benches and surrounding areas.”<sup>11</sup> The knowledge of this cycle is largely tacit transmission and modelling, as the apprentice watches what the master does, tries it independently, is checked and corrected throughout, and eventually is able to work autonomously. In an earlier paper in which she details the pedagogy of the cabinet shop she visited, Gamble concludes that “visualization” is the both the purpose and outcome of this “tacit pedagogical transmission.”

By visualization, Gamble means, “The ability to visualize the whole through each part, or to see in the visible that which is invisible, is dependent on a particular relationship between different segments.”<sup>12</sup> This is the crafts person’s ability to see the whole even while working on the individual parts. David Pye calls this part-whole relationship an embodied principle of arrangement. Each article produced embodies an essential principle of arrangement, and a maker creates an embodiment of that principle with respect to certain purposes, materials, and methods of work available to the crafts person. The principle, the idea that orders the various segments of the process, is grasped through the visualization of the maker. Thus, visualization is key to understanding why Bernstein can call craft a vertical discourse because, it “stands in place of a non-articulable ordering principle.” Thus craft knowledge operates according to a principle, “but it is *principle in the particular*.” By contrast, knowledge that is procedure in the particular is the knowledge of the factory: the worker is making a part, but has no need of or access to knowledge of the whole. Moreover, the principle by

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>12</sup> Jeanne Gamble, “Modelling the Invisible: the pedagogy of craft apprenticeship” (*Studies in Continuing Education*, 23/2, 185-200), 197.

which the craftsperson operates is not held discursively. The craftsperson cannot tell in formulae and paragraphs the principle of article, but can draw a sketch or show instances of “right” or “wrong” proportion.

Thus, within “principle in the particular,” Gamble makes a final distinction between discursive and embodied principles. This distinction notes the difference between principles that are known through paragraphs, diagrams, and drawings, and principles that are known through “embodied arrangements”, or work that is produced. “Embodied principles are recognized through the act of visualization and realized through regulated workmanship, where the ‘achievement appears to correspond exactly with the idea’.”<sup>13</sup> It is because craft knowledge is embodied knowledge that it has thrived on the pedagogy of traditional apprenticeship education, which is tacit transmission of knowledge through modeling.

### **Envisioning the Proclamation of the Gospel**

So, if we accept Gamble’s description of craft knowledge as principle in particular and the embodiment of principle, what lines of connection may be drawn to preaching? First, the craft of preaching, like traditional hand crafts, looks at a glance like Bernstein’s description of horizontal discourse. Preaching is always local, occurring in a specific place and time. It is highly context specific and dependent, meaning that preaching cannot take place without a context and when done well is shaped by its context. It is multi-layered, involving a complex mix of knowledge, skill, and experience. And it is contradictory across but not within contexts, meaning that what is “good preaching” in one context may not be “good preaching” in another context; yet, there are multiple strategies for “good preaching” *within* a context. This last feature is key to understanding horizontal discourse, and it is what Bernstein calls “segmented discourse,” meaning that the discourse is realized in specific contexts and embedded in on-going practices. Certainly preaching is contextually embedded, and this is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching preaching in the contemporary seminary classroom. There is diversity across cultures and traditions, and there is diversity within cultures and traditions. Often “context” is so localized as to mean simply “the church I attended.” Moreover, what counts for the student as “good preaching” is often governed by that context.<sup>14</sup>

The final marker of horizontal discourse Bernstein offers is that it is tacit, meaning that it is embodied and involves ‘more than can be told.’ By describing preaching as tacit, one is taken immediately to Michael Polanyi’s work in *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. When Polanyi speaks of skill, he introduces a distinction between *subsidiary* and *focal* awareness. As one begins to embody knowledge (what Polanyi calls “know-how”), the various particulars of a skill, such as riding a bike or playing a piano, necessarily fade into “subsidiary awareness”

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<sup>13</sup> Gamble, “Retrieving...”, 197.

<sup>14</sup> In this case, if a student assesses preaching only by that small context, then preaching has become in Bernstein’s terms purely horizontal discourse, with no “recontextualizing principle” that would qualify it as vertical discourse.

(becoming tacit) while the external task or performance comes into “focal awareness.” As a pianist focuses on playing a concerto, the fingers and keys fade into subsidiary awareness; if the pianist begins to think consciously of his fingers, the piece goes wrong. Or when the carpenter focuses on the cut being made, her posture, motion, and the saw itself slip into subsidiary awareness; if the carpenter begins paying attention to how she is holding the saw, the piece may be ruined. In preaching, the various particulars of the skill – exegesis, knowledge of context, theology, rhetoric, oral interpretation and delivery, etc. – fade into subsidiary awareness as the sermonic moment comes into focal awareness. Polanyi describes this as involving an intentional change of being: “the pouring of ourselves into the subsidiary awareness of particulars, which in the performance of skills are instrumental to a skillful achievement.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus, preaching looks very much like the horizontal discourse of Bernstein’s description: local, context-dependent, multi-layered, segmented, and tacit. Yet, recall that Bernstein describes craft knowledge as a modality of *vertical* discourse characterized by a horizontal knowledge structure and tacit transmission, and Gamble’s use of Sohn-Rethel and her research into trade school pedagogy sought to understand the *vertical* dimension of craft knowledge. According to Bernstein, vertical discourse has a coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure. Rather than “segmented” or context-dependent knowledge, vertical discourse is “recontextualizable” by an external principle. In the trade school, Gamble found that this recontextualizing principle was the *idea* of the thing being made, signified by visualization. Successful work was work that ultimately conformed to the idea of the maker; likewise, a craftsperson’s performance could be judged by how closely the finished product resembled the initial intention. Visualization – the ability to keep the “whole” in view while working on the “parts” – was thus essential to master craftsmanship.

If we extend this understanding of craft knowledge to preaching, we are similarly looking for a recontextualizing principle that transfers preaching from horizontal, and entirely context-dependent, discourse to a vertical cross-contextual discourse. In teasing out this external principle, it might be helpful to turn from the material arts and consider another performative art, which is more closely related to preaching. In a material art like furniture-making, the coherent principle that governs the work is the design, often rendered in a sketch or plans. In a performative art like acting, though, the recontextualizing principle would be the character that is “sketched” in the script. The “idea” of that character is external to the actor, and accessible to both performer and audience by means of the script. A successful performance on the stage or screen is one that renders the character well, and the methods the actor has learned enable an excellent rendering.

In the craft of preaching, it is tempting to consider that the recontextualizing principle is the method of sermon preparation. When Bernstein discusses vertical

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 64.

discourse in the humanities and social sciences, he writes that vertical discourse takes the form of, “specialized modes of interrogation and specialized criteria for the production and circulation of texts.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, a prescribed way of developing a sermon would be like a specialized mode of interrogation, calling for a particular method of exegesis, or a certain way of framing the main idea (e.g. law/gospel, or focus/function). Because this kind of external criteria is relatively easy to delineate and evaluate, it is especially tempting for the teacher to assess the apprentice-preacher along these lines: Was the exegesis done properly? Was there a clear focus and function? Etc. It is also tempting to conceive of the recontextualizing principle as the form of the sermon, which in Bernstein’s terms is a “specialized criteria for the production of texts.” Thus, the student is assigned to preach a three-point sermon, or a four-pages sermon, or a funeral sermon, and is assessed on whether the sermon met the specialized criteria for that kind of “text.”

The difficulty, however, is that if we take either of those options for the recontextualizing principle in preaching, we mistake the craft of preaching for a literary science. If we look again through the lens of the material arts, the mistake becomes clear. Assessing a sermonic performance on the basis of method is like evaluating an apprentice-cabinetmaker on the basis of how well the particular steps of construction were performed, without respect to the completed “whole.” Yet the completed whole is the purpose of the maker, and ultimately the steps and quality of the steps by which she arrives at the whole are only instrumental. Likewise, evaluating a sermonic performance on the basis of how well the criteria of a particular form are met, would be like evaluating a furnituremaker on the basis of which tools were used and how well – not the final quality of the piece. In trade school pedagogy, as Gamble discovered and documented, students are taught to follow certain methods and use certain tools. But these are variable, often dependent on the preferences of the master-teacher, and remain instrumental to the finished work.

I would argue that the recontextualizing principle in the craft of preaching is the *proclamation of the gospel*. Recall again the craft of acting: the actor aims to render the character, and the character is the idea against which the workmanship of the actor is judged. Likewise, in preaching the preacher aims to render the gospel, and the gospel is the “idea” against which the workmanship of the preacher is judged. Beyond methods and forms, what is of ultimate importance in the sermonic moment is whether or not the gospel is well proclaimed. The method of the preacher and the form of the sermon and sermon delivery is important, but only instrumental to the proclamation. To use Polanyi’s language, the various skills of preaching – method, exegesis, theology, congregational analysis, rhetoric, vocal performance – fall into subsidiary awareness (though they may have been in focal awareness during the preparation of the sermon) and are embodied in the preacher in the performance of the sermon.

If the proclamation of the gospel is indeed the recontextualizing principle in the craft of preaching, what are the implications for teaching preaching? First, it is vitally

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<sup>16</sup> Bernstein, p. 159.

important that the student be able to visualize what excellent proclamation of the gospel is – to “see” it like an actor aims to “see” the character. At one level this includes developing a core understanding of the gospel, and some teachers ask students to articulate the gospel as they understand it in order to draw out this understanding. But the recontextualizing principle is more than that: it is embodied arrangement, it is proclamation and performance. What does it look like when a preacher is proclaiming the gospel well? Can the student call to mind experiences? Can the student describe excellent proclamation discursively? More importantly, can the student point to embodied examples?<sup>17</sup>

The ability to describe and envision excellent embodied proclamation may well be the key factor between students who go on to become “outstanding preachers,” and students who work very hard at preparation but are never able “to put it all together.” When Jeanne Gamble studied the trade school of cabinetmakers, she noticed that whenever a student was not able to “put it all together,” the instructor would say, “She/he can’t do drawings.” Gamble didn’t understand what this meant until she grasped the importance of visualization: not being able to do drawings meant the student could not visualize the idea and was thus making parts without a sense of the whole. Teachers of preaching also have common reasons why hard-working, well-prepared students aren’t able to preach a good sermon. We often say, “They’ve never been exposed to good preaching!” or, “They don’t yet have a sense of their own vocational identity.” In both cases, the issue is one of vision: they cannot see what it would look like for them to proclaim the gospel well. On the other hand, teachers can readily identify those students who have been exposed to excellent preaching over a significant period of time, or who have a strong preaching model they are following, such as a significant pastor or parent.

The importance of visualizing excellent proclamation leads also to the pedagogical importance of modeling. Most teachers of preaching hesitate to hold themselves out as “model preachers,” for a variety of very good reasons. One of the best reasons is that the teacher is careful not to create a classroom of “clones.” Likewise, teachers often caution students who have learned preaching by modeling someone else to discover their own “voice” and “vocational identity.” While this hesitation and caution is well warranted, modeling is nevertheless vital to tacit transmission and thus appropriate to a pedagogy for craft knowledge. Students must see the craft done well by a “master,” they must see it embodied, before they can envision themselves embodying it. Studying the written sermons of great preachers on the page is well, but not enough; learning the method and tips of great preachers is well, but not enough. The principle of modeling in craft pedagogy indicates that it is essential for students to see and experience excellent preaching – the embodiment of proclamation– if they are going to envision themselves

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<sup>17</sup> Even here, what is understood as excellent proclamation context-dependent, and will vary based on the student’s context – but is not wholly dependent on the student’s context. Part of the learning process will likely be for student and teacher to arrive a shared understanding of excellent proclamation in that student’s context.

preaching excellently.<sup>18</sup> Such modeling could happen through viewing recordings of great preachers, guiding students to remember and analyze their own prior experiences of excellent preaching, and visiting local worship services. Perhaps the most effective modeling, though, would be for students to actively observe the teacher crafting and preaching a sermon, from beginning to end. Even if the teacher would not qualify as a “great preacher,” students would see how the discrete skills they have learned are brought together into a whole. It is a vision for the “part-whole” relationship that is essential.

In summary, this paper has explored preaching from the perspective of craft and craft pedagogy, and come to the following conclusions:

1. Preaching is truthfully called a craft, especially as it is a workmanship of risk, and often done in a mode of free workmanship which relies greatly on the embodied skill of the preacher;
2. An understanding of craft knowledge illumines preaching as being “embodied principle in the particular,” meaning that it aims toward the embodiment of a principle.
3. The principle being embodied in preaching is best understood as the proclamation of the gospel.
4. It is vitally important in teaching preaching that students develop a vision of how the component skills of preaching come together into the “whole” of excellent preaching.
5. The “embodied principle” in craft pedagogy is transmitted through modeling, which thus should have a place in the teaching of preaching.

There are other potential pedagogical implications when preaching is considered a craft. For example, in craft pedagogy: knowledge is modular and concepts can be learned “along the way” and not in a necessary order; in the early stages the instructor is especially attuned to the foundational skills which later will become tacit; embodied knowledge is acquired through cumulative projects that are progressive in scale and build essential skills; creativity and creative change proceeds from mastery of basic forms; a vital role of the teacher is to demonstrate crucial steps, and highlight for students common pitfalls; and, finally, repetition and checking is crucial, until the instructor is sure the student can proceed autonomously. My hope is to develop these implications more, both in the classroom and in writing, and I look forward to a conversation with colleagues about how craft-oriented pedagogy either is or could be incorporated into the teaching of preaching.

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<sup>18</sup> In his article, “African American Preaching Perspectives,” Cleophus J. LaRue notes that “imitation of the masters” is a fundamental characteristic of black preaching. He writes that many black preachers, “learn to preach by observation, participation, and an eventual mastery of the “how-to’s” of preaching from accomplished artisans of the preaching craft whom they have come to admire and respect.” Not only does this tradition support the notion of preaching as craft, but the research of this paper suggests that such imitation is pedagogically extremely well-suited to preaching as craft. (In: *The New Interpreter’s Handbook of Preaching* (Abingdon Press, 2010), s.v. “African American Preaching Perspectives.”)

