

## Does “Active Learning” Work in East Asia?

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*The ConneXions Model promotes “active learning” in the leader development process, and this is very different from the traditional East Asian approach to learning. So, will ConneXions work in East Asia? The following are some of the testimonies we have received from current and past students from several ConneXions programs.*

**In all my life, the only learning model I have known** is the traditional way of the “teacher-oriented” model. We can get some benefits from this model, but facing the changing world and the complicated situation the church is in today, this traditional model proved itself to be weak and limited. We need a new model which will prepare us for today’s changing society and today’s Church. The ConneXions Model is the one that we need. The ConneXions Model inspires the students’ interest for study and helps us to take the initiative for our own personal growth and improvement. As a result, we get more out of what we are learning in relation to our own personal experience and needs. This model not only helped us to develop our thinking, but at the same time it brought growth in our spiritual lives, in our knowledge, and in our ministry work. We will keep using the ConneXions Model and look forward to seeing many young leaders benefited by it. (EC)

**My life in the ConneXions program was a happy one.** We lived as a family; even though there were hard times, everyone was happy. Under the ConneXions Model, every one of us experienced growth in life. The ConneXions Model brought us challenges and made us involved in learning in a very active way. Even though it wasn’t easy, it produced fruit in our lives in the end. It gave us a stronger motivation to serve and in the whole process helped us to lay a better foundation for our future service. It helped me to change my attitude toward study, and inspired a growing desire for knowing the truth. It helped us to have a clear understanding of our responsibility, purpose and vision, and it really gives us courage to face the difficulties that lie ahead. Now I know what is meant by “forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.” God’s will for us is so beautiful. (LJ)

**Since we adopted the ConneXions Model,** we experienced a great change in how we teach and train leaders. Not only did our attitude toward study change, but the student-teacher relationship has changed, too, producing visible growth in all the students’ lives. Under the ConneXions Model, we had more interaction between students and teachers. Sometime we did a “role exchange,” when the students would play the role of the teacher and the teacher would be the student. During all these activities, the students have to take the initiative and be actively involved in the study. As a result, the learning became an interesting and exciting activity

for the students, and they got the most out of the learning. It inspired us to think in different ways and it helped us to put what we were learning into practice. (LL)

**In the past, learning for me has been just a “receiving” process.** It was a “one-way” thing; I never thought about “giving” to anyone and thought I was a good learner and knew a lot. However, when we used the ConneXions Model, I started seeing my limits and the areas in which I needed to improve. I realized how little I know when it comes to application. Now I know God’s truth is to be applied in my everyday life, not just to be discussed and preached in the pulpit. Under the ConneXions Model, we had a new environment in which to study and grow. Our attitudes for study changed from passive to positive, our sight was broadened and it made learning an interesting process. At the same time, we began to understand our teachers from a new perspective; now we appreciate them more and know the weight of the responsibilities they carry. All these changes in attitude and thinking helped us to appreciate each other more and gave us a purer and more intense motivation to study. Our learning became an enjoyable process. Through sharing, we became closer as brothers and sisters; this has improved our unity which will be essential for our future service. The ConneXions Model challenged us to face our limits and encouraged us to overcome difficulties. It helped us see obstacles and difficulties as opportunities to bring growth to our lives. It has changed how we see things. (DZ)

**For me, study was a boring process,** difficult to endure before. But since we adopted the ConneXions Model, study has become an interesting activity I love to be involved in. Now, the teacher gives us more opportunity to practice in class, which was a new experience for us. Our teachers ask us to preach as a preacher does. I think it is a very good way to learn, because it stimulates us to apply what we have learned. The interactive activities help us to develop a broader way of thinking; this has really helped us to grow. Now we are learning the truth of God’s Word in relation to application in our lives. Consequently, we have a deeper understanding of the will of God and the heart of God. Everyone supports this model, and I really appreciate this opportunity to get equipped to accomplish the Great Commission! (WW)

**ConneXions was a new way of learning for me** and in the beginning I had a hard time getting used to it. But after adjusting, I found out that it brought more stable growth to my life. It is not like the traditional way of learning. It requires both the students and teachers to be actively involved in the learning process. Now the students do not merely passively receive the information; they have to be actively

involved in the class. We not only receive, we “give,” too. This has brought us a deeper understanding of biblical truth. It created pressure for us, but, at the same time, enlarged our capacity. This way of learning has truly brought new growth to my life. (BY)

**Under the traditional way of learning,** study was a boring task we had to endure. It usually gave us a lot of pressure and produced very little in the end. But the ConneXions Model created a fresh and lively learning environment for all of us. We now have a new attitude and our whole relationship to the learning process has changed. There seems to be no limit to the ways we can learn! We didn’t just learn in the classroom from the teacher, but we lived together and we knew each other in everyday life. We have more chance to learn from the teachers and from each other. Also, ConneXions gave us more opportunities to practice. Through all these experiences, we have improved our ministry skills and broadened our way of thinking. Through learning from each other, we have built stronger connections as brothers and sisters, and as a “family.” In the end, I just want to say I love this model! (YB)

**ConneXions has changed my whole concept about learning.** I used to have a pretty negative attitude toward study. Under the traditional way of learning, studying in a class is a very boring thing. The teacher simply stands there and teaches, and students come to listen out of duty. In the end, both sides are exhausted with very little benefit. But, since we have used the ConneXions Model, we can all sense the change it has brought to our lives and our spiritual growth. Under this way of learning, we don’t just study in the classroom – we learn from each other in our “life together.” The teachers share their lives with us in a holistic learning environment. We not only learn from our teacher, but we learn from each other’s strong areas, too. We have learned to appreciate the good things in other people’s lives and to have a healthy and open attitude about our own weaknesses. ConneXions has helped us to gain more courage and to grow as “whole people.” Not only the students like the model, but our leaders and church also support the model. I like this model very much. (LC)

**Since we have used the ConneXions Model,** I have experienced greater growth in my life, and the process of study has become enjoyable and more effective. This way of learning has helped me to apply what I have learned more effectively than the traditional way of learning. It has helped us to develop leadership skills as well as to grow in character and in competency in real life. We are no longer “passive” students; we are active learners. Our leaders, our church, and the teachers and students back the model. I expect that, through continued learning, we will clarify our callings and learn more about God and about our mission. In the end we will grow to be qualified co-workers. (ZD)

**I thank God for ConneXions.** Because of the ConneXions Model I had a wonderful learning experience. Compared to the traditional “feeding the duck” way of learning, the ConneXions Model has many advantages. Under the traditional way of study, students are passively involved in the learning process while the teachers try their best to feed the students information. What the students get out of this kind of way of learning is very limited and impractical. However, under the ConneXions Model, students are actively involved in the study; it requires both the teachers and students to “interact” in the learning process. Our whole attitude for learning has changed. Everyone has gotten involved in the study. Everyone has contributed something, and we learned from each other. The ConneXions Model helped us to grow in knowledge, in spiritual life and in service. Moreover, everyone enjoyed learning. I thank the Lord for giving me a chance to experience this kind of “enjoyable” learning life. (SX)

**In the beginning, it was hard for me** to get used to the ConneXions Model. In fact, many of its characteristics were “unthinkable” to me. This was because I was so used to the traditional way of learning and wasn’t ready for this sudden change from passive learning to active learning. But, gradually I began to adapt to this kind of learning and started liking it. The teacher would have us play the role of a teacher and teach a certain book of the Bible. The teacher would help us study the book and prepare the lecture and then have us teach the book in turns in the class. In the end, the teacher would make conclusions based on our teachings. Through sharing our insights, we helped each other in our spiritual growth, our understanding of biblical truth has deepened, and, through this kind of practice, our preaching and communication skills have improved. Now, we all like this model, because, since using this model, we have experienced growth in our lives. Our leaders and people in the church have witnessed the miracles in our lives which were caused by this way of learning, and they are very happy for us. When I become a teacher some day, I will use this model for my students, for our Lord Jesus told us: “Freely you receive, freely give” (Matt 10:8). (HM)



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