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**WORKSHOP**

**Pedagogical Approaches**

**to Integrative Practical Theology**

1. **Starting Point: Learning Outcomes**
2. *Work Integrated Learning: Key Learning Outcomes*

(Stephen Billett, “Curriculum and Pedagogic Bases for Effectively Integrating Practice-based Experiences within Higher Education.” <http://altc.edu.au/resource-integrating-practice-based-experience-griffith-2011>)

* The development of students’ occupational capacities (ie **procedural, conceptual and dispositional**)
* Different kinds of activities (eg placement, project, shadowing) led to distinct kinds of learning outcomes
* Building students’ confidence to engage in their selected occupations
* Assisting students to learn more about their selected occupation
* **Transformation of students’ personal perspectives**
* **Informed insights** into the world of work and work practices
* The importance of engaging with practice as part of occupational preparation

1. *Representative Theological Colleges (ACT, SCD, UD Summary)*

* **Goal setting** for ministry and personal development
* **Understanding** ministry structures and **issue**s
* Practical performance and **initiative**
* **Mentoring**
* **Reflection & Evaluation** (personal, supervisory, community)
* Identify core aspects of their **operational theology**

1. *Link Osmer’s Practical Theology Framework to SFE Learning Outcomes*

* **Descriptive**: what is the current situation
* **Interpretive**: how did the situation develop
* **Normative**: what should we do about the situation
* **Pragmatic**: how will we do something about the situation

1. **Problem Based Learning**

**Methods**

* Observation and Analysis of Identified Problems
  + Field observation (by self or others)
  + Literary research (primary and secondary)
* Case Studies
  + Remote: documentary analysis
  + Detached: field observation
  + Participatory: field engagement
* Scenario Learning

**Developing Scenario Learning[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Developing Scenario Learning (DSL) is a new teaching strategy that has been developed as a hybrid of elements of two well-established teaching strategies – Problem Based Learning (PBL) and role plays. This strategy is particularly appropriate for education in social science and professional areas where authentic problems/scenarios tend to be complex and could be resolved by several quite different approaches. Some of the reasons for developing this new strategy include:

• Many PBL scenarios (e.g., in medicine) have a “correct” answer, whereas many problems in other professional occupations could have many potentially correct answers, and there are benefits in having students share their different answers and rationales to these “grey” problems (this is similar to the use of Inquiry-Based Learning in humanities and social sciences, e.g., Levy, Aiyegbayo, Little, 2009)

• Many PBLs and role plays are based on authentic problems/scenarios, but they remain “static” for the duration of the problem, whereas many real world problems evolve (often in unexpected ways), and having students respond to a developing scenario can help avoid cognitive rigidity in problem-solving

• Role plays are generally based on students taking on a role that is different to themselves, whereas students preparing for professional occupations need to imagine how they themselves would react in the future to different scenarios, rather than imagining their reaction as someone else.

The activity structure of DSL involves two “phases” each with several activities: at the start of the **first phase**, students work together in small groups to analyse a real world scenario (typically a situation they could face in their future professional career). After a period of individual reflection, they then discuss the different issues that may be involved in understanding this scenario (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, emotions, legal, etc.) as a group. After this, each student formulates an initial plan of action to address the scenario (which is shared with all group members). This is the end of the first phase of the teaching strategy, at which point the **second phase** begins with some new development of the scenario (hence the name “Developing Scenario Learning”). Students then go through a similar process of reflection and group discussion about how the scenario has evolved, and how they would respond (including knowledge, attitude, emotion and legal issues), but they also consider how their initial plan of action, and the assumptions on which it was based, may need to be revised.

For further details about the theoretical background and the structure of Developing Scenario Learning, together with an example from teacher training, see Dalziel (2012) and his Pedagogical Template version of DSL in the LAMS software at <http://lamscommunity.org/lamscentral/sequence?seq_id=1856800>.

**Example/Exercise**

In a local church, a group of young people has been vocal in expressing that they don’t believe preaching is a good mode of communication in a post-­‐modern world and that the church should scrap its approach to church services and find interactive ways of communicating. Furthermore, a leading member of the group declares that he is going to quit attending church because he cannot see the value of sitting and listening to one person speak to a large group of people who have different needs, questions and issues and who are not allowed to challenge the speaker’s view or theology.

Trace the possible evolution of this scenario with a view to a practical resolution.

Apply Osmer’s Framework:

* Descriptive: what is the current situation
* Interpretive: how did the situation develop
* Normative: what should we do about the situation
* Pragmatic: how will we do something about the situation

1. **Inquiry Based Learning**

**Methods**

* Literary Research
* Surveys
* Interviews
* Forums
* Focus Groups
* Purpose: to understand how people feel or think about an issue, product, service or idea.
* Method: encourage participants to share perceptions and points of view, without pressuring participants to vote or reach consensus, in a permissive non-threatening environment.
* Process: 3 or 4 FGs of 6-8 participants + moderator and assistant moderator, using same set of questions for all FGs.
* Intent: promote self-disclosure among participants.
* Role of moderator: ask questions, listen, keep conversation on track, make sure everyone has a chance to share.
* Characteristics: 6-8 people who possess certain characteristics (homogeneity) and provide qualitative data (opinions not conclusions) in a focussed discussion (with pre-determined and sequenced open-ended questions, developing from general to specific) to help understand the topic of interest.
* Use as a research procedure of inquiry not to impose views:
  + - “participatory research” which places emphasis on involving people in a community in conducting the research, because of what the process does for that community in terms of developing commitment, capacity, and talents as well as improving utilization.
  + (see Richard A Krueger and Mary Anne Casey, *Focus Groups - a practical guide for applied research*. 3rd ed; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000 or later editions.)
* Stories (Narrative Inquiry)

**Narrative Inquiry**

The role of narrative inquiry is important in nurturing discourse, allowing people to articulate their experiences through their stories and to “offer a perspective about their perspective”. By encouraging people to reflect on, explore and share their stories, narrative inquiry provides a means of developing their understanding of themselves and uncovering meanings through dialogue. Narrative inquiry has the potential to foster students’ critical reflection during their course of study, potentially leading to evidence of transformation of other habits of mind, especially if learning is embedded in a context that supports the establishment of relationships which facilitate discourse.

**Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry is a particular type of Narrative Inquiry. It applies the heuristic approach of IBL to the personal narrative of the learner (in an individual or a group situation). The learner is encouraged to identify and analyse past personal successes, then to articulate ways in which those past successes may be developed to generate ongoing successes. This strategy takes genuine cognisance of where a learner has come from and where the learner is potentially going.

**Example/Exercise**

1. **Individual Exercise (10 minutes)**

Q1. How long have you been involved in directing SFE?

* When did you start? How did you first get involved and why?

Q2. What is your experience of directing SFE?

* Reflect on your overall experience – **past or present**
* What have been some of the high points for you?
* Choose one experience to relate in more detail: What happened? Who was involved? What was your part in it? What made it possible? What made it special? What are you most proud of? What did you learn from this?

Q.3 What does your experience tell you about creating an effective SFE program?

* Reflect on your story: what does it tell you about creating a positive field experience?
* Based on this story: what do you think are some of the key elements of developing and sustaining an effectual SFE program?

1. **Share Stories with Another (Pairs: 10-15 minutes)**

Try to co-create a mood of curiosity, inquiry and respect in your dialogue, rather than a detached analytical interview. Try to get to know each other, be interested to find out about and to understand what has influenced and shaped their performance of SFE directing. Take short notes, ask questions, respect silence. Be ready to give a quick synopsis of your partner’s story to a wider group.

1. **Share Stories in a Group of 4 (20 minutes)**

Each person briefly introduces and shares a summary of their **partner’s** story.

**Listeners**, listen carefully for the main “outstanding features”: what made this experience special?

From your collective stories, make a list of the main features emerging for you.

From your experiences, what are the most important ingredients of a highly effective SFE program?

Present your group findings (notes, flip chart, etc)

How does this exercise link to Osmer’s Framework?

* Descriptive: what is the current situation
* Interpretive: how did the situation develop
* Normative: what should we do about the situation
* Pragmatic: how will we do something about the situation

1. **Group Project Based Learning**

**Methods**

* Combines elements of Problem Based Learning and Inquiry Based Learning

**Project Based Learning**is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. Essential Project Design Elements include:

* **Key Knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills**- The project is focused on student learning goals, including content and skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.
* **Challenging Problem or Question** - The project is framed by a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge.
* **Sustained Inquiry** - Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.
* **Authenticity** - The project features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact – or speaks to students’ personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives.
* **Student Voice & Choice** - Students make significant decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create.
* **Reflection** - Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, obstacles and how to overcome them.
* **Critique & Revision** - Students give, receive, and use feedback to improve their process and products.
* **Public Product** -Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it to people beyond the classroom.

**Example/Exercise**

A college mission team is to undertake a 2 week program in a local church. The congregation is around 25-30 people, mainly elderly (60-80 years old), in a suburb which has seen considerable demographic change from a predominantly young family area to mainly units occupied by singles or couples. The remaining residents are mainly long-term elderly people. The church provides a number of mid-week social functions often attended by these long-term residents, although most are not members or involved in worship at the church.

The church is in serious decline and has asked the college team to “give it a lift” as a last attempt to avoid closure. The team of six mainly young (20-30 years old) and extroverted enthusiasts has six months’ preparation time, alongside their regular studies.

Following the steps of Osmer’s Framework (Descriptive, Interpretive, Normative, Pragmatic), formulate an approach for executing this project.

1. **Conclusion**

* How can such exercises link Osmer’s framework and your SFE Learning Outcomes to create an arena for Practical Theology?
* How can such exercises serve to refine our theology as a part of the function of Practical Theology?

1. See James Dalziel, “Developing Scenario Learning to Theological Education” in Yvette Debergue & James R Harrison (eds), *Teaching Theology in a Technological Age* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 17-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)