

# Teaching Theology in a Technological Age



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Edited by

Yvette Debergue and James R. Harrison

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-8263-1

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8263-7

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## **SECTION ONE**

# **TRACKING GOD'S DIGITAL FOOTPRINT**



# TRACKING GOD'S DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

With the opening of each new digital frontier, the iGeneration learned to adapt rapidly to technological change. Students multi-task with consummate ease, accessing email on smart-phones, researching assignments on tablets, reading a book on Kindle, while drinking a flat white and listening to iTunes in the background. Educational curriculum and delivery, whether face-to-face or online, has had to change to meet the learning needs of students whose attention transitions rapidly between different digital media and messages.

The complexity and pace of technological change have left the theological educational sector gasping as it struggles to devise pedagogically engaging online distance materials, or considers the possibility of using videogame mechanics and design in the classroom for teaching Greek. The technological benefits are enormous, the instant availability of information is unprecedented, and the opportunities to provide theological education to groups marginalised by the tyranny of distance and time are wide open. How should the theological sector address these challenges and opportunities?

Although the technological benefits are vast, our media is replete with stories of the casualties of this change: a sedentary lifestyle and its health effects, cyber-bullying, internet predators, the psychic damage from trolls, addiction to gaming, issues of body image, and so on. How should the theological sector, drawing upon its scriptural and teaching heritage, come to grips with the deficits that are being spawned by the technological revolution? What is our theological, pastoral, social and pedagogic responsibility in nurturing this new generation?

But our digital age raises important philosophical and theological questions about what constitutes true community, the quality of interpersonal relationships in a technological society, the interplay between “real” identity and “constructed” identity, and the discernment of God’s “presence” in a virtual world, to identify several pertinent issues. These questions are not necessarily new. Social thinkers such as Jacques Ellul, Neil Postman and Marshall McLuhan have long since warned that the values associated with technology had the potential to erode culture as

much as enhance it.<sup>1</sup> However, although these reservations about the dangers of technology have real traction, a number of Christian writers have theologically evaluated the opportunities provided by the e-media. They are largely positive about the role of e-media within society and the ecclesial community, arguing that there is biblical and theological warrant for the e-media being a legitimate conduit of the divine presence in teaching, mission and pastoral ministry within the church local and universal.<sup>2</sup> Another who understands the powerful opportunities that e-media can provide is Pope Francis, whose Twitter profile is one of the most influential accounts among world leaders.<sup>3</sup> Heidi Campbell has also addressed many of the concerns that online communities only provide a chimera of what Christian ministry is face-to-face, highlighting the appeal and spiritual usefulness of three email communities for digital believers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage, 1964 [Fr. orig. 1954]); N. Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin, 1985); idem, *Conscientious Objections: Stirring Up Trouble About Language, Technology and Education* (New York: Knopf, 1988); idem, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1992); M. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1962); idem, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); idem and Q. Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Random House, 1967); idem and B. R. Powers, *The Global Village: Transformation in World Life and Media in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> D. Groothuis, *The Soul in Cyberspace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); S. R. Garner, "'Hacking with the Divine': A Metaphor for Theology-Technology Engagement," *Colloquium* 37, 2 (2005): 181-95; A. Byers, *The Media of God and the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013); S. Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014; Italian orig. 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Alessandro Bonzio states that for every tweet of Pope Francis there are approximately 11,000 "retweets" in Spanish and 8,200 in English. However, Pope Francis is realistic about the limitations of online interconnectivity, observing on The World Day of Communications 2014: "The desire for digital connectivity can have the effect of isolating us from our neighbours, from those closest to us ... it is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply 'connected'; connections need to grow into true encounters." See "'Internet, a Gift from God' – The Pope of the Digital Age," [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/.../pope-francis-digital-age\\_b\\_4955367.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/.../pope-francis-digital-age_b_4955367.html).

<sup>4</sup> H. Campbell *Exploring Religious Community Online: We Are One in the Network*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

Not unexpectedly, e-media reflect the paradox at the core of human existence: that while human beings are made in the image of God, they nevertheless live in a world weighed down by the personal and social effects of human rebellion against God. To be sure, the dark recesses of human nature are revealed in the destructive activities of internet predators: but humans also exercise grace and forgiveness towards others in online interactions or facilitate deep learning experiences that are personally and communally transforming for students online. In sum, the disciplines of theology and education engage important questions regarding the role of e-media in society, though the theological understanding of education moves well beyond the parameters of vocational outcomes and individual life-long learning. Is there a case to be made for tracking God's digital footprint in the learning and teaching communities of the academy?

Les Ball has helpfully highlighted the tightrope that believers walk in keeping pace with society: they must learn to adapt to technological and social change, but without abandoning or compromising their message and distinctive lifestyle.<sup>5</sup> Thus the place of e-media in theological education and in spiritual and pastoral formation has to be carefully weighed by Christian educational practitioners. The decision to incorporate the use of e-media in theological curricula should not just be opportunistically conceived as a convenient means of theological colleges and Christian universities expanding their student numbers by online learning in a highly competitive educational marketplace. That would be perhaps to succumb, as Robert Tilley reminds us in this collection, to the acquisitiveness at the core of capitalism, and, if he is right, to precipitate the dilution of "real presence" in the learning and teaching interaction.

How, then, should Christian educators conceive of their role in a rapidly changing technological society? What is their responsibility in considering the introduction of online education for the delivery of degrees or the use of e-media in face-to-face teaching in traditional theological disciplines and pastorally oriented units? What is our Christian "calling" in this new context? As Ball concludes,

It is a call to evolve in its pedagogical philosophy and praxis, with a focal shift away from controlled comprehensive content delivery to the facilitation of the development of the learner, through curriculum design

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<sup>5</sup> L. Ball, "Where Are We Going?" in *Learning and Teaching Theology: Some Ways Ahead* (ed. L. Ball and J. R. Harrison; Melbourne: Morning Star Press, 2013), 20.

and teaching methods that lead to that end. The academy needs to be clear about its traditional heritage, its underlying theological place, its ecclesiological mandate and its educational philosophy, and to keep these in a coherent tension. It needs to engage learners more strategically and actively in a process of relevant discovery and personal growth, and not to assume passivity or even receptivity on the part of learners: learners need to be developed and not merely instructed.<sup>6</sup>

This collection of papers—the vast majority of which were presented at the *Teaching Theology in a Technological Age* Conference, September 19 – 20 2014, Sydney College of Divinity, Australia—aims to explore how the astute use of e-media might accomplish a “developmental” vision of theological education. In this regard, it is important to realise that this book builds to some extent upon two previous publications on theological education in Australia, bringing their cumulative arguments to a highly focused conclusion in this volume.

First, the current book is indebted Les Ball's pioneering investigation of the claims of Australian theological colleges and theology university departments that they provide a transformative educational experience.<sup>7</sup> After reporting what the students, faculty, and stakeholders had said on the issue during the period of 2010–2012,<sup>8</sup> Ball delineates

- what was required for theological curriculum designers to move theological education towards being truly transformative as opposed to being merely cognitive;<sup>9</sup>
- what were several good examples of principled, practical and strategic curriculum design in Australian practice;<sup>10</sup>
- how an integrated curriculum prioritises biblical and theological knowledge, holistically engages all of life's relationships, and incisively addresses contemporary cultural and social settings.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ball, “Where Are We Going?”, 20.

<sup>7</sup> L. Ball, *Transforming Theology: Student Experience and Transformative Learning in Undergraduate Theological Training* (Preston: Mosaic Press, 2012). Ball, sponsored by the Melbourne College of Divinity and the Australian Council of Deans of Theology, conducted interviews, surveys, focus groups and documentary analysis of 51 teaching campuses and 700 people to establish his results.

<sup>8</sup> Ball, *Transforming Theology*, 66-86.

<sup>9</sup> Ball, *Transforming Theology*, 87-103.

<sup>10</sup> Ball, *Transforming Theology*, 104-118.

<sup>11</sup> Ball, *Transforming Theology*, 119-144.

Second, in September 2014, the Sydney College of Divinity held a conference on how the “disconnect” between the teaching of theology in the academy and the transformative claims made for it by its institutional deliverers might be overcome. The collection of conference papers resulted in a book, edited by Les Ball and James Harrison, called *Learning and Teaching Theology: Some Ways Ahead*.<sup>12</sup> The papers explored contemporary educational and theological thought about proposed ways ahead and outlined innovative practices in Australia and New Zealand which demonstrated how this “disconnect” was being successfully addressed.

The current volume, therefore, brings this debate in Australian theological education to a sharply focused conclusion by concentrating on the implementation of e-media in online curriculum design and in face-to-face classroom teaching. The social revolution that the e-media have brought to global networks and educational delivery does not need elaboration here. But some sectors of the theological education sector in Australia have had reservations about the diminution of academic and research standards through an extensive use of online education, its alleged inability to deliver the pastoral training and deep personal transformation required for ministry contexts, the mercenary and entrepreneurial motives underlying the wholesale introduction of online suites in theological education, and so on. Consequently, the authors of the chapters in this book adopt a variety of stances to these issues, adopting in the process a spread of methodologies and theological perspectives, ranging from the theoretical and philosophical to the specifics of educational praxis in their discussions.

In Section 2 are found the essays of the three keynote speakers at the conference, which open up the debate regarding the intersection of theological teaching with virtual technology and its pedagogic implications for the future. James Dalziel discusses the “Developing Scenario Learning” as a teaching strategy that will bring innovation to theological curricula. Dalziel explores how, by the design of challenging real-life scenario units as the backbone of a semester-long unit, theological students might be empowered to challenge their assumptions regarding ministry and ethics, enabling them to handle difficult pastoral situations with increased maturity and confidence.

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<sup>12</sup> L. Ball and J. R. Harrison, *Learning and Teaching Theology: Some Ways Ahead* (Melbourne: Morning Star Publications, 2014).

Jan Albert van den Berg examines the social media platform of Twitter in popular culture, arguing that Jesus approximates the modern “tweeter” by virtue of his succinct aphoristic sayings. In response, van den Berg develops a “Twitter theology”. This form of practical wisdom engages real-life issues by placing value on the stories of people and their communities.

Michael Jensen looks at the benefits and deficits of virtual community. Although online media enable the creation of constructed personalities, this mediated presence is not vastly different from normal interpersonal relationships, though human embodiment ensures a crucial distinction between the two. Jensen proceeds to discuss philosophical (Derrida), theological (Trinitarian, incarnational) and biblical (Pauline) perspectives on “presence” and “absence”, concluding with five suggestions as to what it is “to be there, virtually”.

These introductory essays do not shy away from the downside of virtual relationships, but they also underscore how online media can be innovative in theological education, pastorally engaged with real-life wisdom, and illuminating as to what human and divine presence actually is.

In Section 3, the deficits of technology in respect to theological education and social relationships are examined, with Robert Tilley’s essay being an intriguing entry to the debate. Tilley posits that online education falls prey to the all-consuming acquisitiveness of late-capitalism. He argues that “real presence”—embodied in the new covenant in Christ, experienced in his Spirit-indwelt church, and mediated through the Eucharist—is the only pedagogically viable paradigm for learning and teaching in a Christian context because of its crucial face-to-face dimension.

James Harrison investigates how we bolster resilience in people when they are confronted by the activities of trolls and cyber bullies, examining the issue from biblical, theological, social and historical perspectives. He offers several strategies for ministering to the victims and the perpetrators of these online attacks, suggesting that increased “humanisation” and gracious language, arising from our being made in God’s image, are important principles in shaping our overall approach.

Charles de Jongh investigates recent research on the deleterious impact of the internet upon the academic enterprise, whether it be essay writing, academic research, critical and innovative thinking, prolonged and judicious reading, and the ability to concentrate for extended periods.



Although opening up unparalleled resources for research, the internet has not made the anticipated impact upon academic quality and output, but has posed new learning problems for students that were not as obviously associated with the old print media. While focusing on the deficits of online education and e-media social platforms, each essay provides a clarion call to educationalists about the danger of naively believing that online education and electronic media more generally will always enhance the experience of its users.

Andre van Oudtshoorn argues that the mediated information age adds nothing fundamentally new to reality or to our humanity. Employing a wide-ranging biblical theology as his lens for understanding ourselves, our world and our place in it, Andre argues that while human beings are grounded in a non-compliant lived-through reality, they nevertheless construct symbolic worlds in which they live. The real issue facing humanity in the age of information overload and e-media interconnectivity is this: what kind of reality do human beings want to inhabit? According to van Oudtshoorn, the answer must be found epistemologically in the apostle Paul's triad of "faith, hope and love" if we are to live productively in the fallen non-complaint world and in the symbolic worlds we create.

Section 4 explores the issues involved the relationship of the new technology to alternative pedagogic paradigms, past and present. Stephen Smith and Stephen Healey, drawing upon the experience of the Australian College of Ministries, argue that there are other advances in theory and practice that enrich the student learning experience equally as much as the new technologies. The authors explore four advances in effective learning, including scientific studies on the neuroplasticity of the brain and adult learning theory.

David Morgan argues that one consequence of the Christian doctrine of sin is that we relentlessly return to the ingrained patterns of behaviour of the past. This applies as much to Christian pedagogy as to morality. What is required theologically and experientially is a turning away (repentance) from the habits of the old life and a holistic embracing of the new life in Christ (sanctification). Consequently, in a pedagogical context, theological institutions and their administrations should not always be returning to the old curriculum programming and traditional paradigms but rather be open to the new missional opportunities opened up by quality online teaching and learning.

Both papers bring out very important pedagogical truths for designers of theological curriculum. To absolutise the offerings of

technology at the expense of other advances in theory and practice is misconceived, in the same way as ignoring the missional potential of online education for the safety of traditional curriculum approaches is to ignore the possibilities of the new age in Christ.

In Section 5, a series of case studies looks at aspects of theological pedagogy that can be enhanced by the digital age, with an emphasis on practical application. Andrew Brown supplements his essay with an online presentation application Prezi that readers can follow up after reading his essay. Brown explores the possibilities for visual representation in classrooms, a crucial pedagogical strategy given that we live in a highly visually-attuned generation. After defining key terms for the uninitiated, Brown discusses four educational applications relating to the visual management of information, providing practical examples of classroom visuals and outlining the principles and purposes of visualisation.

Yvette Debergue considers the challenges of teaching medieval history in an age of film. After outlining the pedagogical barriers that popular film presents for the serious history teacher (the students' total ignorance of the historical period other than through the film, cinematic embellishment and misrepresentation of historical events and personalities, etc.), Debergue presents several classroom scenarios on how film can be used to stimulate engaged and critical historical thinking among theology students of church history.

Jong Soo Park explores five challenges regarding the impact of the internet, each best expressed as series of contrasts: (a) there is difficulty in focusing one's attention when one is multi-tasking; (b) the internet provides us unimpeded access to a vast storehouse of information, but it does not deliver us the ability to determine its quality; (c) the breadth of information provided does not necessarily result in greater analytical focus; (d) the vast amounts of information do not necessarily foster true understanding; (e) the breadth of material has fostered a culture of skimming rather than plumbing the depths of the material available. There is a real danger that attention span and cognitive skills are declining in this process.

Diane Hockridge tackles the difficult issue of how one develops spiritual formation in theological students who are in off-campus non-residential (i.e. online) contexts. Drawing upon recent research in Learning Design, Hockridge demonstrates how its framework was fruitfully applied to wholly online theology suites at Ridley College, Melbourne.

Peter Mudge has contributed two essays to the volume, one being his conference paper, the other being a theoretical extension of its pedagogic implications. The original conference paper (“How Little We Know”), arising from an online unit taught by the author, discussed the varied forms of spirituality, along with their associated practices and values, undergirding the leadership of professionals. After outlining the unit’s methodology (narrative inquiry) and its content, Mudge assesses the strengths and limitations of teaching spirituality online, based both on student testimony and the academic literature. The results are somewhat ambiguous, but the author opines that there is sufficient warrant to believe that online education, on the basis of student testimony, can move students beyond the cognitive to a deeper sense of personal awe and wonder. The second essay (“Teaching Online Spirituality”) investigates the rhizomatic nature of online learning: that is, study in an online unit that is characterised by multiple pathways for learning an assessment. From here Mudge explores the pedagogic importance of story and narrative, especially in regard to “narrative-journaling” and “developing scenario learning” in online spirituality units.

David Gormley-O’Brien discusses the decline of the teaching of ancient languages (Latin and Koine Greek) in the theological sector of colleges and universities in Australia. The traditional grammatical-analytical method of teaching ancient languages, Gormley-O’Brien argues, is the chief culprit here because it does not reflect how modern languages are taught in universities: that is, fulfilling the goals of communication, cultures, connection, comparisons, and communities. Gormley-O’Brien suggests that with the advent of e-media we are in a strong position to address each of these goals in creative and stimulating ways in ancient language learning as opposed to the dull and repetitive pedagogies of the past, with the result that ancient languages will again revive in the tertiary theological sector.

What this section of essays in the volume has very clearly demonstrated is that online education can (a) be used, notwithstanding its deficits, to foster creative pedagogic approaches in traditional disciplines (Brown, Debergue, Gormley-O’Brien) and (b) deliver online teaching of spirituality, if carefully structured and implemented, with surprising success.

In Section 6, the authors discuss how one can best establish real community in a virtual context. Daniel J. Fleming unpacks the metaphor of “leaving home”, which is drawn from the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, as a way of describing the experience of studying theology. After

discussing the experience of fear and its relation to “safety mindsets” from the scientific literature, Fleming outlines how trust and care can flourish in an online context by careful and empathetic speech in the presence of our students. To some degree, this latter emphasis recalls the importance of the “gracious” and “salted” speech, an emphasis taught throughout the New Testament, discussed in Harrison’s contribution earlier in the volume.

By contrast, John Capper employs the conceptually opposite metaphor of “returning home” to the classroom to describe the rethinking of community and the educational process online. In a wide-ranging educational and theological investigation, Capper argues that there is no silver bullet, whether it is a particular discipline or technique, which will magically solve the complexities of effective delivery. But an attitude of humility in being willing to learn from each other and in being adaptable will produce harmony in the divine community and allow real progress to be made in transforming online delivery.

Whereas Robert Tilley, earlier in the volume, argued that online education failed entirely as a medium because its inability to deliver the “real presence” of the new covenant in Christ, Tim Bulkeley utilises “social presence theory”, as developed by communications science since the 1970s, in order to analyse questions regarding the depth of interaction (or presence) in online learning. Importantly, Bulkeley concludes that different students will experience the rich depths of presence through different media. Apparently, like Capper, Bulkeley agrees that there is no single solution to interconnectedness and personal relationship in online education.

These final essays in the last section of the book are fascinating because of the way that they interact with previous essays, sometimes coming to entirely opposite conclusions, and even exploring the same themes within this section from the vantage point of diametrically opposed metaphors. These conceptual differences demonstrate that we, to borrow a Pauline phrase, “know in part”, but nevertheless experience the divine riches of grace in the body of Christ precisely because of our diversity of viewpoint and practice.

In conclusion, we would do well to remind ourselves of what Neil Postman said about our entertainment-addicted culture many years ago:

When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, a people

become an audience, and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility.<sup>13</sup>

I suspect that many of us would feel the inward cringe of recognition in reading these chilling words. They remind us of the vacuous, self-centred and valueless aspects of our celebrity-driven culture that are paraded on the social media, the superficialities of which we can obsess over if we pay them too much regard or, worse, give them real credence. Rather we are called to be redemptive agents of grace and innovation in our electronic culture to the honour of Christ, carefully tracking God's digital footprint throughout his technological world,<sup>14</sup> and bringing our Spirit-renewed minds to bear on the things that really matter, online and offline, as we seek after his Kingdom and righteousness.

James R. Harrison and Yvette Debergue

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<sup>13</sup> Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 155.

<sup>14</sup> Spadaro, *Cybertheology*, 7. Spadaro argues that the world-wide web, as God's own project, is not only a technology to be utilised but also "an ambience to inhabit."



## **SECTION TWO**

# **LIVING AS CITIZENS OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD**





# DEVELOPING SCENARIO LEARNING TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

JAMES DALZIEL

This chapter discusses a teaching strategy called “Developing Scenario Learning” (DSL) in which students initially consider a challenging real-life scenario and then discuss their assumptions and approaches to this scenario. After this phase, the scenario develops in some new, often unexpected way and students together reflect further on their assumptions and any new approaches required by the changed situation. The paper explores how DSL may be applied to theological education, particularly in contexts such as training for ministry and ethics. It also considers the potential use of DSL as a repeating structure for an entire unit of study. The paper includes an example of DSL for an online theology unit on ministry and practice using the “LAMS” software, and a template of the example that can be adapted for other theological education topics.

## **Innovation in Theological Education**

There has been considerable interest in recent years in new teaching and learning approaches to theological education.<sup>1</sup> Some innovations have arisen from the articulation of graduate attributes for theological students and the need for changes to teaching methods in order to better align methods with these graduate attributes.<sup>2</sup> Others arise from a reconsideration of the appropriateness of applying typical higher education practices (e.g., lectures, essays, exams) to theological education, especially

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Les Ball, *Transforming Theology* (Preston: Mosaic Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning*. (Langham: Global Library, 2014).

in areas such as spiritual formation, where different modes of learning and assessment may be required.<sup>3</sup>

Still other innovations have arisen from the increasing use of technology in higher education—some arising from the new affordances of the technology, others arising from a more general rethinking of teaching and learning practices provoked by the introduction of new technologies.<sup>4</sup> Technology can be a catalyst for deeper reflection on the whole teaching and learning enterprise, rather than simply an “add on” to existing practices.

From another direction, the rise of open source software and open approaches to educational content has had a considerable impact on higher education particularly through the open sharing of education software (e.g., the Moodle Learning Management System) and educational content (e.g., content shared under Creative Commons licenses).<sup>5</sup> In the field of theological education, the concept of sharing effective teaching ideas and educational content has been encouraged by organisations such as the Wabash Center.<sup>6</sup>

For many theological educators, there may be a willingness to try new teaching methods and/or new technologies, but some uncertainty on how to proceed practically. This chapter describes a new teaching strategy called “Development Scenario Learning” (DSL) which can be appropriate for student reflection on challenging real-world scenarios. It then illustrates its application to theological education with an online example. A template is provided with the example to assist theological educators in creating their own online activities by reusing the “structure” of the DSL example, but with their own content.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring A Missional Alternative To Current Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999); Diane Hockridge, “Challenges For Educators Using Distance And Online Education To Prepare Students For Relational Professions.” *Distance Education*, 34, 2 (2013): 142-160.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Beetham and Rhona Sharpe, *Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age* (Oxford: Routledge, 2012); Diana Laurillard, *Teaching As A Design Science: Building Pedagogical Patterns For Learning And Technology* (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Cape Town Open Education Declaration: Unlocking the promise of open educational resources, 2007 <http://www.capetowndeclaration.org/read-the-declaration>

<sup>6</sup> [www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/](http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/)

## Developing Scenario Learning

According to the Larnaca Declaration on Learning Design, a “teaching strategy” can be defined as “a particular sequence of teaching and learning activities based on certain pedagogical assumptions...A teaching strategy can provide a pedagogical rationale as well as a suggested structure of activities for a learning design.”<sup>7</sup> Two widely used teaching strategies are Problem Based Learning and role plays.<sup>8</sup> Developing Scenario Learning was developed as a hybrid of these two existing strategies for particular use in complex real world scenarios for professional domains (such as teaching, medicine, law, etc.).<sup>9</sup>

A typical use of DSL involves two “phases” with several activities during each phase. 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

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<sup>7</sup> James Dalziel, “Developing Scenario Learning and its implementation in LAMS,” in L. Cameron & J. Dalziel (eds), *Proceedings of the 7th International LAMS Conference: Surveying the Learning Design Landscape* (6-7 December 2012, Sydney), 32-39.

<sup>8</sup> John R. Savery and Thomas R. Duffy, “Problem Based Learning: An Instructional Model and Its Constructivist Framework,” in *Constructivist Learning Environments: Case Studies in Instructional Design*, ed. B. Wilson. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 1996), 135-148; Sandra Wills et al., *Encouraging Role-Based Online Learning Environments by Building, Linking, Understanding, Extending: The BLUE Report*. Sydney: The Australian Learning & Teaching Council, 2009.

[http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/enrole/repository/BLUE\\_Report.pdf](http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/enrole/repository/BLUE_Report.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> For further discussion of the theory behind DSL, see Dalziel, “Developing Scenario Learning”.

action, and the assumptions on which it was based, may need to be revised.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of the scenario itself, the following example from teacher training illustrates the first and second “phases” of the scenario:

Initial Scenario: You are a head teacher in a typical secondary school, trying to encourage staff to adopt a new teaching technique (role plays). An older male teacher, who is known to be quite conservative, is proving difficult to engage in the process—he seems to want to just continue as in the past. He seems not to be enjoying his teaching (he even complains he doesn’t enjoy his newspapers anymore—which he was famous for always reading in the staff room), but does not seem willing to try new ideas. When you ask him directly about trying this new approach, he is uncomfortable, distant and non-committal about what he will do.

Sample questions for students to consider are:

- What are your initial thoughts?
- What knowledge issues might be at play?
- What attitude issues might be at play?
- What emotional issues might be at play?
- What do you see as the problem, and what is your plan of action?
- What additional information/research might you need?

In a classroom setting, this phase might involve 30-60 minutes of discussion of the initial scenario and the questions; in an online asynchronous setting, this might occur over one week of online discussion forum postings. After this period, the strategy moves to the second phase, in which the scenario evolves, e.g.:

One week later: You receive a letter from a psychologist who is treating the staff member for serious depression. The psychologist notes that his patient is a private person who would rather not raise his troubles at work, but recognises that he is not coping with the idea of changing his teaching approach, especially for a strategy that can be quite emotional for students. The idea of changing his methods is causing a lot of anxiety. At the same time, he finds little pleasure in his teaching as it is. The staff member wishes to continue teaching, but is finding change difficult.

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<sup>10</sup> James Dalziel, “Implementing Developing Scenario Learning with Branching for Moral Values in Teacher Training,” in *Proceedings of The 9th International LAMS and Learning Design: Innovation in Learning Design*, eds. Leanne Cameron and James Dalziel. (Sydney: Macquarie University, 2014), 65-72.

Follow-up questions could be the same as the initial questions, together with an extra question about any inappropriate assumptions about the initial scenario. The second phase would typically involve a similar amount of time to the first phase (30-60 minutes in class, one week online). The whole strategy concludes with each student developing a revised plan of action and discussing his/her rationale for this plan.

While DSL does not require the use of technology, a version of this teaching strategy has been developed in the “LAMS” (Learning Activity Management System) software, an open source Learning Design system.<sup>11</sup> The “Authoring” view of the DSL structure in LAMS is showing in Figure 1. The specific teaching training example is available at: [http://lamscommunity.org/lamscentral/sequence?seq\\_id=1856812](http://lamscommunity.org/lamscentral/sequence?seq_id=1856812)

It should be noted that while the examples given in this chapter all involve a scenario that evolves in just one way, it is possible to develop other DSL structures where students have to make a choice about their actions at the end of the first phase, and this choice leads to different evolutions of the scenario according to the choice made.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> James Dalziel, “Implementing Learning Design: The Learning Activity Management System (LAMS),” in *Interact, Integrate, Impact: Proceedings of the 20th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education*, eds. Geoffrey Crisp et al. Adelaide, 7 – 10 December, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> For an example of this kind of “branched” DSL, see Dalziel, “Implementing Developing Scenario Learning.”

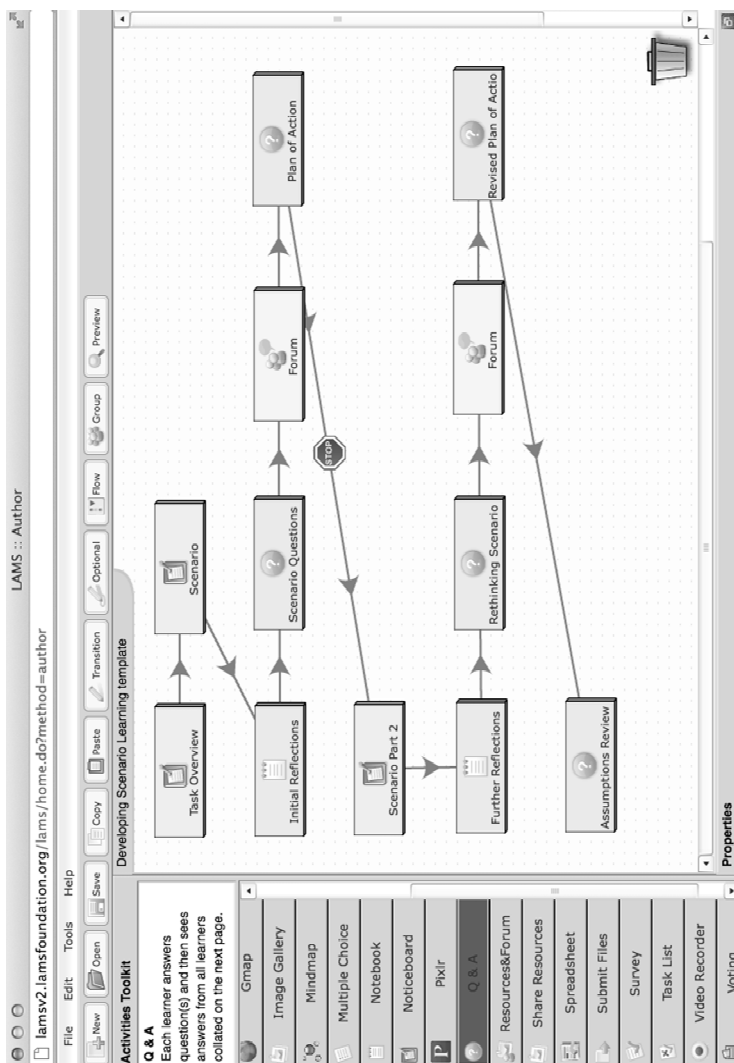


Figure 1: Authoring view of a Developing Scenario Learning template in LAMS. Icons indicate different activity tools (e.g., the Notepad icon for “Initial Reflections” is a private student notebook; the question mark icon for “Scenario Questions” is a set of questions that students answer individually, then see their answers shared with the group; the speech bubble icon for “Forum” indicates a group asynchronous discussion forum).