

# The university classroom as a hermeneutical community for the contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa



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**Dates:**

Received: 27 June 2018

Accepted: 31 Aug. 2018

Published: 29 Nov. 2018

**How to cite this article:**

Du Plessis, A.L., 2018, 'The university classroom as a hermeneutical community for the contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa', *In die Skriflig* 52(1), a2387.  
<https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2387>

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This article originates from a practical theological paradigm and uses an auto-ethnographic research method as it is a reflection on my own teaching and learning duties at the Faculty of Theology to multi-cultural students. The saying is that effective learning occurs as a result of effective teaching strategies. The research question is: What aspects are of importance in the development of an effective teaching and learning strategy that can benefit multi-cultural pastoral students? The article presents three important aspects based on the view that the (university) classroom can be a hermeneutical community. The article unfolds by discussing the plea for the contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa, followed by a discussion of what makes a classroom a hermeneutical community. Lastly, three different teaching theories for theological education are presented. The underlying principle is the lecturer's understanding of teaching and learning theories and how to apply them to reach multi-cultural students in a holistic way (i.e. cognitive, motivational, affective and spiritual). Learning then becomes an active engagement where the content of pastoral modules is interpreted and understood from a cultural context and biblical perspective.

## Introduction

This article originates from a practical theological paradigm and uses an auto-ethnographic<sup>1</sup> research method as it is a reflection on my own teaching and learning duties at the Faculty of Theology. A critical factor that influences my teaching and learning process is the question of how one can develop effective instruction that can address the diverse profile and needs of the students. The saying is that effective learning occurs resulting from effective teaching strategies. Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1994:2) referred to the people of South Africa as a rainbow nation and it is also true of the (university) classroom being a smaller community representative of the whole of South Africa. Being a lecturer of pastoral modules has its own challenges, because pastoral science is not a 'cold' science. Although the content of pastoral modules also includes a measure of theory and understanding, it is not just about facts and theories. The student's inner being and beliefs are affected by the content of pastoral modules and this content confronts the student with certain choices. Pastoral care is part of the broader science known as practical theology. It is due to the practical implications that the teaching strategies of pastoral modules must differ from other theological modules. I strongly feel that lecturing pastoral modules is not just about conveying certain knowledge, but also helping the student to find inner healing and peace by applying the knowledge firstly in their own lives, and only then getting involved in ministry to others. The research question is: What aspects are of importance in the development of an effective teaching and learning strategy that can benefit multi-cultural pastoral students?

Although there are many aspects that can be taken into consideration, the article presents three important aspects that can be applied in the university pastoral classroom context, based on the view that the classroom becomes a hermeneutical community where pastoral students can contribute to the dialogue about the contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa. Therefore, the article unfolds by discussing the need for contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa, followed by a discussion of what it means to refer to the classroom as a hermeneutical community. Lastly, the focus will be on the discussion of the behavioural, constructivist and collateral teaching theories that can be successfully integrated with the generally used theoretical instructional model when teaching theology. According to Pham (2011:406), learning is demonstrated not only in changed behaviour, but also in changes in cognitive processes. Learning is based on effective

1. An auto-ethnographic research method entails that a researcher describes his or her work and personal experiences to study a certain theory or culture of a group of people usually to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity.

teaching strategies when the lecturer is conveying his or her knowledge of the subject in an understandable way. Learning efficiency entails lecturer clarity, stimulation of interests, and an openness to students' opinions (Pham 2011:406). The underlying principle is the lecturer's understanding of teaching and learning theories and how to apply them to reach every student in a holistic way (i.e. cognitive, motivational, affective and spiritual). By applying relevant theories, the lecturer can turn the classroom into a hermeneutical community where the students recognise the validity of the present human experience.

## Contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa

In the past three years many appeals were made for a decolonised curriculum. The 'fees-must-fall' and other falling movements are evident of the urgency and impatience for decolonisation from the side of university students. In the current postcolonial context of South Africa, one important role of the ministry of pastoral caregiving is in effect to re-member those who were dis-membered based on monoculture ethnocentric<sup>2</sup> biases. The consequence of monoculture ethnocentric bias is that colonialism forced Africans to disregard their uniqueness, making them ashamed of their dances, poetry, music and even their thought systems (Mwiti & Dueck 2006:23). The call for decolonisation is an effort to heal the hurts of colonialism. In the discourse of the decolonisation of pastoral care, the name of Emmanuel Lartey immediately comes to mind. In his book, *Post-colonializing God*, Lartey (2013) pleads for a paradigm shift away from globalisation to the internationalisation and ultimately indigenisation of Practical Theology.<sup>3</sup> He advocates for indigenous African practitioners of the African traditional art of spiritual care and reflective healing practices in a postcolonialised era, and describes pastoral caregiving as a double-edged sword, with the twofold goal of community building and community transformation. While Lartey (2013) pleads for the indigenisation of pastoral care, he once advocated an intercultural approach to pastoral care. In his book, *In living colour, an intercultural approach to pastoral care and counselling* (1997), he calls for the affirmation of three basic principles in the pastoral care process, namely contextuality (the framework of surrounding beliefs and world views), multiple perspectives (listening to and dialogue within different perspectives) and authentic participation (the mutual concern for the integrity of the other). A gradual paradigm shift is therefore evident in his work. In my view, the intercultural or cross-cultural approach is a much more balanced discourse than the call for indigenisation and therefore the preference for the concept of the contextualisation of pastoral care. Louw (2010) raises an important aspect

2. Monoculture ethnocentric bias is 'a status that robs people of their culture, impoverishes their collective unconscious, negatively impacts their identity, and compromises their coping ability' (Sue & Sue 1999:35).

3. Lartey (2013:118) defines globalisation as a comprehensive pastoral ministry based on Western research and methodology, and internationalisation as an effort to work interculturally or cross-culturally. However, he states that the huge gap between the Western and African methodology only adds to the deficiency of internationalisation. He criticises an intercultural approach as at best exotic, and at its worst unprofessional. Indigenisation is seen as the counterbalance for Western predispositions.

regarding an intercultural approach and explains its transspecification dimension as:

an effort to put oneself into the head (not shoes) of another person ... a trans epistemological process which tries to experience a foreign belief, a foreign assumption, a foreign perspective and feelings in a foreign context. (p. 184)

I see the contextualisation of pastoral science as one of the important aspects for the development of an effective strategy for teaching and learning that can benefit the pastoral student; therefore I want to elaborate on the meaning of contextualisation.

According to Bevans (2016:4), contextual theology is the recognition of the validity of the present human experience.<sup>4</sup> In making the pastoral classroom a hermeneutical community for the contextualisation of pastoral care, the *loci theologici* must be taken into consideration, namely Scripture, tradition and context. The pastoral student's context influences his or her understanding of God and expression of faith. When looking at contextual theology, it is important to begin with a description of what context represents: (1) context includes the experiences of the student's personal life; (2) personal experiences are possible only within the context of a certain culture; (3) context also refers to the social location of the student; and (4) the notion of the student's present experiences involve the reality of social change (Bevans 2016:5).

It is therefore evident that the context presents opportunities and constraints, because the environment (context) sets parameters for the lecturer about the content of the pastoral modules and the teaching strategies. The development of a teaching philosophy<sup>5</sup> contains a sensitivity towards the contextual factors, such as the specific discipline and the institutional teaching and learning strategy (Schönwetter et al. 2002:83).

The contextualisation of pastoral care is furthermore affected by external and internal aspects. External aspects refer to the historical events, intellectual undercurrents, cultural shifts and political forces to which the student is exposed. According to Bevans (2016:10), external factors compel the lecturer to ask questions about the contextual relevance of the content of pastoral modules. An example to explain the importance of the cultural context can be clearly seen in how different cultures experience the sacrament of baptism. In Western cultures, reformed churches baptise believers by pouring water on their head, while in the African Masai culture pouring water over a woman's head is a ritual that curses her to barrenness (Bevans 2016:10). This is also an example of a monoculture ethnocentric bias that forced Africans to disregard their uniqueness. The contextualisation of pastoral care includes granting people the opportunity and giving them the

4. For the theme of this article, the present human experience is thus postcolonial South African students calling for a decolonised curriculum.

5. A teaching philosophy is a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a specific discipline or institutional context (Schönwetter et al. 2002:83).

confidence to work things out for themselves, on their own terms and in their own way based on their experience. Bevans (2016) concludes:

In the case of religious practice and theory, the need to express this new consciousness of independence and self-worth are particularly important, and although they are often still tentative, efforts at contextual theologizing are being made and need to be made. (p. 11)

Theology is precisely the way that religion makes sense within a specific cultural context.

The internal aspects that influence the contextualisation of pastoral care involve the dynamics within Christianity itself. There are strong arguments for a theology that takes context and contextual changes seriously as it attempts to convey and understand the Christian faith. Bevans (2016:12–15) distinguishes five arguments as internal aspects as shown in Table 1.

Human experience (context) and the Christian tradition should be read together dialectically. The danger with contextualisation is that it may lead to a practice of mixing culture and theology in such a way that it betrays the true gospel; this is referred to as syncretism. The challenge is to stay true to the Word of God. Schreiter (2007) voices the central problem that arises from this:

In the midst of this tremendous vitality that today's Christians are showing, one set of problems emerges over and over again: how to be faithful both to the contemporary experience of the gospel and to the tradition of Christian life that has been received. How is a community to go about bringing to expression its own experience of Christ in its concrete situation? And how is this to be related to a tradition that is often expressed in language and concepts vastly from anything in the current situation. (p. xi)

TABLE 1: Internal aspects of the Christian faith.

Aspect	Argument
(a) Incarnational nature of Christianity (John 1:14)	'Christianity, if it is to be faithful to its deepest roots and to its most basic insights, must continue God's incarnation in Jesus by becoming contextual' (p. 12). For the students to continue the incarnational nature of Christianity, they have to become present in their community.
(b) Sacramental nature of reality (John 1:14)	God is revealed not primarily in ideas, but rather in concrete reality. 'The whole movement of the Bible is one of interpreting the ordinary, the secular, in terms of religious symbolism' (p. 13). For students to continue the sacramental nature of Christianity, they have to reveal God's presence in a truly sacramental way.
(c) A shift in the understanding of the nature of divine revelation	'Although revelation is understood as being complete in an objective sense, God's revealing action is also seen as something that was ongoing as God continues to offer Himself to men and women in their daily lives' (p. 14).
(d) Catholicity of the church	The catholicity of the church is the essence of what the church should be. The Greek words <i>Kata</i> and <i>holos</i> refer to the all-embracing, all-inclusive, all-accepting nature of the Christian faith. 'It is that mark or dimension that insures that the church perseveres the whole gospel and strives to flourish in every part of the world and in every culture' (p. 14). Rather than a blind uniformity, Christianity is endowed with a dynamic that moves towards unity through rich diversity.
(e) The Trinity	'Contemporary understandings of God as Trinity speak of God as a dynamic, relational community of persons, whose very nature is to be present and active in the world, calling it and persuading it toward the fullness of relationship that Christian tradition calls salvation' (p. 15).

Source: Bevans, S.B., 2016, *Models of contextual theology*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY

In the research about contextualisation of theology, it is evident that the research of Stephan Bevans is ground breaking and highly valued. He published *Models of contextual theology* first in 1992 and a revised and expanded edition in 2002 and again in 2016. His description of six models of contextualisation is considered a classic on the theme. In the foreword it is described as '... a map through the sometimes bewildering array of contextual theologies today' (Pears 2010:21). Like a map, models are not to be read literally, but are useful ways of knowing reality. Bevans (2002:31) helpfully states 'It is a "case" that is useful in simplifying a complex reality'. In his book, Bevans places his models along a conservative to radical continuum, starting with the translation model, anthropological model, praxis model, synthetic model, transcendental model and ending with the countercultural model. Two models are especially helpful for successful contextualisation of pastoral care in the classroom context.

The first model that can be helpful is the praxis model. Practitioners of this model are concerned with a specific context, with Christianity in that context, and with developing a way of expressing a Christian faith approach to that context (Pears 2010:26). A marked feature of this model is social change (Bevans 2002:70). The praxis model is a way of doing theology that is formed by knowledge at its most intense level, namely the level of reflective action when the participants discern the meaning of faith and contribute to social change. This means that our reason is coupled with action, thus orthodoxy and orthopraxy (right thinking and right acting). Taking praxis and social change as its concerns, it claims a biblical precedent in action as well as in hearing the Word, for example referring to the Old Testament's prophets Isaiah and Amos. The words of James 1:22 is also of importance: 'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says'. An analogy that is used for this model is that of a garden that needs to be constantly weeded, the work never ends and practice makes one a better gardener. Bevans (2002:78) argues that this model 'is as such basically sound. It is based on an excellent epistemology, its understanding of revelation is very fresh and exciting, and it has deep roots in theological tradition'. Later in the article when the different teaching philosophies are discussed, it shows that this praxis model easily links with the behaviourist and constructivist teaching theories as it is based on knowledge – reflection – practice – reflection – practice. It is also a model that can be used in the implementation of service learning as part of pastoral modules and will be of value in the assessment of service learning.

The countercultural model is the second model helpful to the contextualisation of pastoral care in the classroom context. This model is not against culture as the name might suggest. The countercultural model is a:

radically contextual model based firmly in history and human experience, and committed to social change, whilst at the same time adapting a hermeneutic of suspicion towards the role of context and towards context itself. (Pears 2010:30)

It is an analytical and challenging model, which is embedded in Scripture and in the importance of Scripture and tradition. The gospel always presents a challenging relevance to the human situation and therefore it always offends, but for the right reasons. An analogy is that the soil of a garden needs weeding and fertilising so that the seeds can be planted. Alternative titles for this model are the encounter model, engagement model or prophetic model with their basis in the prophetic tradition and Scriptures like Romans 12:1–2. This model realises that some aspects in culture are simply antithetical to the gospel and have to be challenged by the gospel's liberating and healing power. It resonates with the goal of pastoral caregiving, as voiced by Louw (1993:3) as the care of man's spiritual life; promoting the relationship between God and man; growth towards spiritual and faith maturity; communicating the Bible message of consolation, hope and comfort; and renewal of life in totality, based on forgiveness and acceptance by God.

When looking at the above description of contextualisation of pastoral care, I am convinced that it can answer the plea for rethinking and renewing the current curricula. An intercultural or cross-cultural approach is a much more balanced look at the context of South Africa and a workable option for the decolonisation of the curricula. Louw (2010:182) summarises the essence of intercultural or cross-cultural pastoral caregiving as he states 'interculturality in pastoral care is less about the technique (counselling and communication skills) and more about the quality of the interaction and encounter (being with skills)'. Mwiti and Dueck (2006:38) voice that:

the Christian in culture ought to be rich in individual and communal expressions of faith that are connected upwards to God, inwards to the transformation of individuals, and outwards, touching others and impacting the world. (p. 38)

When the lecturer can present the curricula of pastoral caregiving in this way, the students are reached on all dimensions to grow in their relationship with God, themselves and others.

## The classroom as a hermeneutical community

All changes that are planned for teaching and learning must be in accordance with the strategy of the university. The Teaching and Learning Strategy of the North-West University (NWU) was approved by the NWU Senate on 25 May 2016 and the NWU Council on 23 June 2016. The educational approach described in the strategy can be summarised as an outcomes-oriented, student-centred educational approach focused on inquiry-based, active, participative and meaningful learning within a supportive and enabling environment, with learning designs that include blended learning and that are enhanced by appropriate technologies and multimedia resources. In short, it boils down to creating meaningful teaching and learning experiences where the students become self-directed and

life-long learners. In making the classroom a hermeneutical community for the contextualisation of pastoral care, the lecturer plays an important role by applying the principles as prescribed by the university. To succeed, I am sure that the behavioural and constructivist teaching theories can be integrated with the theoretical-based instructional model of teaching theology. I base my opinion on the following: In the behavioural theory teaching strategy three board components can be distinguish, namely (1) direct instruction determines what should be taught and how the content should be organised based on general categories; (2) it includes specific programmes to build skills by organising lessons and planning teaching procedures and events in detail; and (3) it specifies a clear set of procedures about how lecturers and students interact (Pham 2011:407). The above distinctions are also relevant to the service learning component of the constructivist teaching theory. The lecturer as a subject specialist has the opportunity to develop a teaching philosophy that encompasses important components such as teaching behaviours and methods, content structure, student learning styles and assessments, learning context, strategies and student motivation (Schönwetter et al. 2002:84). This will empower the lecturer to reach the students in a holistic way and in helping them with personal growth, as well as helping them to be ready for their own pastoral care ministry.

When thinking of turning the classroom into a hermeneutical community, it is also necessary to have a clear understanding of what hermeneutics entails. Hermeneutics is defined as the interpretation, understanding and application of the Word of God. Pastoral care is the continuation of the proclamation of the Word in a practical manner, but with the necessary sensitivity not to overwhelm the counselee (or student in the class), but rather helping them with proper interpretation (Louw 1993:6). De Wet (2014:2) adds to this by explaining that pastoral care is not only a descriptive science that explores the praxis, it is also a normative science that offers a vision for how the world should be and that suggests ways towards change. In pastoral care, human actions and experiences are considered in the light of the extent to which these actions are anchored in and reflect the creative, redemptive and consummating acts of the triune God. Pastoral care is therefore an activity that has to do with hermeneutical interaction between theory and praxis. This is the reason why the previously mentioned models for contextualisation are so important. The emphasis is not on the message of Christ over and against the specific culture or context, but on the interpretation (hermeneutical interaction) of the Word that can transform and restore the culture. Lecturers from different cultural backgrounds should consider the culture of the students and be careful to avoid causing someone to lose face or experience shame in their teaching and assessment methods. Mutual respect and open communication in a safe environment are of cardinal importance. Anthropological studies can help lecturers to understand how to engage with different cultures in effective ways. Lewis (2002:566), for instance distinguishes roughly between three different orientations that can help the lecturer

with a broad understanding of the behaviour of the students, namely (1) linear actives are those in the West who prefer sequential tasks, direct communication, and have no fear of confrontation in relationships; (2) multi-actives are those such as Latin-America, southern Europe, Arab lands and sub-Saharan Africa who talk much and freely, enjoy having more than one activity or conversation going at a time, value relationships, and are not slaves to a schedule; (3) re-actives are Asian and some American indigenous cultures who prefer to hear truth and respond to it rather than force their opinions first; they tend to be more introverted, are adept with non-verbal communications, are respectful of others, and prefer diplomatic truth.

Sills (2016) points out that lecturers are often surprised when they realise that their teaching style is driven by the educational style they were educated in and adds that lecturers:

should go into our global classrooms teaching what the Bible clearly presents. We should allow differences of opinion on matters where it is not clear and remain silent when the Bible is (clear). In doing so we will train pastors in culturally appropriate ways. Such an approach allows for mutual respect and learning from one another. (p. 568)

God's Word is not one set of truths for one culture and another for the next, yet each culture must apply the Word that may be unique to them (Sills 2016:282). Appropriate application is the goal of hermeneutics, and clear understanding of what the Word is saying (exegesis) is essential for proper application.

Contextualisation does not change the content of the Bible (and therefore the content of pastoral modules that is based on Scripture); it is simply the process of making the content understood in the context – thus: hermeneutics, the interpretation, understanding and application of the Word of God in a certain context. Critical contextualisation is in need of a balance between proper understanding, interpretation and application in the target culture or context. Sills (2016:291) proposes a four-fold approach, namely (1) cultural exegesis, which means to study the culture nonjudgementally to clearly understand what the students believe and do, and why; (2) biblical exegesis in hermeneutical community, which means to study pericopes from the Bible with the students to identify what it says about a certain theme; (3) leading the students to a critical response or reflection, which is where they realise that God's Word prohibits some belief or action and commands change when necessary; (4) new contextualised practices, which are the changes the students embrace and institute as a result of learning.

In practice, making the classroom a hermeneutical community means that the lecturer and the students must first 'unpack' the content of the pastoral module before beginning to interpret it for the context. In unpacking the content, the point of departure or orientation and the resources are identified, and only then interpretation can begin. Secondly, relevant pericopes are viewed exegetically for understanding

and interpretation. And thirdly, as the hermeneutical classroom community studies Scripture to apply it in the context, pastoral issues arise that require cultural and biblical knowledge. In this way, the students are empowered to apply the principles in the present environment in helping social change and healing. The goal of the contextualisation of pastoral modules is to teach, translate, interpret, apply (minister) and reflect in ways that are both faithful to the Word of God and sensitive to the context.

## Learning theories appropriate for theology

As mentioned earlier in the article, a critical factor that influences my teaching and learning process is the question of how one can develop effective instruction that can address the diverse profile and needs of the multi-cultural students. Teaching theology is largely based on the instructional theory of teaching and learning where the lecturer takes a central role and transfers knowledge directly to students through presentations (HoTEL n.d.). According to Pham (2011:406), any productive teaching method and activity are governed by learning theories. The lecturer must therefore have a variety of skills and a solid understanding of different concepts, ideas and theories. Bigge and Shermis (2004:5) go as far as saying that lecturers who do not 'make use of a systematic body of theory ... are behaving blindly'. In my view, three additional learning theories that can be successfully integrated with the theoretical instructional model for teaching theology for lecturing the pastoral modules are the behavioural, constructivist and collateral learning theories. A short description of these theories will follow.

### Behavioural theory

According to the behavioural theory, learning occurs when there are observable changes in human behaviour that are acquired through conditioning (Pham 2011:406). It is a process that is achieved by means of interactions with the environment, in other words engagement with the surrounding environment (community) in real-life examples. The outward behaviour of the student is the key indicator of learning, as the student must be able to apply the knowledge and insight in practice. Bigge and Shermis (2004:19) emphasise the relationship between three important factors in the behavioural theory, namely antecedent (stimuli), behaviours (responses) and consequent conditions (rewards or punishments). In pastoral modules, the lecturer plays an important role by taking these three factors into consideration. Curriculum development should include programmed instruction, determining what to teach with objectives based on desired behaviour to shape responses to successful outcomes of the module. The transferring of learning is another important element. The lecturer must make sure that the skills, knowledge and attitudes that the student learns in the classroom context can be transformed and applied to the practical setting of pastoral ministry. The student will show the ability to connect the theoretical orientation and the practical application in real-life situations (Pham 2011:407).

The challenge for the lecturer is therefore to help the students bridge the gap between theory and practice. Bridging of the gap between theory and practice can be done by direct instruction or mastery learning.

Direct instruction provides 'a disciplinary structure and can lead to meaningful and systematic learning experiences' (Pham 2011:407). Direct instruction requires classroom environments that have been established as a climate of collaborative learning where the students can voice their feelings and ideas. The lecturer must often intervene in the conversation to ensure that discussions and learning outcomes stay on track. The biggest advantage of direct instruction is that the lecturer structures, organises and plans the content of the model for a progression from general to specific pastoral approaches. But despite this advantage, the limitation is that it offers few opportunities for self-directed learning.

Lecturing pastoral modules can start with direct instruction but must eventually reach a higher level of critical thinking according to the level descriptions of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Mastery learning answers to a higher level of learning outcomes in pastoral modules. If the initial learning is organised, consistently assessed and taught in a specific way, mastery learning is assumed, and the students can master curriculum knowledge (Pham 2011:408). Prior knowledge and the student's frame of reference serve as a prerequisite foundation for learning, so it is required that the student masters basic or general content before moving on to specific pastoral approaches. With mastery learning, the students must demonstrate their competence in the required standard of performance. Cooperative and service learning as learning strategies of the constructivist theory can add value to the mastery learning experience.

## Constructivist theory

According to Brown and Green (2006:37), constructivism is based on the belief that 'an individual constructs his or her understanding of the world in which he or she lives by reflecting on personal experiences'. Pham (2011:411) adds that learners must play an active role in seeking meaning and nurturing self-awareness. This is especially important in the contextualisation for pastoral modules. Contextualisation is an attempt to understand the Christian faith – and therefore the pastoral ministry – in terms of a particular context. The student's understanding is contextually embedded and influenced by the environment or community. According to constructivist perspectives, learning occurs when the students are actively engaged in the learning process and they integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge (Bigge & Shermis 2004:3). Learning is therefore an active process and teaching is done by supporting the students to apply their gained knowledge. Effective strategies include the use of thought-provoking questions and scaffolding<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Scaffolding refers to a spiral instructional model that provides extensive support and a framework of sequential lesson content so that content gradually builds up students' understanding of new concepts based on their prior knowledge (Pham 2011:411).

techniques. This is especially helpful to create meaningful teaching and learning experiences for the students while the community is engaged. Constructivism is best seen in cooperative and service learning methods.

Cooperative learning involves small-group assignments to accomplish shared outcomes, promote socialisation and enhance students' willingness to work with others with diverse needs and sociocultural backgrounds (Pham 2011:412). In this method, the lecturer must categorise students into small groups with similar characteristics, set feasible objectives, plan activities and monitor the individual progress of each student. Pham (2011:412) calls the lecturer the 'guide on the side, who facilitates student learning by not directly getting involved in learning tasks and strategies but provide[s] support when necessary'.

The one outstanding goal in lecturing pastoral modules is to help students bridge the gap between theory and practice. Service learning, also called experiential learning, can be helpful. Silberman (2007:8) defines service learning as 'the involvement of learners in concrete activities that enable them to "experience" what they are learning about and the opportunity to reflect on those activities'. Service learning is a way to integrate theory with practice. The foundation of such learning is the interaction between the students and the community. The lecturer of pastoral modules must be creative in organising events for service learning,<sup>7</sup> such as community service, field experiences like visiting schools or hospitals, et cetera. In this way, the students are exposed to social issues and community service and they become innovative and critical thinkers, principled leaders, effective communicators and skilled collaborators in their communities. Service learning became a requirement in curriculum development when the Council of Higher Education issued a white paper for post-school education and training that was approved by the cabinet on 20 November 2013 (CHE 2006). The goal is to promote and develop social awareness amongst students and to demonstrate the social responsibility of institutions. The lecturer of pastoral modules must find a careful balance between the integration of service and learning, and must remember that in assessment, academic credits are for learning and not for service. The pedagogy of service learning (CHE 2006) is based on the advancement of the students' sense of social responsibility and commitment to the greater good. It creates a learning synergy for students where academic learning is valued along with community-based experiential learning, giving students control over their learning by allowing them to make decisions in directing their own learning. It encourages active learning through community participation and elicits contributions from students on what they have learned in the community and how this can be utilised in the classroom. This kind of learning welcomes both objective and subjective ways of learning and understanding of the module content. The prior indigenous

<sup>7</sup>The integration of service learning into a module has four different phases. The lecturer is responsible for identifying appropriate institutions, as well as for finalising the memorandum of understanding with the institution. All the possible risks and liability issues for the participants must be recognised and precautions must be in place.

knowledge of the student is important to accomplish the construction of meaning in a new and unfamiliar context, therefore – in line with the theme of the article – it calls for the inclusion of the collateral teaching theory.

### Collateral teaching theory

All learning is facilitated by culture and takes place in a social context. The role of the social context or community is to help the learner by providing suggestions and help to foster coconstruction of knowledge while interaction with other occurs. Jegede and Aikenhead (1999) explain that from the viewpoint of cultural anthropology, to:

learn science is to acquire the culture of science. To acquire the culture of science, pupils must travel from their everyday life-world to the world of science found in their science classroom. (p. 47)

A problem originates when the students' 'everyday life-world' culture differs from the culture of what is taught in the classroom. This confirms the call for a decolonised curricula because the clash of cultures within the classroom might lead to the loss of meaningful learning necessary for useful application in understanding life outside the classroom.

The clash of cultures can alienate students from their indigenous culture, thereby causing various social disruptions; alternatively, it can alienate students from the content of the module, thereby causing them to develop clever ways to pass the examination without learning the content in a meaningful way expected by the university and the community. The challenge for lecturers is to help the students transcending cultural borders with a deep understanding of the content of the module to apply it in the unfamiliar context. This is where the collateral teaching theory is helpful. The idea of cultural border crossings emerged from Giroux's (1992) book *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education*. Students are encouraged to live in a world of border crossings with multiple narratives that define reality, without losing their own way of thinking or their own voice. The following ingredients for successful border crossing are suggested:

a sense of flexibility, playfulness, and/or feelings of ease. These ingredients help clarify the human capacity to think differently in different cultures, a capacity that has implications for pupil's success at learning science. (Jegede & Aikenhead 1999:49)

The role of the lecturer varies from coaching apprentices to a tour-guide culture broker and depends on the cultural processes of instruction or learning methods. The successful implementation of the collateral teaching theory will be evident if the students are able to cross cultural borders effectively with a cognitive explanation (deep understanding) of cross-cultural (intercultural) social experiences. In my view, no science can any longer be taught in the postcolonial context of South Africa without the incorporation of the collateral teaching theory.

### Theories as foundation for the facilitation of learning

Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2012:77) quote the psychologist Carl Rogers on his view that teaching and the implementation of knowledge only make sense in an unchanging environment, but because we live in a continuously changing environment, the aim of teaching must be that of the facilitation of learning. Keeping this in mind, Rogers defines the role of the lecturer as a 'facilitator of learning' and states that the critical element in performing this role is the relationship between the facilitator (lecturer) and the student. The relationship is described to be dependent on three attitudinal qualities of the lecturer, namely (1) realness or genuineness, (2) non-possessive caring, trust and respect, and (3) empathic understanding and sensitive listening. These attitudes are necessary in lecturing pastoral modules, because the content confronts the student with certain choices and emotions. In responding to these expressions in the classroom and during experiential learning events, the lecturer must expect both intellectual content and emotionalised attitudes, endeavouring to give each aspect the appropriate degree of emphasis (Knowles et al. 2012:79). In this way the lecturer accepts rationalisations and intellectualising, as well as deep and real feelings. As a lecturer of pastoral modules, I must remain alert for expressions that reveal deep and strong feelings. These may be feelings of pain, conflict, et cetera that exist primarily within the student, or they may be feelings of anger, affliction, et cetera that reflect an attitude amongst the students. In each case, the lecturer should carefully and sensitively help to bring the emotions into the open for constructive understanding and use by the group. This relates also to the fundamental assumption that any episode of learning occurs in a specific context and is profoundly influenced by the context.

### Conclusion

This article looked at the classroom as a hermeneutical community for the contextualisation of pastoral care in South Africa. Many voices arose during the last two to three decades calling for a more culturally sensitive approach in the pastoral care ministry. Words such as interculturation, inculturation and indigenisation are used as synonyms, but when looking at the theory formation behind these words, it is not synonyms. In the last few years, it seems as if there is more consensus that the word contextualisation best describes the challenge for cultural and context sensitivity. This call poses a profound challenge to the lecturing of pastoral modules at university level. As a lecturer of pastoral modules, I had to rethink what the relevance of the content of the modules is in the present environment or context of the students. This led to the reformation of my own teaching philosophy, theories and strategies. In the present age, learning is no longer a passive absorption of information, but an active engagement by the students with the information, both individually and collectively. In the past the differences amongst the students were seen as a problem, but in the process of rethinking the differences amongst the students,

they have come to be seen as a rich source for research. My lecturing style had to change from previously conveying facts and procedures, to where central ideas, concepts, facts, processes and argumentation of the what, why and how of pastoral care are shared between myself and the students. This is only possible when the classroom becomes a safe space with shared openness and respect. The classroom as a hermeneutical community for the contextualisation of pastoral care that embraces learning as a process of active engagement where the content of the module is interpreted and understood from a cultural context and biblical perspective. This means that the students are empowered to become innovative and critical thinkers, in their own right principled leaders, effective communicators and skilled collaborators in the community.

## Acknowledgements

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

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