



## Portfolio, Partnership and Pedagogy

Author: Martin Groves and Phillip Tovey

---

Journal Title: Discourse

ISSN: 2040-3674

ISSN-L: 1741-4164

Volume: 7

Number: 1

Start page: 135

End page: 152

---

[Return to vol. 7 no. 1 index page](#)

---

## Introduction

This paper has the reasonably modest aspiration of reflecting on the experience that a faith community (the Anglican Diocese of Oxford) and an institution of higher education (Oxford Brookes University) have of teaching practical theology over the last decade. There has been much change over that period of time in our institutions and in our teaching of theology. For the purpose of providing background and context, an account is given of some of those changes in this paper. The main focus of the paper is its reflection on the significance of two prominent aspects of our current practice; namely partnership and portfolio based pedagogy. It will be suggested in this paper that our partnership and portfolio based teaching, learning and assessment strategies are not just arrangements of convenience but significant and vital elements in our teaching of practical theology at the present time.

One key issue that lies behind much of the debate about the nature of theology and the location of its discourses is, of course, secularisation. We find it necessary to spend so much time reflecting on the nature of theology and its place in

relation to higher education, mainly because of the marginalisation of the churches and the secularisation of the academy. First the marginalisation, then the problematisation and most recently the demonisation of religion has created a problem for theology in general, and it has created a particular problem for practical theology in the academy. In this paper we reflect on our experience of partnership as an appropriate constructive response to the current problem of the location of practical theology (see also, Groves 2004, Ford 1999). We have no reason to suppose that our experience of partnership is particularly unique or distinctive, though we believe that should not stop us from subjecting it to critical scrutiny.

The way in which we have developed portfolio based pedagogy for the teaching, learning and assessment of practical theology is, we suspect, more distinctive and may well require further elaboration for those who are not familiar with the use of portfolios in other educational contexts. After seven years experience we are of the view that a portfolio based approach to learning, teaching and assessment is a particularly appropriate pedagogical tool for use in practical theology, one which is well suited to serve the needs of partnerships between faith communities and secular universities. This paper seeks to initiate exploration of this claim and begin interrogation of the appropriateness of portfolio based pedagogy for the teaching of practical theology in a partnership between church and academy.

## **Portfolio in the Diocese of Oxford**

In 1996 the Diocese of Oxford had a major consultation looking at the future of its training provision. At the time there was a traditional lecture and essay based course for Reader training, a similar course for training Non Stipendiary Ministers (NSM), various local programmes for lay training and an Ordained Local Ministers (OLM) scheme that wanted to share some of the training with the NSM course and have other standalone elements. Assessment was mostly of written work, and that mostly essays.

The consultation resulted in a proposal to undertake a major revision of the Diocesan training programme, which would combine most of these strands together under a portfolio based assessment scheme. The aim was still to train people for ministry but now this was to incorporate a wide variety of ministries, both lay and ordained, licensed and authorised, into one scheme. The interested layperson was always to be welcomed and form part of the vision for the overall programme.

Aspects of ministry were divided up into units (rather than modules) called Gifts and Competencies. These were developed by a job functional analysis, which asked what knowledge and skills were required for a particular job within the organisation. While in some ways of doing this the emphasis has been on skills to the detriment of knowledge, the Diocese kept both knowledge and skills together, i.e. the practitioner needs to be able to do things and know why they need to be done. In all over 40 Gifts and Competencies were developed, various combinations being deemed appropriate for different ministries.

Assessment is conducted by the production of a portfolio for each Gift and Competency. These can include essays but also reflective writing and examples of practical work, e.g. sermons, worship services developed, and cases studies of pastoral work. The philosophy of portfolio encourages the learner (and the assessor) to be open to a wide variety of evidence. A mentor is provided to help the learner put together a portfolio, and to guide the learner about the relevance of the evidence that is being submitted and its sufficiency to complete the Gift and Competency.

It is perhaps worth saying that all of the people in the training programme are adults, many over 40, and few have been involved in higher education. Also while training people for 'professional' ministry, no one on our programme will be paid for their work in the church. Previous training had been linked to Oxford University, but to get a Certificate in Biblical and Theological Studies people had to sit Martin Groves and Phillip Tovey's Portfolio, Partnership and Pedagogy exam. Very few were willing to do this and the accreditation was thus a very secondary feature of previous programmes.

In constructing the new portfolio based training programme we sought to value people's prior learning and experience

in contrast to more traditional trainings which sometimes seem to diminish or negate students' previous learning in work and life. The inclusion of prior learning either by including evidence in a portfolio for a Gift and Competency or by a more formal Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) route has been another key value in the programme (Tovey, 2002). This has led to the thrust of the programme being to complete portfolios against particular outcomes and not necessarily to attend courses.

Some ten years ago all of this was brought together in a successful validation of a BA and MA in Ministry by Portfolio by Oxford Brookes University. At first this was with the Education Department and then, following the merger of Westminster College with Oxford Brookes University, a relationship began with Theology and Religious Studies at the Westminster Institute of Oxford Brookes University. The MA has since been revalidated and the BA has become a Foundation Degree.

The reactions from the learners were at first quite mixed. Some people found it hard to get out of a lecture and essay mentality. Others became quite creative in building portfolios. Soon there were 100 learners in the programme and 50 people were trained to be mentors. These are all volunteers who take on mentoring 2 or 3 people at a time. A number of people were trained to be placement supervisors in the parish context.

Part of our educational philosophy was to move to a reflective practitioner model based on the work of Schon (1983, 1991), and experiential learning based on the models of Boud (1985), Kolb (1984), Brookfield (1987) and Mezirow (1991). The aim has been to integrate classroom knowledge and practical ministry constantly putting together the knowledge and skills, not least in a portfolio of evidence for assessment.

The portfolios vary in the evidence included, but perhaps not quite as much as the rhetoric sounds. While in theory a wide variety of evidence is allowed, many people put in more standard element of essays and written pieces of work from the parish (with feedback from supervisors). Those who have been very creative have generated challenges in assessment. One person completed all portfolios electronically by generating web pages. Another completed a spirituality portfolio by painting an icon and taping a reflection on it. Due to health reasons one person completed her last three portfolios all on tape. A number of people have included mind maps. One person never wrote an essay for all her portfolios but submitted reflections, diagrams, presentations. Pictures have been included, and some people have presented documents more like a business proposal.

The introduction of assessment by portfolio and in particular the assessment of a diverse range of evidence required careful thought and staff development. This has been done by the Diocese through workshops both in consultation with the university but also by in-house training. Bringing together mentors, who first mark the portfolios, and having group exercises of marking, has produced a growing culture of understanding the qualities required for a good portfolio. These are defined in the course handbook as including evidence that is sufficient, current, authentic and valid. Sufficiency has been a point of great debate and the programme probably asks for less evidence than at first.

Currency of evidence has kept to a 5-year rule. Authenticity requires that the work is the work of the learner and not someone else. Validity asks if the evidence presented actually fulfils the required outcome. One key part of the portfolio is the introduction. In this students are encouraged to describe their learning in completing the unit, including their own development through courses, practical work and the whole learning process. Learners are also encouraged to look forward to potential areas for future development. The inclusion of this page of writing is critical in the integration of theory and practice in a context of personal self-evaluation. We have used portfolios to enable students to develop their self-understanding as reflective practitioners and to identify key issues in their formation for ministry. This is perhaps now better evidenced than any previous system the Diocese has previously run.

One of the most complex areas for the development of the programme has been to establish what constitutes an appropriate volume of evidence in relationship to the credit rating of the portfolio units. At first our validated program included units of 5 and 10 credits. This was very helpful from a 'training for ministry' perspective as it was possible to include a wide range of subjects in, say, a Certificate. However it soon became clear that a 5-credit portfolio was not

sufficient to enable students to critically evidence the gifts and competencies required for ministry. It was unrealistic to expect students to produce very slim portfolios and much more satisfactory to work with larger units. In due course the change to Foundation Degree led to all units being 15 credits as that was the standard size given by the university. Even after that adjustment, size of portfolios was a critical issue. Some people produce very large portfolios and others relatively slim ones. In part the nature of student centred portfolio pedagogy is to allow some variation, however in dialogue with the external examiner a clearer definition of word length of evidence has been written into the course handbooks, and mentors trained to work with these guidelines.

The switch to a Foundation Degree has been a positive move. While not changing the educational approach the Foundation Degree emphasis on work-based learning, and vocational education has fitted with the ministry training needs of the Diocese. A new development was the inclusion of Ripon College Cuddesdon in the program. They wanted an accredited course in which ministry skills were seen as integral to the course rather than one where theoretical knowledge is assessed and accredited but practical ministry is unaccredited. There is now the development of a further partner just about to join in the consortium.

## Practical Theology at Westminster College

There is a sense in which Oxford Brookes' involvement with the teaching of practical theology considerably predates the 1999 validation of the Diocesan training programme. In 2000 Westminster College Oxford, a Methodist College of Higher Education, merged with and became absorbed within Oxford Brookes, a secular new university. As a result of the merger Oxford Brookes became heir to the Westminster College programmes in theology. Westminster College had pioneered developments in practical theology with the development of a CNAA validated MA in Applied Theology by distance learning. This degree had been developed in the 1980s and by the early '90s it had acquired a strong national and international reputation, recruiting students from around the world. It might be imagined that as a Church College of Higher Education, Westminster had no need to offer any fundamental apology for teaching practical theology. Nevertheless in those days it was an increasingly cold climate for religion (even in Church Colleges) and it is significant to reflect on the precise location and character of the Westminster Masters in Applied Theology. It is possible to note three points of accommodation, which indicate the already problematised situation of practical theology in the academy. Its *level*, its *mode* and its *curriculum* all represented a certain differentiation between the world of practical theology and the world of the secular academy. Even in the context of a Church College of Higher Education, practical theology at Westminster was from the outset conducted at arm's length from the ordinary business of the secular academy.

In respect of its *level* practical theology was taught at Westminster only at Masters level, a site of academic activity appropriately specialised and separated from the mainstream bulk of undergraduate studies; a site, as it were, for consenting adults. The *mode* was distance learning. Indeed it is generally recognised that Westminster led the way in the development of distance learning theology at that time. Distance learners were (in the nature of the case) part time students only rarely physically present in the academy. These were students somehow different from other students. Notwithstanding its evident success in the 1980s and '90s, both the level and mode of teaching practical theology at Westminster were sufficiently differentiated to enable it to be held at arm's length from the ordinary world of the secular academy. The third point of accommodation concerned the curriculum. Here the relationship with secularism was not so much differentiation but rather the opposite, accommodation in its more normal sense. The model of practical theology pioneered by the Westminster College Masters was the fairly simple and straightforward training of faith practitioners in the skills and methods of the social sciences so that they could apply those methods in the analysis of their professional context. Now there is a lot to be said for the application of social science methods within the disciplines of practical theology, but it does represent an essentially deconstructive and individualistic approach to practical theology?one that requires very little compromise from the secular academy.

This description of the pioneering work in modern practical theology at the former Westminster College should not be taken in a negative way. Indeed the original MA in Applied Theology demonstrated its strength and vitality by

successfully undergoing many revisions and revalidations including an Oxford University iteration as MTh in Applied Theology. Since merger with Oxford Brookes University it has become the MA in Practical and Contextual Theology (MA PaCT). The Westminster Institute MA PaCT is recognisably the same degree as the original Westminster College MA and is currently enjoying a surge of popularity. The point being made here is not that there was anything wrong with any of the Westminster Masters' degrees in applied or practical theology, only that in considering the matter of teaching practical theology in higher education there are certain significances to be noted in respect of the level, mode and curriculum adopted by these early modern expressions of practical theology in the academy.

## **The Significance of Partnership and Portfolio in the teaching of Practical Theology in Higher Education**

When in 1999 Westminster College became part of Oxford Brookes University, some people wrongly imagined that the translation from a Church College to a full bodied university would privilege academic, scholarly and theoretical theological endeavour at the expense of practical projects and partnerships with the churches and faith communities. As has been noted from the account that has been given of practical theology in the recent history of Oxford Diocese, this turned out not to be the case. On the contrary, upon the merger with Brookes the Westminster theologians acquired an active and direct interest in the newly validated partnership between the university and the training programme of the Diocese. What they hadn't realised was that the universities, particularly the new universities, are seriously involved in myriad professional partnerships within and beyond the regions they serve. And so it turned out to be the case that whilst the secular university may have had relatively little intellectual appetite for some of the traditional disciplines of academic theology, it had considerably less difficulty engaging with a professional training programme with church partners. The university did not particularly discriminate between the training needs of the faith communities and the training needs of local employers, Health Care Trusts, The Ministry of Defence, or whosoever. Once again it is possible to see how the secular academy locates practical theology in comfortable frames of reference. On the whole it is probably the case that universities have little interest in practical theology for its own sake. But they are able and willing to support it in the context of the development of professional regional partnerships in which they do have an interest.

It is easy to see the benefit of partnership in the teaching of practical theology in the secularised world of higher education. Partnerships provide an articulated relationship with churches and faith based groups in the community. It is an articulated relationship that, even more effectively than the old distance learning programmes, holds religion at arm's length. Of course it does not follow from this that the universities are automatically interested in developing collaborative relationships and partnerships with churches and faith organisations. They will do so only if they can see benefit accruing to themselves and if the partnership has a sound business plan. Whatever arrangements are put in place they must generate a secure and worthwhile income stream for the university. Without this, talk of partnership will not even be brought to the starting line. This is likely to be the largest obstacle to the continued development of partnerships between the churches and higher education. The faith communities often give the impression of wanting to live in the cash free world of voluntary and volunteering organisations. Partnerships between faith communities and the universities cannot exist under these conditions.

Under the secularising conditions of modernity and the privileging of differentiated identities under post-modernity, the articulated relationship of partnership offers a natural mechanism for the churches to relate to higher education. Within such partnerships, portfolio based programmes develop the principle of articulation in a way which is mutually beneficial.

## **Practical Theology, the Church and the Academy**

A diocesan training department is one location of major grappling with issues of practical theology. Both of the immediate previous words need some refinement. Theology had been seen as an academic university subject perhaps since the medieval development of universities. There is certainly a fear of the word in many of the people in

the diocesan training program; laypeople don't have theology; that is what professors at Oxford do. Laurie Green (1990) by contrast, locates theology at many levels: academy, denomination, parish, and Sunday school teacher. Schleiermacher has tinged practical theology with the idea that this is professional ministerial training (Farley, 1983). The rise of theological colleges in the Victorian period perhaps divided the academy from the theological college, each gradually finding a different identity. However, to reduce the term practical theology to ministerial, indeed ordained ministry training would presently be a misrepresentation of the position and work of the Diocese.

The department of Stewardship, Training, Evangelisation, and Ministry (STEM) in the Diocese of Oxford has a whole range of functions and grapples with a variety of practical theological questions:

- What is the place of children in the church? How can parishes be helped to include them as full members of the community?
- What is the perspective that young people can contribute to the church's understanding of itself and the world?
- What is the best way that the faith community can protect its young people and vulnerable adults?
- How is the church to be resourced? How are the people of this area to best use their time and talents?
- How does the church respond to an ever-changing context?
- What is the mission of the church today, and how is that most appropriately conducted?
- How is the church to develop its leaders?

There are also questions about ministry:

- What are the criteria for selecting people for ministries in the church?
- What sort of priests does the church need in the future?
- What is the place of lay ministry in the church?

There have also been large questions about: the relationship with other churches nationally and locally, there being many Local Ecumenical Partnerships in the diocese; and the place of women in ministry, there being many women priests and priestly married couples. More recently the diocese has had a major controversy about sexuality and leadership in the diocese. If practical theology begins with concrete issues on the ground, in contrast to theoretical issues in abstract, then clearly one locus of practical theological issues is a faith community.

While the department includes a brief for ministry training, this has been mostly for lay training in the past, particularly for the office of Reader. The development of Ordained Local Ministry has led to dioceses increasingly being involved in ordination training. This has traditionally been the realm of theological colleges, of which Ripon College Cuddesdon is one of the oldest, being a project of bishop Samuel Wilberforce to train the clergy of the diocese. Theological colleges soon became national institutions. After the Second World War Non Stipendiary Ministry was developed and this led to the development of courses, not least the Oxford Ministry Course, to allow part time education for ordained ministry. This, alongside OLM and Reader ministry, led to a complexity of different strands and courses. The portfolio training scheme was the Diocese of Oxford's attempt to respond to this problem. Recently all of this has been set in a new context by the Hind Report (2002) and the emergence of Regional Training Partnerships (RTP). Reflecting the orientation of the Oxford portfolio scheme, Hind also conceived of ministerial training as being for the entire range of ministries, lay and ordained, paid and unpaid, local and national.

The teaching that the diocese engages in is multi levelled. Some is at a simple level, and some is more complex. In the course of accrediting the Portfolio scheme it became apparent that much of our previous work in teaching had been at level 1 HE. More recently the department has developed a programme for training in leadership called

'Servant Leadership'?this is now used by a number of dioceses in England and Wales. Training the leaders in the church in issues of leadership and ministry has been crucial in a context where the initial training of many of the incumbents was for a type of pastoral ministry that is rapidly ceasing to exist. The teaching and learning from this programme is being used by some learners to complete portfolios for their MA in Ministry. At present Professor Tony Berry is conducting a research project on the programme to evaluate its effectiveness. This is indicative of another sort of partnership relationship; that beyond the issues of accreditation.

## **Faith Community and University Partnership**

The value of a partnership with a university goes beyond accreditation. Clearly it is important to the Diocese that the training delivered is of comparable standard to a university and that this is recognised through the validation process. However, there is also a wider cultural context. The students benefit from having their work recognised in the award. Many of them have never been to university and feel that they are unable to produce material of university standard. There is a huge growth in confidence on receiving a university-accredited award. Diocesan staff also benefit from the training available both in Oxford Brookes and in organisations such as Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SEEC). These mostly have been encouraging, confirming that the teaching is at similar levels to universities and that the problems discussed in the Diocese are shared with other subject areas. Diocesan staff have benefited from training in APL, plagiarism, reflective learning, and levels and credit issues. This cultural exchange is another benefit of partnership with a university.

There are some downsides, however, as in any partnership. One issue is the amount of investment of time in validation and ongoing accreditation. For the Foundation Degree considerable hours were spent in its production. In this process new learning was required not least about the nature of Foundation Degrees. Some dioceses would not have enough staff or the expertise to undertake such a major project. Although a church problem, the programme seems to go from one inspection process to another, so having just finished the validation of the Foundation Degree, there are now two bodies from the church inspecting different training routes (OLM and Reader). Thus it appears to the staff that they are constantly in a process of validation or inspection.

Overall the benefits to the diocese are much greater than the drawbacks. In the Regional Training Partnership there are five dioceses working with five different accrediting universities. Discussions at that level would indicate similar issues as have been raised. There is also a varying amount of support from universities for different programmes, which is in part a function of where the validating body is geographically to the programme it has validated. There are also considerable variations in the financial arrangements with different universities. University accreditation is clearly here to stay and there will be an ongoing discussion in the church about these issues and with the universities in the various partnerships.

## **Portfolio and Pedagogy**

There is a body of literature, describing, defending and debating the place of portfolio based assessment in learning and teaching strategies (De Rijdt, C. Tiquet, E. Dochy, & F. Devolder, M., 2006; Leggett, M & Bunker A.; 2006, Gibbs, 1995). Here it is only possible to offer some brief definitions and descriptions in order to clarify what role it has come to play in our teaching of practical theology in the partnership between Oxford Brookes University and the Diocese of Oxford.

It is sometimes assumed that when 'portfolio' is referred to in the educational context, what is being spoken of is no more or less than a mode of assessment. It is certainly true that whilst portfolio does present itself in the first instance as a mode, a moment and a form of assessment, nevertheless it contains some underlying principles which profoundly affect and drive the student learning experience. That is why we speak here and elsewhere of portfolio based pedagogy.

The significance we attach to assessment by portfolio is indicative of the application of two principles that (whilst not

without their critics) are reasonably well established in contemporary educational practice. The first is that assessment can and should be used as a principle tool or driver of student learning. It follows from this that the form of assessment should be appropriate to the context of the learner. The second is that assessment should be directly related to the intended learning outcomes for the unit of work in question. The portfolio is the ordered and self-critical presentation of evidence by the student that he or she has met the learning outcomes specified for the work in hand.

Again it is reasonably easy to see how the differentiated roles of learner, faith partner and academic partner can be configured within this environment. In the first instance it is for the faith partner and academy to agree learning outcomes. Secondly it is for the university to oversee and finally determine the assessment of the student portfolios. Thirdly, it is for the student to own and evidence his or her learning experience. Fourthly it will be for the faith partner to determine a) the training requirements of its organisation and b) the level of student support and mentoring it wishes to provide in support of its members and students. For better or worse within this economy the delivery and organisation of teaching per se is not a direct responsibility of the university and may be barely visible to it. The quality of teaching will be apparent to the university only as mediated by the evidenced quality of student learning at point of assessment.

It might be observed at this point that whilst this paper has made a case for a strongly articulated partnership between faith based organisations and higher education institutions for the purposes of delivering practical theology; this does not necessarily imply the use of portfolio based assessment. There is no reason why a strongly articulated partnership should not employ a more traditional mode of assessment. Whilst this is true, nevertheless, from our experience in this particular partnership we can identify seven points at which a portfolio based teaching, learning and assessment strategy helpfully reflects and generates a pedagogic environment conducive to the endeavour of practical theology in community contexts. The seven points are these.

1. The flexibility of portfolio assessment can and is used by the faith partner to guide and train student learners in directions appropriate to the different needs of its organisation (Cox and King, 2006). Indeed the constitution of the portfolio programme on which we are reflecting in this paper allows a double layer of flexibility. In the first instance learners will select evidence from their own area of activity in order to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes. For example someone involved in inter-faith dialogue may produce a very different set of evidence to demonstrate that they have understood Matthew's gospel from someone involved in justice and peace ministries. Secondly, since the university validated modules are sufficiently general as to be assessed by a number of different portfolios the church partner can specify which portfolios it requires a learner to undertake for a given module if they are to be recognised as having a certain speciality or ministry within the organisation.
2. The second point is the same as the first except seen from the perspective of the student learner rather than the training organisation. It is that portfolio presentation of evidence takes the individual learner's context seriously, allowing as much contextual variety as is the case in the real world of the learner. This is particularly valuable given the diversity of situations represented by students of practical theology.
3. The portfolio is a critical and ordered collection of evidence taken from multiple sources of learning and practice. The opportunity to evidence such multiplicity and diversity is highly appropriate to adult professional learners in diverse situations where that multiplicity is intrinsic to their professional activity. The church or faith organisation (*qua* employer) needs to be able to assess the performance of its people in these diverse situations. Portfolios enable such assessment to take place.
4. Portfolios provide the opportunity to evidence learning in both theory (knowledge) and practice (skills) without privileging either one over the other. Whilst it is sometimes said that portfolio is an assessment tool particularly suited to practical or skill based competencies (like baptizing babies) we have found it to be an equally suitable format for the assessment of theoretical knowledge based learning (Winograd, P. & Jones, D. L., 1992). At best we would say that it is a tool for the assessment of praxis.

5. It is routinely acknowledged that portfolio enables the presentation of evidence gathered over time, thereby enabling representation of change, growth and development. Whilst such an assessment facility is no doubt useful in a wide variety of professional contexts, we have found it to be particularly valuable in evidencing spiritual development and facilitating the continuing professional development of our learner students.

6. Portfolios provide a context for what is sometimes called 'authentic assessment', that is to say what is evidenced for assessment is what was done in real time and in real professional and contextual situations. For example a student could evidence his or her learning about baptismal theologies in part with reference to his or her work in a parish baptismal preparation class. Working in this way the assessment tool is evidently appropriate for the learning needs of the practitioner.

7. By giving learners the right to select their evidence of learning, portfolio based assessment encourages and enables the minority or religious voice to be spoken in the academy (Courts, P.L., & McNemy, K.H., 1993).

## Conclusion

There are three issues that if left unattended will frustrate the teaching of practical theology in higher education. We believe that each of them is met and constructively engaged with by the framework we have described.

First and most importantly there is the issue of secularisation. Churches and faith communities want and need to speak in the public square, but are increasingly frustrated and silenced. On the other side of the same coin it would seem that the academy is increasingly embarrassed about giving a home to the religious, or a platform to the religious voice. The articulation of partnership enables the different integrities of church and university; it enables the voice of the religious learner to be heard in the academy.

Secondly there is the issue about the place of practice in the academy. It is true that this seems to be less of an issue than it once was. Nevertheless, there are still some traditional universities that have reservations about the teaching and assessment of practice based activities. Whatever debates we might have about the nature of practical theology it would be oxymoronic to claim that it had no involvement with practice, and not just any old practice, but with the practice of religion. It is widely recognised that portfolio based assessment offers a helpful and critically constructive mode of assessing evidence of practice.

Thirdly, whilst not all practical theology has to do with the organisational and training needs of faith communities, some of it does. Partnerships provide an appropriately articulated relationship between the professional needs of churches and faith organisations and the sometimes different interests of higher education. Within this framework portfolio provides an opportunity for the authentic expression of the religious voice in the academy.

In summary this paper has argued that partnership between faith based organisations and institutions of higher education mediated by a portfolio based pedagogy offers a powerful framework for the potentially problematic business of teaching practical theology in higher education.

## Bibliography

- 'Hind Report', *Formation for ministry within a learning church*, (London: Ministry Division, 2002).
- Boud, D. Keough, R. & Walker, D., *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*, (London: Kogan Page, 1985).
- Brookfield, S.D., *Developing Critical Thinkers*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987).
- Cole, D.J. Ryan, C.W. & Kick, F., *Portfolios across the curriculum and beyond*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press, 1995).

- Courts, P.L., & McInemy, K.H., **Assessment in higher education: Politics, pedagogy and portfolios**, (London: Praeger 1993).
  - De Rijdt, C. Tiquet, E. Dochy, F. & Devolder, M., 'Teaching Portfolios in Higher Education and their Effects: An Explorative Study' in **Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies**, 22.8 pp.1084-1093 (2006)
  - Farley, E., **Theologia: the fragmentation and unity of theological education**, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).
  - Ford, D., **Theology: A Very Short Introduction**, (Oxford: OUP, 1999).
  - Gibbs, G., **Assessing Student Centred Courses**, (Oxford: OCSD, 1995).
  - Green, L., **Let's do Theology**, (London: Mowbray, 1990).
  - Groves, M., 'Locating Theology', **JATE**, vol. 1.2, p147-158 (2004).
  - Kolb, D.A., **Experiential Learning**, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1984).
  - Mezirow, J., **Transformative Dimensions in Adult Learning**, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).
  - Leggett, M & Bunker A., 'Teaching Portfolios and University Culture' in **Journal of Further and Higher Education** vol. 30.3 pp. 269-282 (2006).
  - Schon, D.A., **The Reflective Practitioner**, (Aldershot: Arena, Ashgate, 1983, 1991).
  - Tovey, P., 'A Case Study in the Accreditation of Prior Learning in Ministerial Training', **British Journal of Theological Education**, vol.12.2, pp.145-153 (2002).
  - Winograd, P. & Jones, D. L., 'The Use of Portfolios in Performance Assessment', in **New Directions for Educational Reform**, 1.2, pp.37-50 (1992).
- 

[Return to vol. 7 no. 1 index page](#)

---

Created on: July 15th 2008

Updated on: August 19th 2010