



www.brethrentraining.org

Square Pegs in Round Holes

Problem Based Learning in
Training for Service in the Brethren


© 2018 Brethren Training Network

2

Introduction

“Square pegs in round holes”


1. Square pegs = formal training
2. Round holes = unwritten traditions and conventions




3

Frustration


Square pegs do not fit in round holes unless they are forced to do so!




4



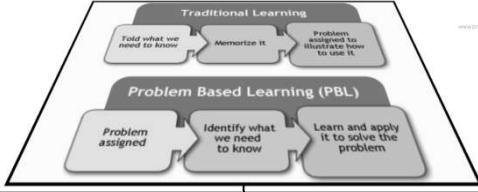
| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Formal, “external” training models</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works well with more structured congregations Placements tend to reinforce links with supportive churches |
|--|--|




| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Experience-based, intuitive model</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of unwritten and unspoken “rules” Linked into unofficial network of relationships |
|---|--|



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Differing possible answers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go separate ways Focus on new works Recruit Brethren students Only train existing workers |
|--|--|



| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <p>Problem Based Learning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps apply theoretical knowledge Takes account of no common structures Teaches subtlety/“intuition” |
|--------------------------------------|--|



Problem Based Learning

- Must be clear syllabus
- Consistent marking
- High standard of scenarios
- Complete module

© 2018 Brethren Training Network

Scenario Example 1

A pioneered church plant run along Brethren lines but dependent upon the personal vision and drive of one individual

Content of Scenario
After about 5 years there is a secure fellowship and the 3 elders agree that help is needed from a younger individual in a full-time capacity to oversee the young people's work and build links with the community. The pioneer says he is fully in agreement with taking on a new worker but the entire church looks to him as its founder and leader.

People involved

- Pioneer evangelist & elders & members
- New worker

Discussion Questions

1. Outline the potential problems that the new worker would face and the strategies that he or she would need to make their role a success.
2. How could the pioneer himself be trained for this development and what should he do to make the new initiative a success?

© 2018 Brethren Training Network

Scenario Example 2

Fellowship situated on the edge of an urban estate

Content of Scenario
The elders seek a full-time worker to reach younger families. A young couple is recruited who both decide to serve part-time to fill one complete full-time position. Initially, progress is good. However, tensions emerge when the elders seek to apply secular principles in their mentoring of the church workers so that time sheets and targets for numbers of new contacts or members are imposed.

People involved

- Young couple
- Elders

Discussion Questions

1. How should the church workers deal with this situation?
2. What does this development reveal about the elders and how could they be better helped to understand the challenges of full-time Christian service?

© 2018 Brethren Training Network

Scenario Example 3

A fellowship about 100 years old with very few internal changes for the past 40 years

Content of Scenario
The dominant elder seeks a gifted outsider to lead the church forward before it slips into terminal decline. The older members are not generally comfortable with the concept of a full-time church worker. The leading elder gives the church worker authority to make changes and supports these which are effective; but then he suddenly leaves.

People involved

- Church Worker
- Elders & older members

Discussion Questions

1. What advice would you give to the recruited full-time worker and the elders?
2. What are the most likely outcomes in this scenario and why? How could they be avoided?

© 2018 Brethren Training Network

Scenario Example 4

www.brethrentraining.org

Church employing a full-time elder on a fixed term contract

Content of Scenario

The full-time elder was appointed from outside of the fellowship. One of the other elders decides that he is being called by the Lord to serve full-time. This elder has been with the church for many years and is very well linked in to the other Brethren churches in the area and has a close friendship with one of the elders.

Discussion Questions

1. Give guidelines for how you think each of the people in this scenario ought to respond?
2. What do you think is most likely to happen and why?

People involved

- Full-time elder
- Elders & elder seeking to go full-time

© 2018 Brethren Training Network

Scenario Example 5

www.brethrentraining.org

A fellowship with a long tradition of effective evangelism within the community

Content of Scenario

A full-time worker served for 10 years and remained. His role had been pastoral. The elders appoint a new man to focus on evangelism. He brings people into the services; but is not liked by the majority of the church. He is not gifted pastorally and does not come from the Brethren. Rumours start that 40 people want to leave.


Discussion Questions

1. What could be done to help the previous worker and the new one to build a positive relationship?
2. How can the potential church spilt be averted?

People involved

- New worker & previous worker
- Elders & 40 people who want to leave

© 2018 Brethren Training Network



www.brethrentraining.org

What should be the aim?

- o Identify existing traditions
- o Understand unofficial networks
- o Learn how to work within these structures

© 2018 Brethren Training Network