

Situated Learning in Religious Institutions

Wesley Adam Stroud
University of Oklahoma

Abstract: Historically, religious institutions center the construction of knowledge within the contexts of the sermon. Here the parishioner is often limited to the role of “*hearer of the word*”. This presentation will seek to identify gaps in knowledge transfer through a discourse of the roles for both the teacher and the learner. By using multiple teaching strategies the learner-teacher relationship can be reconsidered. This presentation provides pedagogical methods of creating successful communities of practice in religious institutions by developing more active roles for the parishioner.

Topic: Situated Learning in Religious Institutions

Research Question: How should the relationship between learning and teaching be reconsidered?

Methodology: Critical Ethnography

Theories: Situated Learning Theory, Sociocultural Learning Theory

Core References:

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. Print

Wenger, Etienne. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print

Wenger, Etienne. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print

Schiro, Michael. *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2008. Print.

Research Innovations: Religious institutions have created a “one-way” method of information delivery. Parishioners often play a passive role within the church acting as a listener or hearer of the word or more commonly a “vessel to be filled”. This type of learning environment follows the transmission model of education. New authentic learning opportunities can be created through the reconsideration of roles for both the learner and the teacher. Utilizing differentiated instruction teaching methods, the learner can move from low levels of thinking

to higher levels of thinking. As most religious institutions are focused on helping parishioners to make positive changes in their lives, it is then necessary to create opportunities for the actual application and evaluation of the knowledge gained.

Research Status: This research comprises the initial stages of my doctoral dissertation. The focus of this research is in the process of completing the literature review, constructing the theoretical framework, and developing data collection methods.