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| **Name:** Mark Britten | **Date:** 01.11.2022 | |
| **Reflective Journal Title:** disruption in group sessions | | |
| **Original Piece of Work ~~/ Rewritten Piece of Work~~** (Delete as applicable) | | |
| **If recording this as /linking to a blog or vlog, please copy and paste the relevant link here – in doing so, please remember the importance of ethics, permissions, confidentiality and access.** | | |
| **Background/Context:** (Where, When, Who)  Friday night drop in youth club. 24 young people, about 50/50 church YP and their friends who don’t attend other sessions.  4 adult volunteers: leader, two volunteer leaders (me) and a 4th person who arranges tuck shop and snacks.  Church building: main hall, youth room and corridors including toilets | | |
| 1. Outline the focus for your reflective journal.   (This could be a theory you have read, theological idea or an event that happened in your practice.)  What are/were your personal feelings or emotional response to this? (Guide 150 words). Linking you work to Competence Elements in Optional for Year 1 students. | | |
| The session is organised as follows:   * Big group activity (50 mins) * Break / tuck shop (10 mins) * God slot (10 mins) * Choice of games, console, chill   During the break a massive argument broke out in the corridor. It was unclear what had caused it, but about 8 of the young people were shouting and pushing people in and out of the toilets.  The session leader stepped in to calm things down, and did really well – I couldn’t have done it so smoothly. She sent everyone not directly involved into the hall with the other two volunteers and listened to the story before YP calmed down – there were no apologies but they were able to walk away from each other.  As a result, the God slot led by the other volunteers was really hard. No one listened, everyone was on their phones messaging each other it transpired. The volunteer leading the session got stressed and shouted at everyone and listen to what they had prepared.  The rest of the session went OK – we spent the evening going between groups listening to their reflections on what had happened. | **Competence Elements** | **Practice Tutor Comments** |
| 1. Reflect on how practice, theology and theory relate to each other in the context of your reflection (this must include references to relevant reading) (Guide 600 words) | | |
| **Reflecting on Practice**  Reflective practice is really important when working with people. We use Kolb’s *Experiential Learning Cycle* (Smith 2010) as a structure for our team meetings after every event, talking through what had happened. As a result of previous reflections we knew we had to have at least 4 volunteers for the session so that if we had to split a group up there were two volunteers in each location.  The team leader took a different approach this time, introducing Gibb’s *Reflective Cycle* (1988) which is very similar, but deliberately introduces a stage where we reflect on our feelings about the event. This was useful in this instant because I was able to talk about how I was scared when everyone was shouting – I didn’t know what to do and was worried it would get physical and someone would get hurt while in my care.  The other volunteer who led the God Slot also was able to talk about what made them angry when no one was paying attention. I think this helped them process that angry and go home less stressed.  After this we talked about what we could have done differently. In John 4 and Acts 17 we see Jesus and Paul responding to the situation in front of them – they didn’t go in planning to do something, they listened to the woman and the meeting and were able to give the right response at that moment.  We discussed whether we should have cancelled the God Slot, moved it to the end of the night, or just left it as an open discussion about what had happened, because as it was it was a waste of time (although of course the Holy Spirit could have spoken despite what was going on).  **God Slots at open youth clubs**  We also wondered whether we should still be doing a God Slot – it is often stressful and none of the young people care. If we were able to intentionally have conversations using Informal Education (Richardson & Wolfe 2001, p.126) then we could perhaps be responding like Jesus and Paul to each individual person, rather than just talking about whatever was on the rota each week. This relies much more on the skill of the youth worker and some people will be better at it than others, but making it an intentional strategy that we reflect on each week will help all of us get better at it.  Last term at the club I spoke with one of the young people who I’ll call ‘Dave’ in the last hour when there were no activities planned. Dave does not come to church and has no faith as far as I’m aware. I have no idea what the God Slot had been about but I asked him about his brother when we were waiting to play pool and it turned in to a really deep conversation about why God lets some people get ill. At the end of it I asked if he would like me to pray for his brother and he said yes. I prayed for healing, but also that him and his parents would be able to deal with the stress of the illness.  He is still not a Christian but does talk to be about his family and other stresses in life and I don’t think he would have done that if it had been a God Slot about illness and prayer.  Evangelism and discipleship is always best when it’s relational rather than programmed from the front.  **Boundaries**  Acts 29 (2022) suggest there is a process from people being strangers, to acquaintances, then friends and finally disciples. I am still Dave’s youth worker but as a result of intentional conversations I have become *friendly towards [him] like a friend* (Pepper 2013). We need to maintain professional boundaries so I do not think ‘friendship evangelism’ is the right word, but it is definitely best within relationship. | 1h  4a,b  5c  5e |  |
| 1. What will you differently in future? What is your plan of actions now? (Guide 150 words) (bullet points are acceptable) | | |
| There are two things I took out of this event:   1. This was the first time I had really seen the benefit of the team meeting to reflect on the evening. It helped the other volunteer deal with their stress, and also helped the whole team to ask questions about the God Slot.    1. Reflection should always include ‘feelings’ from Gibbs’ model.    2. Everyone must be given the opportunity to speak during reflection so make sure that all voices are heard. 2. I will speak to my Line Manager about whether the God Slot should still be part of the youth club. I don’t think people listen as well to an adult talking at them, as they do when a friendly adult is listening to their story.    1. Speak to LM about the God Slot    2. Ask to talk about it in a Youth Club leaders meeting next term. |  |  |

**Bibliography**

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