



Open-space Learning in Real World Contexts*

Workshop Practice: Still Image or Tableau

1. Description:

Still images or tableaux have a wide variety of uses. Material may be presented to participants in a number of forms from text, to objects, to audio and visual extracts, from which they devise an image that represents their understanding of the material. Alternatively participants might be asked to crystallise their response to a larger body of material (a play, for example, or a theoretical work). Groups would typically be in 3s or 4s and could offer images as an entire group (either with or without a “sculptor”) or could respond individually. Images can be used to create contrasting ideas: actual/ideal, contemporary/historical, male/female. Alternatively images can be used to demonstrate moments of transition.

2. Learning possibilities:

Promotes the ability to précis complex material. Requires reflection and analysis. Requires participants to embody knowledge.

3. Examples:

For a Shakespeare module: participants are asked to “read” and convey in tableaux contrasting understandings of the character of Ophelia. Participants show, in tableaux, versions of Lear’s relationship with his daughters.

For a module on “Literary and Critical Theory”: participants are asked to use tableaux to explain Gramsci’s theory of “hegemony”, or Lacan’s “mirror stage”.

For American History: participants are asked to create tableaux that reflect the position of Native Americans from various historical perspectives; a 2010 academic point of view, for example, or the view of a western settler in the 1850s, or the Native American owners of a New England casino.

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