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Fairy-Tales, Role Plays & Groupwork

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This strategy is inspired by: Case Studies, Fish-Bowl Learning, Role Plays, Using Visuals, Cooperative Learning and Groupwork, Group Presentations, A Guest Speaker and E-tivities.

Teaching & Learning Context

This strategy was in the context of our part-time, level 8, 10 ECTS flexible learning Certificate in Jungian Psychology with Art Therapy. Of the 12 contact days, two are dedicated to The Interpretation of Fairy-Tales, with a follow up zoom 90 minutes evening tutorial. The contact days consisted of guest lecturers from 11:30am – 1pm, and from 2-4pm. The Art Therapy session was from 9:30am-11:10am both days. Due to the pandemic the contact days were relocated to online. A silver lining to this was that I had the opportunity to collaborate with my wife on the Art Therapy morning, and also 'sat in' on the guest lecturer sessions (as I had to be the tech guy). Our class consisted of 15 mostly mature students with careers in the arts or healing professions.

Implementing the Strategy

This screencast video, approximately seven minutes in length, has been uploaded to the Academic Writing Skills Moodle page. Access to the Turnitin Upload Practice link is restricted until the student has viewed the instructional video. This is required only once; however, students can view the video as many times as they need.

- A week before the two contact days, students were requested to do some homework, by creating a fairy-tale character of their choice with art materials to hand (mask-making, figurine 'sculptures' and so on).
- For the art therapy session on the first contact day, they were invited to introduce their character, and share its characteristics, magical powers and a bit of its narrative context in small groups (break-out rooms of four each - one group of three), and then return to the main space for a general sharing.
- The follow-on guest lecture (predominantly theory, but also including experiential elements) then helped to introduce theory, which tacitly allowed for resonances to the earlier workshop.
- The following morning the group were tasked to create a 6-minute fairy tale in their groups. They were put in break-out rooms for about 25 minutes. Lyn Mather (Art Therapist) and myself would enter the rooms unobtrusively as 'flies on the wall' (web cam off), to ensure groups were on the right track.
- Upon return to the main space, we implemented a fish-bowl type environment. Each group with their characters had to, in turn, enact their fairy tale. Technically, this was achieved by 'hiding all participants' excepting the group who were unmuted and web cams active. In this way we could witness the fairy tale. After this, return to the main space, and move to the next group.

- After all groups had completed, there was about 15 minutes for group discussion. This strengthened the experiential basis for the follow-on theoretical emphasis of the guest lecturer. The follow-up zoom session some days later (after an assessment activity on this theme) then allowed for further consolidation of the 'situated' theory.

Observations/Reflections

I was impressed with this learning experience. Initially I had cold feet about implementing a fish-bowl style workshop given the technical uncertainties of not only a new method, but also the challenge of doing this online. Thanks to the encouragement of my wife (Art Therapist) we together managed to sort the minor tech glitches that arose. In future, I would provide a bit more scaffolding by means of one or more carefully chosen fairy-tale case studies, to allow for a stronger theoretical basis. If the staff delivery hours were more generous, we could also offer more extensive individualised feedback to the e-tivity forum assessment. This would lift the experience to a new level of learning.