

# Thought Captivation

*"We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2Cor 10:5*



## Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults.

Jane Vella's, [Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults](#) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), is one of several required books I read for the first two Fuller Seminary courses I completed this Spring 2004. As I read this book I was challenged to intentionally adopt several principles in the ministry to university students. I'm convinced these principles are useful for church ministries as well. That is why I recommend this book to you.

Jane Vella educates adults in many cultures and for many different groups, mostly community development projects. I'm very familiar with this kind of work and many of the places and people she writes about. One of the goals I have set for the summer teams of student interns serving in community development projects is for the students to have the best learning experience of their lives. Vella refers to this learning as the 'quantum' concept, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I need to encourage my staff to participate in the process of writing their own job descriptions. I need to be more effective at listening and giving open questions, especially in the teachings I give. Those open questions need to be put to the 'safe' environment of small groups. I have practiced this sort of thing at some level, but I see I need to be more intentional. For example, I have asked the question, "What was your best learning experience?" Sometimes, but not always, I send the participants to small group to discuss the question. I need to be more effective at defining learning tasks and follow through on them so that the participants truly participate in the learning process.

### 1. How can I adopt principles of Vella's dialogue education and quantum thinking?

Vella's key assessment principle, 'Who needs What and defined by Whom' or 'WWW', is what we will adopt in all of our student ministry programs. To do that, I need to keep a journal. As I pray for individuals in my team and network around the world, I am writing a WWW assessment for YWAM Campus Ministries staff and their projects.

### 2. Which of the quantum thinking principles have I already practiced and how can I improve on them?

The Field Ministry Internship programme is a serving/learning outreach project for university student teams integrating their field of study with ministries cross-culturally. Vella's book referred to so many things that I have been attempting to do since 1989. For example, to help students feel 'safe' we form small teams of 4 to 7. During the first few days in the host country, we typically send small teams out on a 'scavenger hunt' in order to learn how to get around with some measure of independence within the safety of their small group. We send small teams to integrate well as a short-term team on a long-term field project. In this way, the students also gain a greater level of participation in the serving/learning process. The students design their own field projects on site as they assess the needs of the long-term personnel and projects they are serving.

I can see how we practice a learning needs assessment, but we do not involve the students enough. We are concerned for safety in the learning process, but I can see that some additional structure and demonstration of concern for the students learning process will raise the energy level and create an environment where learning can take place even when there is much uncertainty. We have structured the outreach program with four phases: Orientation to Cultural Awareness to Ministry to Debriefing. I have learned that we need to add a fifth phase, an Assessment Phase, before the Ministry phase. To date it has been assumed by the leadership, but students have had little understanding of that important phase. To show more respect for the students, we need to document the Assessment phase. By doing so we will be showing more respect to the students giving them more opportunity to participate and take responsibility to decide.

This book is providing a guideline for a full team leader training program. I am very excited about the potential increase in skills that our team leaders can develop through a week-long seminar for FMI team leadership.

### Summary

I have created a matrix grid in my journal with Vella's 7 steps for course design for follow up. The key words, RESPECT and ENERGY, are at the top of the list to encourage me to focus my attention on these key values for the adult learners. I have placed a column on the page for each of the 10 different student internship and YWAM leadership training programs I am leading or developing. For each of the seven steps I am considering the different approaches for each of the

different programs, depending on the participants, the outcomes, the context, the content, and how learning can be measured and sequenced for greatest effectiveness. I'm expecting quantum changes in all of our programs.