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**Workshop: Understanding theoretical application through concrete experiences**

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“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation”

Plato, 347 BC – 427 BC

Student engagement and the development of a sense of belonging have been found to play an important role in undergraduate student retention and success (Thomas, 2012). One way of developing such an environment is through group-based and role-play activities (Mair, Taylor & Hulme, 2013). This workshop demonstrates the use of seminar time to facilitate learning by engaging students in interactive group work across all levels.

Kolb’s (1984) four-stage experiential learning cycle identifies having a “concrete experience” as the basis for “reflective observation” where the understanding is developed. “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984: 38). The focus of this session is on social psychological literacy which is applicable to all environments where people come together in groups and can therefore be easily related to (Buunk & Van Vugt, 2007).

This experiential workshop provides an opportunity to engage in an interactive group activity (simulating real-life settings) usually held with third year Psychology students in one of the seminar sessions on the Occupational Psychology module. Small groups of 4-5 people will be invited to complete a simple fun task which will serve as a means to examine the dynamics involved in group work. A reflective discussion on the interactions and processes observed as the task was completed follows, aimed at identifying and highlighting group and individual behaviour and how they relate to the theoretical underpinnings on the topic.

**References**

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