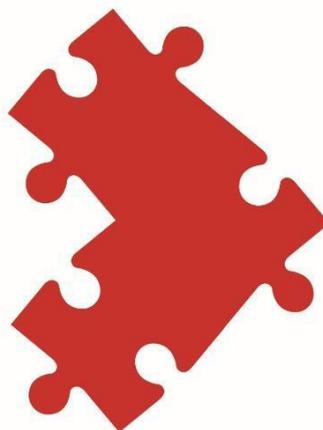# WORSHIP: LEADING AND PREACHING A GUIDE FOR TUTORS AND MENTORS
## APPLIES TO WLP 3.0 ONLY

## Issue 2, September 2020

## About this Guide:

This Guide is designed to be an introduction to the roles of Tutor and Mentor for the Worship: Leading & Preaching course. Whilst it is intended as a helpful reference for tutors and mentors, students would be well-advised to read it too, so that they understand what their mentor and tutor can contribute to their learning journey.

It outlines the ethos of the course, introducing concepts like student-led learning, blended learning, theological reflection and portfolio-based assessment. These may be unfamiliar to you or may be applied differently in Worship: Leading & Preaching from other training programmes you are used to.

It provides an outline of the course from the point of view of the tutor and mentor, including its modular structure and the various elements within each module.

It describes the process of building and submitting a portfolio, and especially the role of the tutor in guiding the student through the process and assessing outcomes.

It is designed to be a source of reference for mentors and tutors, which accounts for its bulk. It does not contain everything you might possibly need though, and needs to be read in conjunction with the other course guides.

## Other useful information:

- Worship Leading & Preaching: A Guide to Learning
- Worship Leading & Preaching: A Guide to Portfolios
- Worship Leading & Preaching: Additional Needs Guide
- Worship: Foundations

## Main changes in this issue:

| Sections | Change |
|----------|--------|
| Various | Substantial changes throughout to reflect the new model for portfolios and assessment introduced for newly-enrolled students in September 2020. A few "Change Alert" bubbles list the main changes for the benefit of those familiar with the previous versions of the course. If you are new to the course, you can safely ignore these. |
| Various | The previous chapter 4 describing the course structure has been deleted, as this information is now in the Guide to Learning. |
| Various | Extracts from Standing Orders relating to training processes can now be found in the Guide to Learning. |

If you find errors or omissions, please email localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk. Your help with keeping the course documents up-to-date is greatly appreciated.

## Table of Contents

# 1    INTRODUCTION

## 1.1    What is Worship: Leading & Preaching?

Worship: Leading & Preaching (WLP) is the approved training pathway for Worship Leaders and Local Preachers in the Methodist Church in Britain. It is designed to encourage students to reflect theologically as they test and exercise their calling. The course material is delivered online in order to make maximum use of different media and learning techniques, and to allow it to be developed and improved over time. It seeks to address the need of the contemporary church for competent and enthusiastic leaders and preachers who can practise in a wide diversity of contexts, and inspire the next generation of disciples in their worship and service.

WLP provides the theological education which underpins the process of formation of a Worship Leader or Local Preacher. Completing the course and meeting its assessment criteria does not make someone into a Worship Leader or Local Preacher, but should demonstrate to the Local Preachers' Meeting or Church Council that they have gained sufficient competence in theological learning and reflection to undertake the role to which they believe they are called.  It is for the Local Preachers' Meeting or Church Council to discern whether the person is called by God to serve in this role.

Note that the word "student" is used in this guide as convenient shorthand to refer to persons "on note" and "on trial", and to worship leaders in training.

## 1.2    What does a Tutor do?

It is a great privilege to share with someone as they explore the gifts and the calling God has given to them in the service of the Kingdom.

The tutor's role is to act as an accompanist to the student through the study programme which is an essential part of their formation as a local preacher or worship leader. This involves establishing a relationship of trust with the student and being available as a guide, encourager, supporter and critical friend as the student explores for themselves the delights that theology offers.

It is not necessary for the tutor to be a local preacher themselves, although they should be recognised by the appointing LP meeting as possessing a demonstrable competence in theology and the practice of Christian worship. They may for example be a theological educator or a Lay Preacher or Reader in another denomination.

Tutors may work with students in a single circuit or across circuits, districts or even regions, depending on local needs and circumstances.  It is important that every student has access to a tutor on whose wisdom and insight they can call.

In addition to supporting the student in prayer, the duties of the tutor can be summarised in three parts:

1.    The tutor supports and advises the student during their self-paced learning, which is focussed on the *Learn* parts of each module-section.

2.    The tutor is responsible for convening and facilitating *Explore* sessions for each module-section.  These constitute the group-work sessions of this blended  learning programme. Material is provided for use in these sessions, which are designed to last 90 minutes each.  A worship leader will attend 12 of these in total, a local preacher 24.

It is helpful to arrange these sessions well in advance to allow students to prepare adequately, so some degree of organisation is necessary.

3. During the course, the student will be progressively assembling a portfolio as evidence of the understanding and skills they are acquiring. Each project for the portfolio will be discussed with the tutor, who will provide informal feedback and make suggestions. When both the student and the tutor are satisfied that the assessment criteria have been "Met", the item will be included in the portfolio. When the portfolio is closed and formally submitted, the tutor will append their final comments as the portfolio goes on to moderation.

4. For local preachers in training, the tutor provides regular reports of the progress of the student's studies to their quarterly Local Preachers' Meeting, liaising as necessary with the Local Preachers' Secretary. For worship leaders, training reports are provided by the tutor on request for the Church Council at the student's church.

## 1.3   What does a Mentor do?

The mentor's role is to accompany the student as they develop in understanding and skill as a practitioner.  The mentor accompanies the student throughout the course, until they are recognised as a worship leader or local preacher.

A mentor for a local preacher in training should be a local preacher themselves.  A mentor for a worship leader in training can be a worship leader or a local preacher.

The mentor's primary responsibility is to be an accompanist to the student as they develop as a reflective practitioner in the leading of worship and/or preaching.  In some ways this is like the relationship of an expert practitioner with their apprentice.

This involves establishing a relationship of trust with student and being available as a guide, encourager, supporter, sounding board and critical friend as the student develops their skill and competence in guiding the people of God into the worship of God.  This is a wonderful privilege and a highly rewarding role.

In addition to supporting the student in prayer, the duties of the mentor can be summarised in three parts:

1. The mentor works closely with the local preacher or worship leader in the early stages of training, sharing the preparation and leadership of worship until they are confident (and competent) to lead worship on their own.

2. The mentor continues to be available to provide advice and guidance to the student on the planning of services, and opportunities for the student to reflect on their experiences of leading worship.  The mentor is encouraged to support the student by attending some of their services, and providing thoughtful feedback to the student.

3. The mentor has opportunities to be their student's advocate in places where their practice is under scrutiny. For example, the mentor for a local preacher can be a valuable advocate for them in the Local Preachers' Meeting, especially when their tutor is not a member of that meeting.

4.

## 1.4   Where to find what you need

This guide sometimes refers you to other places where you will find more detailed information. Some of these sources are:

- Guide to Learning

- Guide to Additional Needs

- Guide to Portfolios

- Standing Orders applying to Local Preachers.

All of these, and more useful information including Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs) are available on the Methodist Church website. Look for the Worship: Leading & Preaching page at www.methodist.org.uk/wlp.

### 1.5 Enrolment on Worship: Leading & Preaching

As a tutor or mentor, you will need to be enrolled onto the Worship: Leading & Preaching course website. The circuit Local Preachers' Secretary instigates this using the Local Preachers Return Form. It may be necessary for you to remind the Local Preachers' Secretary that they need to do this. You will need to provide them with the email address you prefer to use, and the names of the students with whom you are working.

When the Local Preachers' Office receives the form, they will enrol you on the course, and you will receive an automatic email advising you of your login details requesting that you change your password within a time period.

The Learning Network provides training for tutors and mentors. A Learning & Development Officer in your region (who is also the Regional Moderator) will be able to advise when training is available in your area. You can find out how to contact the Learning Network at www.methodist.org.uk/learning/network-regions.

Many Districts have a District Local Preachers' Secretary and some also have a District Local Preachers' Tutor. Whilst their roles and responsibilities vary, they often have a wider perspective on what is happening in the district, and can be helpful in making contact with other tutors and mentors. Your circuit Local Preachers' Secretary or the Local Preachers' Office will be able to put you in touch with your district officers.

For any further information, don't hesitate to contact the Local Preachers' Office at Methodist Church House on localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk or 0207 467 3774.

## 2   STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

### 2.1   Introduction

Current educational practice emphasises that learning is most effective when students take responsibility for their own learning outcomes.  The emphasis has shifted away from a didactic pattern familiar to many, where the tutor is responsible for teaching the student key facts and skills, and the student for demonstrating their mastery of these facts and skills through formal examination.

The model adopted for Worship: Leading & Preaching makes the student responsible for their progress in learning.  They are responsible for working through the material at their own pace, and for producing projects for their portfolio as they go.

In planning their study, students will need to take account of their tutor and others in their learning group to ensure that their study targets align, and do not interfere with those of others.  For example, they will need to ensure that they take account of the timings of "Explore" sessions so that they are adequately prepared.  They will also need to give their tutor sufficient time for completing the assessment process on each project, and for the completed portfolio.

Educational research has clearly shown the wide diversity of preferred learning styles among students. The course is designed to enable people with a wide range of preferences to engage with the material in different ways. The course is also intended to be accessible to those whose working patterns or other responsibilities do not enable them to keep regular appointments for tutorials.

### 2.2   Blended Learning

Worship: Leading & Preaching is designed around blended learning.  In other words, it combines individual study and reflection with group discussion and practical exercises, and makes use of a wide variety of source materials, many of them delivered online.  These materials include text, video and audio materials, some produced specifically for the course, others drawn from a wide range of reputable sources.

The course is supported by a Module Reader, containing extracts from published books and articles held by the Cliff College library.  Copyright law requires that this material is only available to those who are enrolled on the course as students or tutors.  The Methodist Church pays an annual copyright licence fee on behalf of each student on the course.

Because the course is delivered online, it is designed to be very flexible and adaptable for the changing needs of the church.  It contains many options and ideas suitable for people in different places.  Over time, the contents will be updated with new material and different learning resources.

### 2.3   The Role of the Tutor

Student-led learning affects the role of the tutor significantly. The tutor is an accompanist on the student's journey of learning.  The Tutor is not expected to go through the material page-by-page with the student, still less to teach the material, but to respond to the student's needs as they navigate through the course themselves.

There will be times when the tutor offers guidance and direction, particularly in the early stages, when the student is seeking to understand the structure of the course and its many possibilities, and when the student encounters difficulties with challenging aspects of the course.

Again, in contrast to a traditional teaching role, the tutor is not responsible for ensuring that the student completes all the coursework exercises and background reading in each module – that is the student's responsibility. However, the student may wish to talk through topics or issues that they find particularly challenging, or seek out a different perspective where their assumptions have been challenged.

In addition to the mandatory *Explore* sessions, some students and tutors find that regular meetings work best for them. Others use email and meet occasionally as circumstances permit. It is good practice to set periodic meetings to provide the opportunity for the student to raise concerns and establish a good working relationship with their tutor before the submission deadlines start to loom large. Explore sessions are also provided in residential Summer Schools at Cliff College or online. These can provide a great opportunity for engaging with a wider peer group, especially for those in circuits where there are no other students.

In summary, the tutor's role includes:

1. Supporting their students in prayer;

2. Being a guide or accompanist to the student by having an overview of the learning journey and being able to assist and guide them;

3. Focussing on the development of their students' theological understanding and skills rather than their skills as a practitioner in leading worship and preaching;

4. Assisting their students in developing their skills in learning and theological reflection and in setting themselves realistic and achievable targets;

5. Ensuring that students are provided with the opportunity to engage with the Explore elements of the course, including facilitating these where required;

6. Assisting their students whilst they are assembling their portfolio, advising them on suitable items to include and providing formative assessment on these items;

7. When the portfolio is complete, providing summative assessment prior to moderation;

8. Reporting to the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting as requested on the progress of the students through the course;

9. Being the point of contact with the regional Learning Network specialist in case of external support or guidance being required.

The tutor's role is **NOT** to:

• Teach the course material;

• Monitor their students closely in completion of all the tasks, readings and exercises suggested by the course;

• Impose study programmes and deadlines on students;

- Ensure that the student adopts their theological outlook;

- Worry that the student is not engaging with the course in the way you would.

## 2.4 The Role of the Mentor

The mentor is often the person in closest contact with the student, and an important link to the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting, which has oversight of the student's formation.

The mentor provides guidance and encouragement to the student throughout the processes of training. They draw on their knowledge and experience of worship and preaching to encourage and support the student through the practical aspects of their formation. This can be a very rewarding role, and friendships are often forged through this learning journey.

As the student's "travelling companion" for the practical parts of their formation, the mentor does not have a formal role in the student's academic studies, but is available to the student as a sounding-board and "critical friend" through the demands of their formative training. As the student progresses, the content of the conversation is likely to move away from the details of service preparation and delivery, and towards a theological and spiritual exploration of the meaning of worship and preaching in the contexts where they both exercise their ministries.

In the early stages of training, the preparation and leading of worship is shared between the mentor and the student. Persons "on note" will share in some or all of the mentor's planned preaching appointments, progressively taking more responsibility for the various elements of worship. When a local preacher is placed "on trial" and acquires their own appointments on the circuit plan, the mentor will continue to support and encourage the student, offering to discuss aspects of service planning or delivery, and discussing feedback received. The mentor will try to attend worship led by the student from time to time to provide support and informed feedback on the student's progress.

For some students and mentors, regular meetings work best, particularly in the early stages of training, others prefer to make contact when the need arises. A good practice is to meet periodically to discuss a specific service in which the student is taking a leading role, either during the preparation or afterwards to review the feedback received. The mentor will be able to advise the student in the planning of, and reflection on services.

In summary, the mentor's role includes:

1. Supporting the students you are working with in prayer;

2. Working with their students to develop their worship leading (and preaching) skills;

3. Sharing their appointments and working collaboratively with their students in leading worship, including (for local preachers on note), providing opportunity for them to preach;

4. Engaging with their students in ongoing supportive discussion about their developing sense of call to their role;

5. Drawing from their own experience in providing appropriate guidance and support in the preparation and leading of worship, especially in the early stages, but throughout the training process as called upon;

6. Continuing to support their student by attending their services from time to time and providing constructive feedback, including formal feedback requested by the Local Preachers' Meeting;

7.  Assisting their students in selecting suitable material to include in their portfolio, and supplying constructive feedback to enable them to reflect on their experience of worship.

The Mentor's role is **NOT** to:

- Turn their student into a clone of themselves, with the same preferences and habits in leading worship;

- Impose their own expectations on the student, in terms of their level of the number of appointments they should offer, the content of their services or anything else;

- Ensure that their student's prayers and sermons sound as if they were written by their mentor;

- Turn a blind eye to areas of practice where the student would benefit from constructive criticism and guidance.

## 3    REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

### 3.1    What is Reflective Practice?

All of us reflect.  We think and ponder about life, the world around us and our experiences.  At certain times of our lives, events happen that cause us to think deeply and possibly reconsider our assumptions about the way things are.

Educators have long understood that we learn most effectively when theory and practice are combined with the opportunity to reflect on what we are learning.  We can then refine our understanding, adapt the way we do things, and progressively improve our levels of competence and skill.

Theological reflection is rooted in our ordinary attempts to makes sense of our faith, our world and our lives.  All of us are already familiar with doing this; it's part of how we make sense of life as Christians. However, studying a course like this presents particular opportunities for theological reflection, and provides a structure to translate our reflecting into improving competence and skill.

Theological reflection is far from a mechanical exercise.  You need to be open to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to do it well.  The Holy Spirit is the One who sends us out into the world (Luke 24.49), who guides us (Acts 8.29), who shapes our vision (Acts 7.55), and who inspires critical theological engagement with a situation (Acts 3.8).

The process will go best therefore, if you do it prayerfully.  Yet it is also a human process that is helped by having an understanding of how its various components fit together to bring about transformation.

The Liberation Theologians of the 1960s and 1970s are credited with rediscovering theological reflection as a way of transforming communities, although the principles go back much further.  Out of their work emerged practices such as the Pastoral Cycle, represented by diagrams such as this:
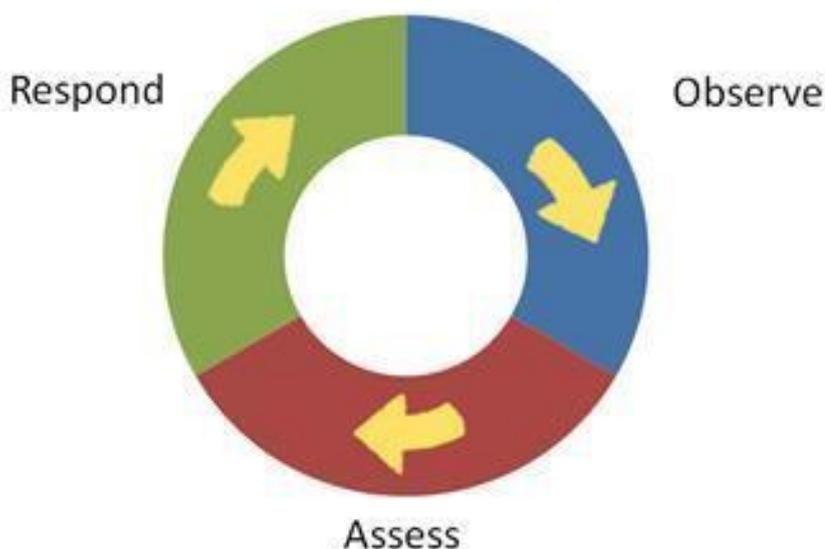


Moving around the cycle, we make our observations and collect evidence from real life and from our own experiences.

We then assess our observations and experience, taking account of other information and experience. As Christians, our assessment will take account of theology, asking such questions as "What does this show me about God and the purposes of God?"

To close the cycle, we consider how we can respond to the insights we have gained, asking such questions as "How does this new insight affect the way I might respond to this situation in the future?"

Some people prefer to refer to a "Pastoral Spiral", which recognises that we actually move around the reflective cycle many times through our journey of faith, each time learning something new. In the process of learning to be worship leaders and local preachers, each time we complete the cycle, our competence and skill will be improved, and our awareness of God and of our own calling will be changed.

## 3.2 What Reflective Practice means for the Student

Students will very quickly realise that they are required to reflect on virtually everything they do, and in many cases, record their reflections. Initially this may seem onerous and unnecessary, but eventually it should become second nature.

More guidance on theological reflection appears in the Guide to Learning, but here are some questions that might help your students to reflect on their portfolio items. Note that these are suggestions to start a thought process, not questions which all demand an answer every time!

- How did you tailor your material for your specific audience/context?

- What worked particularly well, and why?

- What worked less well than you expected? Can you identify any reasons for this?

- Did anything take you by surprise? If so, how did you manage the unexpected situation?

- Did you follow the intended plan, or did you make any changes 'on the hoof'? Why?

- What feedback did you have from participants? Did it enable them to engage with the theme / worship?

- What have you learned? How have your knowledge and understanding of the theme developed?

- What links did you notice with your previous learning and experience?

- How have your practical skills developed?

- Is there anything you would do differently, in the light of your experience?

- What impact did this have on your own journey as a Christian disciple?

## 3.3 What Reflective Practice means for the Tutor

Because this course is not only student-led course, but based around the principles of reflective learning, the role of the tutor is very different from that on previous courses which

have cast the tutor in the role of a teacher.  The traditional role of a teacher is to convey information, skills and understanding to the student, which are then assessed through formal examination.  The teacher needs to check that the student is doing all their required reading, so that gaps in knowledge can be filled before assessment takes place.  The teacher has considerable control over the students' learning experience and the student can sometimes become a passive recipient of education.

The tutor for a student-led course based on reflective learning has a different role.  They are there not to impart knowledge, but to encourage their students to seek out knowledge and understanding for themselves, whilst reflecting and developing their competence and skill.  The tutor's means of assessing progress is through formative assessment of portfolio items produced progressively through the course, and through conversation as a "critical friend".

This can feel risky for tutors, as compared to previous courses, the tutor has less control over the learning process.  A diligent tutor will always be tempted to walk the student through the course material to reassure themselves that the student is making progress. This is not however necessary, or even advisable, unless the students asks for particular advice or guidance.

Evidence also suggests that, despite the concerns of tutors, learners on student-led courses tend to be highly motivated to progress with their learning.  Sometimes, the tutor may need to help a student with planning their study, and setting appropriate expectations, but there is generally no need to police the student's learning at a detailed level.


### 3.4    Reflection at the Heart of Worship: Leading & Preaching

The course provides many opportunities for theological reflection.  This is deliberate, to encourage students to establish reflective practice at the heart of a process of lifelong learning.  Some students will find this tedious, and will need great encouragement to keep practising their reflection.  Some students may become frustrated because reflection seems to be too subjective, emotional and intangible and they are seeking to learn hard facts.

The evidence from portfolios submitted to date, suggests that the main reason why portfolios do not meet assessment criteria is that they contain insufficient reflection.  Tutors and mentors are advised to work diligently with their students on the practice of reflection.  The benefits to the student's future ministry as a worship leader or local preacher will be enormous, and the process of reflecting together will greatly enhance the student-tutor relationship.

## 4 COURSE STRUCTURE

### 4.1 Modules

The structure of the course is described fully in the Guide to Learning. Each of the eight modules consists of three module-sections, which are self-contained units of study. Each module-section is designed around a set of *Learning Outcomes*, which are listed at the start of each module-section. These are tabulated in full in the *Guide to Portfolios*.

Each module-section consists of three parts:

1. **Worship** – some resources to enable students to ground their study time in the worship of God.

2. **Learn** – the main body of resources for self-paced learning, which includes links to a *Module Reader*, consisting of book extracts and other literature held by Cliff College library for use by enrolled users of WLP. Each *Learn* part also includes a *Project Brief* based on one of the Learning Outcomes, and which forms the basis of the portfolio project for that module-section.

3. **Explore** – this consists of ideas and resources for those facilitating the *Explore* sessions for each module-section.

### 4.2 Time Commitment

Training as a worship leader or local preacher is a demanding challenge, and requires patience and commitment. The Methodist Church has always placed a high priority on the training and formation of those who lead worship.

Guidelines are provided to help students to regulate the time they spend on the course and to balance it with their other commitments and responsibilities. Note that these times are additional to any time the student spends in preparing and leading worship.

Mentors and tutors have a role to play in helping students to balance their time commitment to the course, particularly where there is a tendency to apply too much effort and time to achieving a standard of excellence which is not called for – portfolios are assessed only as MET or NOT YET MET, and there are no awards for superior achievement.

The total time expectation for a module-section is approximately 20 hours. With three module-sections per module, the time per module is 60 hours, meaning that the total study time for a Worship Leader is 240 hours, for a local preacher it is 480 hours in total.

The normal expectation is that students will complete either two or four modules in a year, meaning that a Worship Leader could complete the course in one year, but is more likely to take two. Similarly, a local preacher could complete the course in two years, but is more likely to take four.

The following table illustrates the typical weekly study time commitment for a student. Almost inevitably, this will increase because students will wish to explore topics in more depth and breadth than strictly necessary, or because they are unfamiliar with academic study.

|  | Studying Term Time only (38 weeks per annum) | Studying All Year (50 weeks per annum) |
|---|---|---|
| Worship Leader (1 year) | 6.4 hrs | 4.8 hrs |
| Worship Leader (2 years) | 3.2 hrs | 2.4 hrs |
| Local Preacher (2 years) | 6.4 hrs | 4.8 hrs |
| Local Preacher (4 years) | 3.2 hrs | 2.4 hrs |

This time commitment excludes any time spent by the student preparing and leading worship in their home context.  There is a balance to be found for students between taking sufficient worship leading and/or preaching appointments to enable their development as practitioners, and becoming over-committed so that study time becomes burdensome.

Mentors in particular can help students to strike the best balance of study and practice time. They can also advocate on behalf of their students, especially where there is pressure to take more appointments than advisable because of a local shortage of resources.

These time commitments might at first seem to exclude anyone in full-time employment or with intensive family commitments.  This is certainly not the case, and busy people are often very skilled at building in time for study when it is an important priority for them. The course has been designed deliberately to allow study to be fitted in around other responsibilities, so that no one should feel excluded from learning.

## 5    WORKING IN GROUPS

### 5.1    The Explore Sessions

One of the main responsibilities of the tutor in Worship: Leading & Preaching is ensuring that the students have the opportunity to attend an Explore session for each module-section. This may mean facilitating the sessions yourself, but there are many different ways that the Explore sessions can be provided.

There is great benefit for students to be part of a cohort of students studying together, and tutors are encouraged therefore to find ways of ensuring that their students have access to this group-learning experience.

Options include these:

1.   Some circuits can run *Explore* sessions themselves, as they have sufficient students within the circuit to form a viable group for discussion;

2.   Some circuits where there are just one or two students collaborate with one or more neighbouring circuits to run *Explore* sessions jointly.  This requires additional planning and co-ordination, but has the benefit of providing a larger group for discussion and spreading the task of facilitation;

3.   Some Districts and Learning Network regions offer *Explore* sessions. These are sometimes evening or weekend sessions and whilst students must often travel further and allow more time, the benefits of meeting in a larger group are considerable;

4.   Residential Spring and Summer schools, run by the Learning Network take place at Cliff College each year.  These are particularly helpful for students who find themselves studying alone and with no access to a group.  Please note that involvement in a residential or online school does not remove the student's need for a local tutor and mentor.

### 5.2    Skills for Group Facilitation

Ideas and materials for Explore sessions are provided in the Explore element of each module-session. These are designed to be used "out-of-the-box" and are timed to fit into a 90 minute meeting. This does not prevent this material being supplemented or adapted for use with a particular student group, provided the aim of the Explore session is met.  In summary, these are to enable students to engage collectively with the themes and learning outcomes of the module-section.

Facilitating a group is different from chairing a meeting, or teaching a class. It is about helping a group to have an efficient and inclusive meeting. The role of a facilitator combines a number of roles and tasks, but everyone present shares the responsibility for ensuring a meeting is well run, productive and participative.

In the context of Worship: Leading and Preaching Explore sessions, the tasks of the tutor as facilitator includes the following:

- Helping the group decide on the structure and practicalities for the meeting and keeping to it;

- Keeping the meeting focussed on the discussion in hand;

- Regulating the flow of discussion, ensuring that everyone's voices are heard and no one dominates the discussion;

- Clarifying and summarising particular discussion outcomes, and recording issues that need to be taken up outside the meeting, such as queries to the regional training officer;

- Keeping the meeting to time, ensuring that each exercise is given sufficient time;

- Ensuring everyone is kept informed of arrangements for next time;

- Ensuring that facilities and resources are available for the meeting: a room is booked, refreshments available, any teaching resources or equipment is available etc.

Some of these tasks may well be undertaken by others in the group by agreement – the essence of facilitation is collaboration.

At first sight, a facilitator seems to fill a role similar to that of a traditional chairperson. There are however important differences. A facilitator never "directs" the group without its consent and never imposes their will on the group. Any decisions are made by consensus, and are the responsibility of the group as a whole. A good facilitator stays neutral and reminds the group that the reason for meeting is to enhance the learning journey of all. The success of the meeting is therefore the mutual responsibility of the whole group.

Active listening is a key facilitation skill – without it a facilitator simply can't do his or her job. When we actively listen we suspend our own thought processes and give the speaker our full attention. We make a deliberate effort to understand another person's position and their underlying needs. We simply listen, and we don't just listen with our ears. We also use our body language, eye contact and where appropriate verbal cues – short questions or comments – to help the speaker formulate their thoughts and let them know that they are being listened to.

Active listening helps facilitators in several ways. It helps us to understand how the speaker feels about a subject or situation and the underlying emotions, concerns, and tensions. It allows us to focus on the core issues of a speaker's message. It enables us to hear what the speaker is actually saying to us, and not what we want to hear. It also shows the speaker that we are interested in what they have to say.

For more information on facilitation skills, see *https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/*. The material in this section is drawn from their online resources, which are free to use.

### 5.3 Resources for Explore sessions

The online *Explore* parts contain ideas and material for use in facilitating group sessions. They are designed to stimulate conversation in a group setting, to draw out themes the student will have encountered in the *Learn* material, and to encourage thinking about how the student can apply their knowledge and skill in their own context, and in their portfolio projects.

Whilst the *Explore* sessions can provide opportunity for students to talk through specific topics with their peers and their tutor, the sessions are not intended to enable the tutor to provide detailed coaching on the *Learn* material, which is designed for self-paced study by the student.

## 6 PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 Portfolios, Projects and the Project Workspace

**WLP 3.0 – PORTFOLIOS UNTANGLED**

**All new students from September 2020 will be enrolled on the new version 3.0 of the course. This version introduces major changes to portfolios. Full details are in the Guide to Portfolios, Issue 3. The key changes are:**

- **A portfolio now consists of twelve *projects*, one per module-section. These are completed and assessed online as the student works through Learn.**
- ***Apply & Reflect* has gone, as have Theological Themes and the rules matching them to modules.**
- **Tutor assessment takes place online, and most forms and Cover Sheets have gone as has the need to use Zip files to upload.**
- **There is no increase in student workload, as work previously in Folders 1, 2, 3 and 4 is now specific projects within module-sections**
- **Projects are now assessed with direct reference to the Learning Outcomes of the module-section where they appear.**

All assessment of a student's progress in Worship: Leading & Preaching is done by means of portfolios.

Compared to previous versions of Worship: Leading & Preaching, the structure of the portfolios have been greatly simplified. A portfolio in WLP 3.0 consists of twelve projects, one per module-section. Each project is based on one or more key Learning Outcomes from the module-section, and is described in a Project Brief, accessible from the Learn part of the module-section.

Projects are built online and assessed online within the Project Workspace. This allows for the dialogue between students and tutors during formative assessment to be recorded, helping with the reflective process which is central to the purpose of portfolio assessment. Portfolios are assembled entirely online within the student's Moodle account. When all twelve projects in a portfolio are complete, Moodle enables the summative assessment of the portfolio to be completed. This is also conducted online.

Portfolios and their assessment are described fully in the **Guide to Portfolios.** Two **User Guides**, one each for students and tutors are also available which describe in detail how to use the Project Workspace.

### 6.2 Portfolio Assessment

Assessment of portfolios is the responsibility of the circuit tutor, and is based on assessment criteria which are described in the Guide to Portfolios. These competency-based, and the

underlying question asked in assessment is: "Have the required competencies been demonstrated?"

Projects are assessed against criteria which are designed to demonstrate progress in learning.  Only when they are assessed as having Met the assessment criteria can they be added to the portfolio.

At the end of the course, the judgement needs to be made in summative assessment whether or not the student is able to fulfil the responsibilities of a worship leader or local preacher. The assessment that the portfolio has MET the assessment criteria is a signal to the Church Council or Local Preachers' Meeting that they use in making their judgement regarding the competence of a person to satisfy the demands of their call.

Throughout the assessment process, help is available from the Learning Network in your region.  They will be able to provide advice and support, and can help you to build up your own skills and confidence as an assessor.  There will also be opportunities to meet with other tutors to compare ideas and best practice, and compare and critique each other's assessments.

### 6.3     Portfolio Moderation

Moderation of portfolios is designed to ensure consistency of assessment across the whole of the Methodist Connexion so that students can know that their work is being assessed fairly. Two stages of moderation are carried out:

Regional moderation is organised by the Learning Network in your region.  Moderation takes places twice per year. The portfolio deadlines of **31st March** and **30th September** signal the start of the moderation process.  Only portfolios completed and assessed by the tutor by these dates will be moderated in the current moderation round.

All completed portfolios are moderated regionally, by a process of sampling – that is, not all parts of a portfolio are initially checked. If concerns are raised, the sample is enlarged until the moderators are happy that they have a clear understanding of the portfolio and its assessment.  If a regional moderator disagrees with the tutor's assessment, in other words they believe the criteria are actually NOT YET MET, they will refer the portfolio on for Connexional moderation.

When regional moderation is complete, a sample of the portfolios, plus any that have been specifically identified by the regional moderators, are moderated at a Connexional level. This is to ensure that assessment criteria are being applied consistently across the regions.  In cases where there is a difference of opinion between the assessor and regional moderator, the decision of the Connexional moderator is final.

Once moderation is finished, students are advised of the moderation outcome by email.  This is done by the end of November (autumn deadline) or May (spring deadline).  Students are asked to advise the outcome of their studies to their tutor, mentor and Local Preachers' Secretary without delay.

In any case where moderation has resulted in a portfolio being reclassified as NOT YET MET, the regional Learning Network officer will contact the student and tutor with information regarding the reasons.  Note that NOT YET MET does not imply failure, and keeps open the possibility of meeting the criteria in future.  In many cases, to achieve the MET category,

some items in the portfolio may need to be revised, missing items added or more commonly, more theological reflection added.

However, NOT YET MET can however be a difficult message to convey to the student, who may be assuming all is well because of their initial assessment by their tutor. Great pastoral sensitivity may be required, and the tutor may wish to include the student's mentor in the discussion.

If you are unsure who your Regional Moderator is, look for the Learning Network pages on the Methodist Church website.

### 6.4    Assessment of Services

The Local Preachers' Meeting is required to provide for the assessment of services lead by those on note and on trial every quarter.  Similar arrangements should also apply to worship leaders in training but are not mandated in Standing Orders.  In addition, two trial services take place during local preacher training.

For each of these, the student is expected to make use of the *Service Planning and Reflection Form* to guide their preparation, and provide opportunities for reflection.

They are asked to speak to their mentor (if possible) before and after the service, and to use the contents of the *Service Planning and Reflection Form* as part of this conversation.

After the service, when they have spoken to the person(s) who assessed the service, and have completed their final reflections on the *Service Planning & Reflection Form* relating to feedback and pass a copy to their tutor, who will review it and provide you with their feedback.

The circuit should keep a record of the assessed services for each student,  A template is provided in the Guide to Portfolios.  The purpose is to check that the student is receiving as wide a range of opportunities for participating in different kinds of worship as possible.

For more information on the responsibilities of the circuit, including tutors and mentors, please see the Guide to Portfolios, chapter 4.

### 6.5    Plagiarism

If you suspect that a piece of work you are assessing is not wholly the student's own work, or that a source is not correctly referenced, you may have detected a case of plagiarism.  A conversation with the student may be sufficient to identify an omitted reference to a quote. You may need to explain the issue of plagiarism and why it is considered unacceptable. Chapter 7 of the *Guide to Learning* explains the issue.

If you suspect plagiarism during your summative assessment of the completed portfolio, please contact the Local Preachers' Office, so that we can run the necessary electronic checks on the portfolio.

## 7 ONLINE LEARNING

### 7.1 Why online learning?

The prospect of online learning will present no problems to some, but will be daunting to others.

There are several reasons that Worship: Leading & Preaching is provided as an online course:

- It allows the course to be much more flexible and adaptable than a paper-based course in addressing the widely varying needs of the contemporary church.

- It allows the use of many different types of media, such as audio and video sources to enhance the learning experience and provide for a wider range of learning preferences.

- It enables the course to be adapted and developed to meet changing needs, as part of an expanding range of learning resources for the whole church.

- It allows for efficiency in the preparation, assessment and moderation of students' work, whilst saving paper.

- It is not economically feasible to produce, administer and deliver a paper-based course given the resources available to the church today.

The majority of students and tutors, once they have gained some experience in using the course, find that they gain confidence and start to enjoy the benefits of online learning. Circuits are encouraged to support those who do not have access to the facilities required to study online, and by making use of IT skills that exist among members of the circuit.

For those who for particular reasons, struggle with interacting with computers, please see the Additional Needs Guide, described further in section 7.5 below.

### 7.2 What is Moodle?

The course makes use of a "Virtual Learning Environment" (VLE) called Moodle. Moodle is widely used by schools, colleges and universities, is used by millions of students worldwide and is recognised as the leading VLE in the world. It is "open- source" rather than commercial software, which makes it affordable for use by the Methodist Church.

The Moodle system is hosted for us by the Church of England, and maintained by a specialist support company, who ensure its availability and security and provide us with regular updates. All of the contents of the course, including the text, videos, book extracts etc. are maintained by the Local Preachers' Office at Methodist Church House and overseen by a Board of Studies appointed by the Methodist Council.

We recommend that tutors view these and become familiar with the basic operation of the Moodle system, even if you are unfamiliar with using computers. An important thing to remember: whatever you do on WLP, you won't be able to break anything, and you can always get back to where you started.

Mentors also are encouraged to gain a basic understanding of how the online course works so that they are aware of the materials their students are using, and the nature of their studies.

It is worth noting that "guest access" is available to the whole course apart from the Module Reader (for copyright licensing reasons), and can be used at any time for personal study or use in study groups or meetings.  Local Preachers' Meetings are encouraged to make use of the course material as part of their Continuing Local Preacher Development (CLPD) programmes.

To access the course as a guest, use

> Username:    **guestaccess**
>
> Password:    **guestaccess**

### 7.3    What if I have no access to the internet?

WLP is designed to be used online, using a computer or tablet device connected to the internet.  This connection can be a broadband connection in the home, or a mobile data connection via a mobile phone contract.  Additionally, there are many public spaces (e.g. libraries, community centres and coffee shops) where free internet access is available, and some WLP students choose to make use of these facilities.

There are areas of the country where internet access remains difficult.  Where students are experiencing difficulties with internet access, we encourage circuits to explore imaginative solutions: perhaps making internet connections in church or circuit offices available for student use, or providing funding to assist with the cost of home broadband connection.

For students who struggle to watch the online video clips in the course because of very poor internet speeds, a memory stick containing these clips can be obtained from the Local Preachers' Office.

We are sometimes asked whether the complete course can be provided in a printed version. This is not feasible due to the production costs involved which would be over £1,000 per copy.  In addition, working from a paper copy does not allow access to the audio and video material in the course.  Printing facilities are provided on the course website to print any part of the course.

### 7.4    Additional Needs

Delivery of the course online enables various opportunities to provide support for people with additional needs.  Please see the Additional Needs Guide for more information about additional needs, and what support may be available.

All students enrolled on the course receive a short questionnaire which allows them to indicate (if they wish) any additional needs they have.  Students may choose to share these needs with their tutor and/or mentor, who should appraise themselves of the support that is available.  Please note the need to protect the student's confidentiality at all times.

Facilities available within Worship: Leading & Preaching include:

- Audio transcription – all text-based parts of the course can now be "listened to" using commonly available (free) software.

- Visual presentation – various facilities are available to alter text size and colour and optimise contrasts etc.

## 8    DISCERNMENT, FORMATION AND TRAINING

### 8.1    The Formation of a Local Preacher

The formal process of training as a local preacher starts with a conversation between the candidate and their Superintendent Minister, who is responsible for appraising the candidate of the duties of a local preacher (Standing Order 564A) and for issuing a Note to Preach. Responsibility for discerning the call of a local preacher lies with the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting.  The Local Preachers' Meeting then provides the opportunities for the local preacher to develop as a reflective practitioner within a supportive fellowship.

The Standing Orders describing the training and recognition of local preachers and worship leaders predate the introduction of WLP and simply refer to "authorised training courses". These Standing Orders apply to Worship: Leading & Preaching, which is now the only authorised training course for new students.

The formation of a local preacher takes place under the oversight of the Local Preachers' Meeting, which is responsible to their Circuit Meeting for discerning the call and supervising the formation and training of a local preacher. The full process of training as a Local Preacher is described in the ***Guide to Learning***.

### 8.2    The Formation of a Worship Leader

Responsibility for discerning the call, and for the formation of a Worship Leader lies with the Church Council, who should draw on the advice of their circuit Local Preachers' Meeting. There are fewer guidelines in Standing Orders relating to Worship Leaders, and local contexts and practices and vary.  A Guidance Note is available for download from the Methodist Church website at [www.methodist.org.uk/wl](http://www.methodist.org.uk/wl).  In case of doubt, the Local Preachers' Office will be able to provide up-to-date guidance and advice.

The process is less complex than that for a local preacher, and does not involve designated periods "On Note" and "On Trial", formal interviews and the conduct of Trial Services. It is however necessary for a tutor and a mentor to be appointed to accompany the worship leader through their training.

The tutor for a worship leader may also be the tutor for local preachers, and worship leaders in training may be part of a mixed tutorial group of worship leaders and local preachers and others.  The tutor may be based in the circuit or elsewhere and need not be a worship leader or local preacher themselves.

The mentor for a worship leader need not be a member of the church in which the worship leader is training, but should have a good knowledge of the church, be available to work with the student there in the early stages, be present from time to time at worship they lead, and be prepared to accompany them as required at Church Council meetings when their training and development is discussed.

### 8.3    Transferring from Worship Leader to Local Preacher

From time to time, a student who is training as a Worship Leader senses a call to train as a Local Preacher.  The process to transfer to the Local Preacher course is straightforward and is described in the ***Guide to Learning***.  The starting point, once the student has spoken to their Superintendent Minister, is usually to contact the Local Preachers' Office.