THESIS

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WHAT IF LEARNING APPROACH WITH YEAR 12 STUDENTS IN ENGAGING THEM IN A MEANINGFUL RESPONSE TO LIFE’S BIG QUESTIONS IN BIBLICAL STUDIES.

AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT.

Submitted by


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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

This thesis is my own composition and is the result of my own research and work.

It contains no material that has been published elsewhere or taken in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree.

No other person’s work has been used without acknowledgment in the main text of this thesis.

All research procedures reported in this thesis have been given the approval of the Education Research Ethics Committee of Morling College Ltd.

Signed: Craig Foster

Dated: 28th October, 2016
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ABSTRACT

One recent attempt to address a Christian pedagogical approach is the What If Learning approach (WIL) (2016). What If Learning seeks to promote, through classroom pedagogy, certain attitudes, behaviours and ways of thinking in the classroom that are movements “toward” the Christian characteristics of faith, hope and love.

This research study investigates the effectiveness of using the WIL approach in a Year 12 classroom to engage students and enable students to think through a meaningful response to life’s big questions. The research methodology used was action research over three cycles. The research sample involved one Year 12 class of 18 students in an Anglican independent school in New South Wales. The research instruments included surveys and interviews with a focus group of four students.

Analysis of results showed the majority of students found that the lessons were more engaging than the usual biblical studies lessons; and encouraged a meaningful response to the concepts raised in the lesson which provided them with helpful life applications as they were encouraged to think more deeply about applying these concepts to their life. However, the lessons did not appear to encourage a specifically Christian response from the students nor did it help them to think differently or more deeply about Christianity.

Recommendations from this study include further research to provide comparisons across other Year 12 biblical studies classes using the WIL approach. In addition, a longitudinal research project could be undertaken to make comparisons across biblical studies classes from year 7 to 12 using the WIL approach. Further, teachers of other subjects using the WIL approach in their lessons could utilise the surveys from this study and compare the results with lessons not utilising the WIL approach.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY ......................................................................................... i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ ii

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................ iii

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION .................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Background to the Study ............................................................................................ 1
  1.2 The Purpose of the Study ......................................................................................... 2
  1.3 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions .............................................. 2
  1.4 Benefits of the Study ............................................................................................... 3
  1.5 Outline of the Thesis .............................................................................................. 3

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................... 5
  2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 5
  2.2 The What If Learning approach ............................................................................. 5
  2.3 Transmisssional and Apologetic approach ................................................................ 8
  2.4 Jesus’ approach ........................................................................................................ 9
  2.5 Methodological approach ..................................................................................... 10
  2.6 Story/Narrative approach ..................................................................................... 11
  2.7 “Best Practice” Pedagogical Approaches in 21st Century Teaching .................. 11
  2.8 Challenges of Teaching Biblical Studies in a Christian School ........................... 12
  2.9 Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 13

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .............................................................. 14
  3.1 Research Design .................................................................................................... 14
  3.2 Research Participants ............................................................................................ 14
  3.3 Research Instruments ........................................................................................... 15
  3.3.1 Class Surveys – (Appendix 1a and 1b) ............................................................. 15
  3.3.2 Interview Questions – (Appendix 2) ................................................................ 16
  3.3.3 Focus Group Review – (Appendix 3) ............................................................... 16
  3.4 Research Procedure .............................................................................................. 16
  3.5 Validity and Reliability ....................................................................................... 17
  3.6 Research Ethics .................................................................................................... 17

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND ANALYSIS ................................................................. 18
  4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................ 18
  4.2 Cycle One ............................................................................................................... 18
  4.2.1 Planning and Action ......................................................................................... 18
  4.2.2 Observation ....................................................................................................... 20
  4.2.2.1 Results of Initial Survey ............................................................................. 20
  4.2.2.2 End of Topic Survey ................................................................................... 23
  4.2.2.3 End of Topic Survey – Student Self Evaluation (Part e) ............................ 23
  4.2.2.4 Results of the Focus Group Interview ....................................................... 24
  4.2.2.5 Results of the Focus Group Review Discussion ....................................... 25
4.2.3 Reflections Cycle One ........................................................................................................ 26
4.3 Cycle Two ................................................................................................................................ 27
4.3.1 Planning and Action ............................................................................................................. 27
4.3.2 Observation ........................................................................................................................ 29
4.3.2.1 Results of Initial Survey ............................................................................................... 29
4.3.2.2 End of Topic Survey .................................................................................................... 31
4.3.2.3 End of Topic Survey – Student Self Evaluation (Part e) ............................................. 32
4.3.2.4 Results of the Focus Group Interview ........................................................................ 32
4.3.2.5 Results of the Focus Group Review Discussion .......................................................... 33
4.3.3 Reflections Cycle Two ......................................................................................................... 34
4.4 Cycle Three .......................................................................................................................... 35
4.4.1 Planning and Action ............................................................................................................ 35
4.4.2 Observation ........................................................................................................................ 35
4.4.2.1 End of Topic Survey .................................................................................................... 37
4.4.2.2 End of Topic Survey – Student Self Evaluation (Part e) ............................................. 38
4.4.2.3 Results of the Focus Group Interview ........................................................................ 38
4.4.3 Reflections Cycle Three ..................................................................................................... 39

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION .................................................................................................. 40
5.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 40
5.2 Cycle One ................................................................................................................................ 40
5.3 Cycle Two ................................................................................................................................ 42
5.4 Cycle Three .......................................................................................................................... 45
5.4 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 48

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .............................................. 49
6.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 49
6.2 Limitations ............................................................................................................................ 50
6.3 Recommendations for Further Study .................................................................................. 50
6.4 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 51

REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 52

APPENDIX 1a - Initial Class Survey ........................................................................................... 56
APPENDIX 1b - End of Topic Survey .......................................................................................... 57
APPENDIX 1b, Part e - End of Topic Survey - Student Self-Evaluation ................................. 58
APPENDIX 2 - Interview Questions ............................................................................................ 59
APPENDIX 3 - Focus Group Review .......................................................................................... 60
APPENDIX 4 - End of Topic Survey - Student Self-Evaluation Cycle One Results ............. 61
APPENDIX 5 - End of Topic Survey - Student Self-Evaluation Cycle Two Results ............ 62
APPENDIX 6 - End of Topic Survey - Student Self-Evaluation Cycle Three Results .......... 63
APPENDIX 7 - Cycle One – Lesson Plan ..................................................................................... 64
APPENDIX 8 - Cycle Two – Lesson Plan ..................................................................................... 65
APPENDIX 9 - Cycle Three – Lesson Plan

APPENDIX 10 - WIL strategies of: Seeing Anew; Choose Engagement; and Reshape Practice – Cycle Two

APPENDIX 11 - WIL strategies of: Seeing Anew; Choose Engagement; and Reshape Practice – Cycle Three
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Summary of Initial Class Survey – Cycle One .........................21
Table 4.2 Summary of End of Topic Survey – Cycle One .......................22
Table 4.3 Summary of Initial Class Survey – Cycle Two .......................28
Table 4.4 Summary of End of Topic Survey – Cycle Two .......................30
Table 4.5 Summary of End of Topic Survey – Cycle Three .....................36
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

As an experienced teacher of Biblical Studies in an independent Anglican school I have been encouraged recently through reading Christian educational research to think more about the nature of Christian pedagogy. Smith and Smith (2011) state, “it seems fair to observe that our commitment to Christian scholarship has been significantly more articulate than our commitment to Christian pedagogy” (2011, p. 6). Although this quote is directed at Christian tertiary education, I believe the sentiment applies to Christian secondary education.

After teaching Year 12 biblical studies classes for the past eight years I have often wrestled with the question: should we be teaching this subject to year 12 students? The large majority of students in the school are not Christian and are absorbed in their HSC studies. They often find it difficult to see why they are studying this subject and so are not as engaged in the subject as they could be. Thus the opportunity to use a Christian pedagogical approach that seeks to improve the engagement and responsiveness levels of students was something I was enthusiastic to investigate with my Year 12 biblical studies classes.

The WIL approach is endorsed and promoted by the Sydney Anglican Education Commission. Thus it is likely to become a well-used approach in Sydney Anglican schools. This Christian pedagogical approach seeks to promote certain attitudes, behaviours and ways of thinking that are movements “toward” the Christian characteristics of faith, hope and love.

The WIL website states that pedagogy is: “how we teach and learn; classroom practice; the habits of the classroom; the experience of teaching and learning as a whole” (2016). It also emphasizes that classroom pedagogy needs to be shaped by Christian faith in a Christian school, otherwise, the pedagogical practices of a classroom may send messages that are counter to a biblical view. For example, pedagogical classroom practices and habits may be unintentionally reinforcing messages of individualism or secularism in that we are seeking to produce professional workers who achieve their dreams and potential.
As I teach a unit of work in Year 12 Biblical Studies entitled – “Life’s Big Questions”, the WIL approach which includes the three integrated areas of Seeing Anew, Choosing Engagement and Reshaping Practice may be effective in engaging students in the big questions of life and enable them in thinking through a meaningful response. Thus this research study investigates students’ engagement and their meaningful response which includes whether the lesson provided students with helpful life applications; secondly, whether the lesson encouraged students to think more deeply about applying these life applications to their life; and thirdly, whether the lesson encouraged a specifically Christian way of viewing the world or a Christian way of living.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research is to investigate how effective the What If Learning approach is in engaging Year 12 students in thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life in biblical studies. The study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the What If Learning approach in relation to student engagement, their responsiveness to the life application ideas raised in the lesson and the effectiveness of the WIL approach in encouraging a specifically Christian response to the topic under consideration.

As the What If Learning (WIL) is an approach to pedagogy that seeks to promote certain attitudes, behaviours and ways of thinking that are movements “toward” Christian characteristics, this research will also seek to measure how effective the WIL approach is in encouraging a specifically Christian way of viewing the world and a Christian way of living.

1.3 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Statement of the problem:

From my experience in teaching biblical study classes to year 11 and 12 students for the past eight years, the efforts of the teacher can be very much focused on making ‘the content’ of a lesson relevant with less effort being given to making ‘the pedagogy’ of the lesson engaging. The WIL approach seeks to encourage a greater emphasis be given to pedagogy. Thus research of the WIL approach needs to be conducted to ascertain if firstly, the WIL approach assists with
engagement levels of students in senior biblical studies classrooms and secondly, to investigate if the WIL approach actually encourages a meaningful response to the big questions of life.

The research question for this study is:

How effective is using the What If Learning approach in engaging Year 12 students in thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life in biblical studies.

1.4 Benefits of the Study

Teachers of Biblical Studies and other subjects should find this research helpful in providing tools to evaluate the engagement levels of their classes and if the lessons help the students make a meaningful response to the concepts raised in the lesson. If biblical studies lessons are too complex and cognitive for students there is the danger that student engagement levels will drop as will the effectiveness of the lesson. There is also the danger that the lessons are engaging but do not actively promote meaningful Christin responses in the lives of the students. Thus the results of this research should provide data on the effectiveness of the WIL approach to increase the engagement levels of students without decreasing attention and responses to the deeper philosophical and biblical viewpoints of a unit of work.

Christian Schools that are interested in thinking more deeply about Christian pedagogy in the classroom will find this research helpful as a working example that uses a particular Christian pedagogical approach - the WIL approach. It is hoped that by evaluating students’ engagement and response levels, a more objective analysis of the effectiveness of the approach can be made.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the research topic of investigating the effectiveness of the What of Learning approach in engaging students in senior Biblical Studies classes. Chapter Two consists of a literature review that considers various ‘Teaching Christianly’ approaches with a particular focus on the WIL approach. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology undertaken in this study. It describes information about the participants, the action research approach and the instruments utilised in this study.
Chapter Four describes and analyses the results from the data gathered from the instruments with respect to the research question. Chapter Five discusses the results in relation to the research question and the literature review. Chapter Six provides the conclusion, highlighting the important findings, the limitations of this study and future research recommendations.
2.1 Introduction

There are many models of “Teaching Christianly” which relate to teaching and learning grounded in Christian theology. Some use a Doctrine approach (Berkhof and Van Till, 1989; Poythress, 1974, 1979; Steensma and Van Brummelen, 1977); some a Character of God focus (Mackenzie, 1997, p.87-113); some a Christian worldview approach (Belhaven University, Faculty Worldview Papers (n.d.); Edlin, 2014; Goodlet & Collier, 2014) and others a philosophical and theological approach (Holland, 2013). The WIL approach is considered a Christian pedagogical approach (Cooling and Green, 2015, p.100) or a Christian character approach as it seeks to promote Christian character virtues.

This literature review discusses some of these models in more detail as well as focussing on the WIL approach. It also reviews some of the literature related to teaching Biblical studies in Christian schools particularly in Years 11 and 12.

2.2 The What If Learning approach

The WIL approach is an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to be “distinctively Christian” (WIL, 2016). The three WIL steps, seeing anew, choosing engagement and reshaping practice are considered social processes that seek to encourage this “distinctively Christian” approach. “What If Learning is not a method or an instrument which teachers may adopt to ensure their practice is ‘Christian’ and which will yield measurable data. What If Learning is primarily an approach that aims to help teachers make connections between their teaching and learning practices and the Christian ethos of their school and their own Christian worldview if appropriate” (Cooling and Green, 2015, p. 100).

What If Learning regards the intentional development of Christian pedagogy in the classroom as more significant than curriculum content for the integration of faith and learning (Cooling & Green, 2015, p.97; Smith and Carvill, 2000; Smith and Smith, 2011). The What if Learning site warns that by focusing on big worldview type questions this might lead to designing activities in a way that implied that those most capable of intellectually sophisticated reflection were also
those most capable of spiritual development. Thus the “What if Learning” approach seeks to design teaching and learning activities that allow students to respond meaningfully to spiritual and moral issues at varying levels of sophistication (WIL, 2016). The focus is more on the teaching and learning practices, than on the content that is taught or when Christian words or ideas feature in the curriculum.

“Seeing anew” is about looking for new opportunities in the lesson to bring into focus the Christian characteristics of faith, hope and love. “Choosing engagement” is about choosing ways of engaging such as listening, discussion, questions, writing, pictures, music, role play, independent research, collaborating, and helping fellow learners to most helpfully achieve the purpose of the lesson. “Reshaping practice” is about reshaping classroom practices which may involve changing the layout of the classroom, altering an approach, adjusting student interaction in ways that best suit the new way of seeing that lesson (WIL, 2016).

A major inspiration for the WIL framework was Wenger’s *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (1998). WIL focuses on Wenger’s three modes of identification/belonging which are imagination, participation and reification/repertoire. *Imagination* can be likened to *seeing anew* (1998, p.176). This aspect of practice encourages teachers to consider seeing anew their teaching and learning tasks through Christian eyes. *Participation* can be likened to *choosing engagement*. This aspect of practice opens up questions in connection with exploring how education can be Christian. It enables teachers to consider whether the Christian virtues are evident in the patterns of participation in the classroom activities or whether they are inadvertently encouraging non-Christian character qualities, such as pride and selfish ambition. *Reification and repertoire* can be likened to *reshaping practice*. If teaching is to be genuinely informed by faith, hope and love which are the three virtues that WIL bases its teaching and learning approach on, this will mean developing a fitting repertoire. Thus both Wenger and WIL encourage teachers to reshape their practices so that teaching and learning together reflects and fosters Christian ways of seeing (Wenger, 1998; WIL, 2016).

The WIL approach to pedagogy seeks to promote certain attitudes, behaviours and ways of thinking that are movements “toward” the characteristics of Faith, Hope and Love (WIL, 2016). Otherwise, the pedagogical practices of a classroom may send messages that are counter to a biblical view. For example, pedagogical classroom practices and habits may be unintentionally reinforcing messages of individualism or secularism.
The major strength of the WIL approach is that it encourages a reflection process upon the teaching practices of the classroom. This reflection process may reveal that teaching practices are unintentionally encouraging messages that are contrary to the Bible such as various worldviews, individualism, consumerism, and relativism. Another strength of the WIL approach is that it recognises that students are not just reason based creatures but are also changed by feelings and experiences. Smith (2009) argues that a person’s worldview is not merely a set of doctrinal and philosophical beliefs completely formed by reason and information. Worldviews are also comprised of hopes and loves that are shaped by experience, community life and daily practices. The WIL approach adopts this argument and uses three inter-related steps to promote a re-framing of teaching and learning practices within a Christian telos and it looks at the significance of what can be learned from within an imagination that is framed by Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God. (Cooling & Green, 2015, p.99). The WIL approach claims to be “framed by Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God” (Cooling & Green, 2015, p.99).

A major weakness of the WIL approach is that it is difficult to ascertain how it is a specifically Christian approach. As it could be argued that a Jewish or Muslim school could happily use the WIL approach in their schools. The confusion lies in what the WIL approach has made its telos. The WIL states that it is “framed by Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God” (Cooling & Green, 2015, p.99) but it also states that it seeks to focus on the promotion of the Christian character virtues of faith, hope, and love. Thus the telos of the WIL approach is primarily character values. While the Bible’s focus and telos is “turn from your sins, trust in Jesus and his forgiveness, obey his commandments and you will enter the Kingdom of God” (Mark 1:15). Thus the WIL approaches telos is a movement “towards” Christian character virtues while the Bible’s telos is always a movement “towards” Jesus.

Another significant weakness of the WIL approach is that it regards the intentional development of Christian pedagogy in the classroom as more significant than curriculum content for the integration of faith and learning (Cooling & Green, 2015, p.97; Smith and Carvill, 2000; Smith and Smith, 2011). Although pedagogy is important in the classroom I believe it is the content that makes something “distinctively Christian” not the pedagogy. The pedagogy (the how) should always sit under the Bible’s message (the what). Keller (2012) argues that Smith goes too far in giving emphasis to right action (that is practices) over right thinking (that is doctrinal and philosophical belief) and advises against an either/or approach with respect to thinking and action. Keller proposes that the key is the heart and that the heart’s commitments are changed through repentance in both our thinking and behaviour (2012, p.218).
Thus the potential weakness of the “What if Learning” approach is that it will encourage lessons that focus on the end values of Christian faith over and above the prior and necessary repentance of hearts, minds and lives. Although the website says that it does not seek to do this, over ninety of the one hundred plus exemplar teaching lessons on the website are focused on Christian values would seem to indicate otherwise (WIL, 2016).

2.3 Transmissional and Apologetic approach

Cooling (2013), a key contributor to the WIL approach is concerned that many Christian teachers, who have a high view of the authority of Scripture, feel that to teach Christianly is to “favour a transmissionist or apologetic approach aimed at persuading students to accept a biblical view” (p.8). In a Christian school there is a danger that the “good news” can become “bad news” because the gospel is continually forced upon students by unhelpful transmissional or apologetic approaches. However, it would seem that there is still a place for such approaches in a Christian school as long as the guiding principle in 1 Peter 3:15 - “do this with gentleness and respect” - is adhered to.

Collier and Dawson (2008) state that in a secularized society, and despite the best efforts and intentions of Christian educators, Christian education often appears to make little difference to the ‘real life’ attitudes and behaviours of students. One potential reason for this apparent lack of efficacy lies in the pedagogical approaches taken by at least some Christian educators (Cooling, 1994). Specifically, pedagogies that focus on the transmission of Christian beliefs rather than on more active inductive approaches fail to address underlying values, and thus typically fail to engage the allegiances of students within and beyond the walls of the classroom (Skillen, 2000). Collier and Dawson (2008) cite Cooling (2010) who indicates that such approaches can actually encourage an active resistance to learning about religion and help create unnecessarily negative reactions towards Christianity (p. 203). Collier and Dawson argue that “the pedagogical limitations of transmissional models of Christian education represents a central potential reason for the limited impact of Christian schools on the spiritual formation and reformation of their students” (p200). Although the “transmissional” approach may sometimes create a negative response in some students, to argue that this approach “represents a central potential reason” for lack of efficacy upon spiritual formation of students would be difficult to justify. Transmissional and apologetic approaches can obviously be very unhelpful if they are done without sensitivity and wisdom but to reject these approaches because they may cause “negative reactions” or “lack
efficacy’ would appear to go against the frequent use of such approaches in the Bible, in particular the frequent use of such approaches by Jesus himself.

2.4 Jesus’ approach

As Jesus is considered a Master Teacher (Horne, 1998) it is helpful to consider the teaching approaches that he used. Jesus uses a wide range of teaching practices and methods throughout his ministry. The what of Jesus’ message and the who of his personality and authority are significant factors in making Jesus an exciting teacher but the how of his teaching also played a significant part in making Jesus such an exciting teacher. Jesus used a great variety of forms and techniques as the medium for his message. Collinson (2014) notes that not only were Jesus’ teaching methods impressive but his observation of people, nature and society were highly engaging. Jesus knew the power of curiosity in learning and his teaching left his hearers questioning, attracted and wanting to learn more (Collinson, 2014, p. 76). He went beyond pure facts and knowledge as he provided opportunities for his disciples to learn in community and to observe good and bad life models. Jesus also provided opportunities for collaboration, small group work and he catered for individual differences (Collinson, 2014, p 83). All these different practices can relate to best practice pedagogy for schooling in the 21st century.

Stein (1978) explores the various forms and methods that Jesus used to teach. The variety of such forms of teaching used by Jesus highlight what a creative teacher he was, even before consideration of whether his teaching was effective. Stein provides numerous examples and Scripture references of Jesus teaching methods such as: similes, metaphors, questions, and classic story parables (1978: p. 7-32). Horne (1998) also identifies the following teaching strategies of Jesus: Openers, Basic Skills such as concrete examples to teach abstract concepts, Inquiry Learning such as using the problems people brought to him as opportunities to teach, Conversations which desired conviction rather than persuasion, Questions and Discourses always in a more or less informal way.

As noted by the authors referenced above, questioning was a favourite method of Jesus’ teaching. He used a critical thinking approach in his teaching with questions which were not answerable with simple ideas (Lee, 2010). Jesus asked questions to review general principles and to inspire deep thinking. (2156 of 6176). It has been calculated using Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956) that nearly 87 percent of Jesus’ questions were constructed to require thinking at multiple levels of Bloom’s taxonomy and 46 percent were asked at the highest levels (2010; loc 2178 of 6176).
2.5 Methodological approach

Oppewal (1985), in contrast to the WIL approach moves beyond the methods and practices and firstly consider what the Bible’s “epistemology” (theory of knowing) and “teaching methodology” is before going to specific methods and practices. His plea is: “what Christian educators should have is a methodology which is anchored in the Judeo-Christian epistemological tradition” (p. 7). He argues that the Bible’s epistemology is holistic and does not drive a wedge between knowing and doing. He encourages a “holistic classroom methodology” which is a “single generic strategy rather than a set of pedagogical moves suggested by ‘methods of teaching’” (p. 1).

Oppewal (1985) proposes a biblical classroom methodology that is based on a biblical model of knowing and is characterised by an interactive flow between the learner and some raw material, a give and take between the knower and the to-be-known. The outcome is to be a movement towards truth, the truth will always be a truth relative to and appropriate to the age level of the student. The methodology proposed is divided roughly into three phases, which he calls consider, choose, and commit phases (p. 9).

Lee (2010) similarly to Oppewal, considers methodology as primary and argues that the main intention of the teaching methodology Jesus used is to change the whole lives of the disciples, including visible as well as invisible domains (loc. 1480 of 6176). This was what Bailey (1983) also observed about Jesus’ methodology in his use of parables.

Smith and Smith (2011) as leaders of the WIL approach seek to move the “the integration of faith and learning” more in the direction of “pedagogy” than “theological and epistemological frameworks” as it is the latter where they argue all the energies have gone and they seek to “signal a game changer” where there is more focus specifically on learning, and specifically on the practices involved in teaching and learning (p, 4-5). The increased attention given to “pedagogy” by the WIL approach is obviously helpful but it is unhelpful to elevate it above “theological and epistemological frameworks” as they both have an important and complimentary role in the integration of faith and learning in the classroom.
2.6 Story/Narrative approach

Increased attention is being given to the value of using a story/narrative approach in the classroom. The benefit of this approach is that it can helpfully combine good pedagogical practices with biblically faithful theological and epistemological frameworks. Shortt (2014) highlights the importance of story in the classroom and how stories were Jesus most often used method of teaching (p. 252). Egan (1986) argues that stories provide an alternative approach which “encourages us to see lessons or units as good stories to be told rather than sets of objectives to be attained” (p.2). Egan highlights that stories engage us affectively by the use of binary opposites (good/bad, honour/selfishness etc.) and having an end - in that they do not just stop but rather they satisfy some conflict set up by their beginning, they have a resolution. Thus Egan builds into his teaching model a means of establishing at least some degree of story-like rhythm (p.30-38) and he proposes a Story Form Model approach to teaching (p.41).

The story approach to teaching has strong biblical support, as God reveals himself and his plans to us through story, through the grand biblical story of Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation (Shortt, 2014). This grand biblical story utilizes all the aspects mentioned by Egan as to what constitutes a good story (p.41). Jesus classic parable stories also had the features noted by Egan built into them. Bailey (1983) also highlights that Jesus’ parable stories had three basic elements: a point of contact within the real world of the listener; a “response” that the original listener is pressed to make; and a combination of theological motifs that together pressed the listener to make that response (p.37).

2.7 “Best Practice” Pedagogical Approaches in 21st Century Teaching

A significant contributor to effective teaching practices in the 21st Century classroom is Hattie (2012). He has measured extensively what factors make teachers more effective in the classroom. Students identified in a Hattie study (2012) that those teachers who demonstrated more passion as defined by the 7 Cs (Care, Control, Clarify, Challenge, Captivate, Confer, Consolidate) were those they found the most effective (2012, p. 28). These 7 Cs have clear parallels to the strategic teaching categories used by Jesus, as identified by Horne (1998) in 2.4, Hattie also highlights that highly effective teachers know where students are at on their journey of learning and will be able to differentiate teaching for individual students based on this understanding (2012, p. 92-115).
Hattie (2012, p. 92-115) reports that material presented in verbal, visual and multimedia form provide a richer representation than a single medium; stories tend to be remembered better than facts and abstract principles; spaced schedules of studying produce better long-term retention than a single session; an understanding of an abstract concept improves with multiple and varied examples; and, making errors is often a necessity for learning to occur.

Cuttance and McGuinness (2013), based on the research of Hattie listed the top 14 teaching strategies that have the strongest and most powerful influence on student learning. “Teacher clarity” was ranked number three, “direct instruction” was ranked number seven, “working through examples” was ranked number nine and “questioning” was ranked number thirteen.

Dickman (2009) highlights that pedagogical theory promotes the use of “higher-order” questions but observes that most questions in practice inadequately fulfil this goal as most questions demand mere answers. Dickman highlights a unique type of question entitled “questions-eliciting-question” (or QEQ) that are questions not to be answered but to be asked and shared with one another. The goal of QEQs is not to get learners to answer them but instead to get learners to ask them in such a way that the questions become their own (p. 9). The QEQ approach is very similar to the Socratic Method.

2.8 Challenges of Teaching Biblical Studies in a Christian School

Maple (1997) argues that many young people are two generations away from church and its associated Christian worldview. Further, Collier and Dawson (2008) believe that it is unrealistic to expect that anything other than extended, purposeful contact can lead to enduring faith commitments.

The related challenge for biblical studies teachers is the limited time they spend with students. Kraft (1996) considers the example of Peter talking to Jesus at the end of the gospel of John where Jesus encourages Peter to “feed my sheep” after his departure (John 21:15). Kraft notes that by this time in Jesus ministry he has had three years of intense personal relationships with his disciples and Kraft helpfully points out that: “people are opened up to change through the development of friendship with and respect for the change agent” (p.191).

Another challenge for biblical studies teachers is the two significantly different groups of people in the classroom who view the Bible differently. Christians and non-Christians have a different view of the importance of the Bible in their life. Christian students have the Holy Spirit applying
the Word of God to their hearts while Non-Christians do not (John 3:5-8; Romans 8:8-17; John 16:5-15). Hoekstra’s (1985) helpfully reminds the Religious Studies teacher of the importance of helping the Christians in Religious Studies/Biblical Studies classes to respond more fully in repentance, faith, and obedience through decision making and action in this world (p.9).

However, the challenge still exists for how to effectively teach non-Christian students Christian values from the Bible when they do not believe in the Bible. Guinness (2001) helpfully proposes an approach with non-Christians, termed “Life as a Journey”, that incorporates some of Kraft’s ideas mentioned above, which include the following stages of life examination: Stage One – A Time for Questions; Stage Two – A Time for Answers; Stage Three – A Time for Evidence; and Stage Four – A Time for Commitment.

2.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, What If Learning is an approach that recognises that students are not just reason based creatures but are also changed by feelings and experiences. Although it is an approach that claims to be “framed by Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God” its potential weakness is that it may give too much emphasis to right action (i.e. practices) over right thinking (i.e. doctrinal and philosophical beliefs). However, it appears to be a helpful corrective to the worldview focus of most Christian education models, which can often be too complex and cognitive for the average student. If biblical studies lessons are too complex and cognitive for students there is the danger that student engagement levels will drop as will the effectiveness of the lesson.

This chapter has reviewed the literature in respect to models of education for teaching Christianly, particularly related for the Biblical Studies class with an emphasis on the WIL approach. The next chapter will consider the research methodology used in this study to investigate the effectiveness of the What of Learning approach in engaging students in senior Biblical Studies classes.
3.1 Research Design

The Research Design that is used in this study is Action Research. Kane and Chimwayange (2014, p. 54) state the benefit of Action Research is that it creates a dialectical movement from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to new action. The central goal of Action Research is positive educational change. The change is expected to impact significantly on the teacher involved and how he teaches. The educational change relates to the increased engagement level of students in their thinking and meaningful response to the big questions of life by the use of the WIL approach.

There are four phases of Action Research: Planning (identifying the issue and developing a research plan); Action (trialling, collecting, compiling, questioning, making changes); Observing (analysing, discussing, writing, sharing); Reflecting (evaluating, implementing, revisiting). The four phases are considered cyclical but the process is also flexible, in that there may be times to stop mid cycle and start a new cycle. The focus is on critical reflection and making progress in the issue identified (NSW DET, 2010).

This Action Research Study focuses on using the WIL approach in a Year 12 classroom and in line with the research question evaluates the engagement of students and the effectiveness of the approach to enable students to think through a meaningful response to life’s big questions. Three cycles are used. The focus of Cycle One, relates to the big question of: “What is the Meaning of Life?” In Cycle Two, the focus is on: “What does it mean to ‘live life to the full’?” The Cycle Three focus is on: “Which answer for ‘Living Life to the Full’ is most appealing to you?” In all cycles the WIL teaching practices of seeing anew, choosing engagement and reshaping practice are used.

3.2 Research Participants

The population involved students from an Anglican Independent school in Sydney. The sample included one Year 12 Biblical studies class with 18 students made up of 10 males and eight
females surveyed about their perceptions of the benefit of the teaching and learning approaches used which arise from WIL. A sub sample of four students, two boys and two girls were selected to be interviewed and also form part of a focus group. The four students selected for the focus group represent a range of learning ability and interest in the subject.

3.3 Research Instruments

There are four main instruments used for this Action Research Study. Two surveys, interview questions and Focus Group review questions.

3.3.1 Class Surveys – (Appendix 1a and 1b)

The initial survey (Appendix 1a) at the beginning of the topic is designed to explore the students’ knowledge and interest level in the subject and the topic to be covered. The initial survey contains sixteen questions on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is divided into two sections of eight questions each. Part A seeks to measure their general interest level in the subject and Part B seeks to measure the general interest on the topic before the topic is taught. It is planned that this survey takes approximately five minutes to complete.

The end of topic survey (Appendix 1b) is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the WIL approach in improving student engagement and thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life. The end of topic survey contains twenty questions on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and four short response questions. This survey is divided into five sections. Part A seeks to explore students’ engagement with the lesson. Part B seeks to evaluate how engaging the teacher was. Part C evaluates the students’ engagement with the Christian ideas raised in the lesson. Part D explores the responsiveness of the students to the life application ideas raised in the lesson. Part E includes four short response questions asking for more detail about what the lesson taught them and whether it helped them in their thinking in response to the big questions of life. This survey is planned to take about ten minutes for the students to complete.
3.3.2 Interview Questions – (Appendix 2)

There are seventeen interview questions. The interview questions are divided into four sections. Part A seeks to explore the reasons for the student engagement or lack of engagement with the lesson. Part B seeks to explore how the teacher was helpful or unhelpful in encouraging the student’s engagement with the lesson. Part C seeks explore how the student engaged or did not engage with the Christian ideas raised in the lesson. Part D seeks to explore how students applied or did not apply the life application ideas raised in the lesson.

The four students who form the Focus Group are together when they are asked these questions, face to face separately thus enabling the group to hear each student’s response. The interview takes 20 minutes and occur straight after the lesson.

3.3.3 Focus Group Review – (Appendix 3)

The Focus Group review is a conducted after the interview questions are completed. Time allocated for the Focus Group review is 30 minutes.

Nine open-ended questions form the review. There are two parts to the Focus Group review discussion. Part A focuses on the engagement of the lesson and whether it encouraged them to think through a meaningful response to the big question raised in the lesson. Part B explores the usefulness of the whole survey process and if so how it could be improved in the future.

3.4 Research Procedure

The research took place in May 2016.

There are three cycles with one 60-minute lesson in each cycle. Each lesson is part of “the journey of discovery” and builds upon the previous lesson. The three Lessons are taught around the topic, a Search for Meaning, with the Cycle Two and Cycle Three lessons focused on the topic, Living Life to the Full, as a particular answer to the Meaning of Life question raised in the Cycle One lesson.
The data collected from the surveys is analysed to determine the engagement of the following four areas of the lesson: firstly, the lesson engagement, secondly the teacher’s engagement, thirdly the engagement with Christian ideas presented and fourthly the effectiveness of the lesson in encouraging life applications. Surveys from each cycle are to be compared to investigate if particular trends are evident across the three lessons. Analysis of the interviews involve grouping together similar statements and answers to questions and comparing these responses to the class survey responses. At the end of each of the cycles, reflection by the researcher/teacher is to take place relating to the results of the surveys and data collected from the interviews and focus group reviews on what improvements should be included in the next cycle.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Using the four main instruments allows for triangulation of the data and increases the reliability and validity of the data. The benefit of surveying multiple lessons is that it highlights dominant trends and patterns of interest, giving the results improved validity and reliability the more lessons that are reviewed. The surveys enable a comparison of general class responses to each of the lessons and more in depth responses are gained from the Focus Group interview questions and review.

3.6 Research Ethics

The research study was approved by the Morling College Education Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct the research with the classes was given by the Deputy Head of the school. Participants were invited to take part in the research by way of a verbal question and were informed of the voluntary nature of the surveys and interviews. The collection of the data was taken anonymously and kept confidential. Students had the freedom to answer or not answer questions and cease the survey or interview at any time.

This chapter has given details of the research methodology used in the study. The next chapter will describe the results gained from the study.
CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and analysis of the Classroom Action Research Study with Year 12 students. An analysis of the data derived from the three cycles on the topic ‘big questions of life’ is used to address the following research question: How effective is using the What If Learning approach in engaging Year 12 students in thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life in Biblical Studies?

The Action Research Study took place over three weeks with three cycles of one 60 minute lesson each with a Year 12 Biblical Studies class of 18 students. Due to absences, nine students were present in Cycle One; eleven students in Cycle Two; and in Cycle Three ten students were present. Four students, two boys (M1 & M2) and two girls (F1 & F2) who were diverse in their abilities, beliefs and level of engagement, from the class volunteered to take part as a Focus Group. One of the students, (F1) was absent for the lesson in Cycle Two and another female student (F3) was invited to take her place. This provided the opportunity to hear an in-depth response from a different student for Cycle Two. In Cycle Three due to the small number of students and time constraints the Focus Group Review was not conducted but the whole class were given the opportunity to be involved in the Focus Group Interview in order to provide broader feedback.

4.2 Cycle One

4.2.1 Planning and Action

The planning of the 60 minute lesson focused on the big question: What is the Meaning of Life – for you? The teacher/researcher gave a brief overview of the lesson before students completed the initial survey. The lesson plan (see Appendix 7) used a number of the WIL strategies from the areas of: Seeing Anew; Choose Engagement; and Reshape Practice. As these three areas work together the strategies outlined below in each area often overlapped with another area.
Strategies for Seeing Anew

Three strategies were identified from Seeing Anew to provide motivation and challenge. Strategy No. 3 – Towards curiosity about life’s big questions incorporated a clip entitled: Monty Python’s Meaning of Life to provide a humorous way of introducing the topic. In addition, challenging questions were also considered at the end of the lesson. Strategy No. 4 – Towards meaning, significance and purpose involved an exploration of two Bible passages from Ecclesiastes. Strategy No. 6 – Towards being challenged and changed. Students were challenged to examine their life and the meaning to life by referring them to Socrates’ statement: “the unexamined life is not worth living”.

Strategies for Engagement

Four strategies were identified from the section of the WIL entitled Strategies for Engagement. Strategy No. 2 – to think with a key image or phrase. The key phrases used for this lesson and also the two lessons in Cycle Two and Cycle Three was “the journey of life” and “in search of meaning”. The image used was a snakes and ladders’ diagram with stages, which included the unexamined life; a time for questions; a time for answers; a time for evidence; and a time for commitment.

Strategy No. 4 – to experience delight, reflection & wonder. Four engaging and award winning advertisements were chosen to promote delight, reflection and wonder and reflected the ideas of: life being a journey, a discovery, a searching for meaning. Students were provided with twelve words (for example – search, journey, fun, freedom) on a PowerPoint and were asked to write “the dominant word/idea on a post-it note that resonated with them” after watching the adverts.

Strategy No. 6 – to extend their ways of participating. A quick game of snakes and ladders in teams was planned and introduced. Students then wrote on a post it note the following: The Meaning of Life for me is………. and then posted their responses up on the white board; the class categorised these ideas into groups of meaning; finally by class vote a decision on which “meaning of life topic” provided the focus for the coming lessons.

Strategy No. 7 – to pursue big questions. The lesson was planned around the question of: What is the meaning of life – for you? The lesson then concluded with a think/pair/share exercise in response to the following questions: What is the value of examining your life and thinking about the meaning of life? Why don’t we think about the meaning of life?
Strategies for Reshaping Practice

Four strategies were chosen from this Reshaping Practice area of the WIL approach. Strategy No. 6 – Create the appropriate atmosphere related to activities already planned as part of Seeing Anew and Engagement namely, the Monty Python clip, the snakes and ladder activity and watching the advertisements to create a class atmosphere of: “we are on a fun and exciting journey together in search of the meaning of life”.

Strategy No.13 – Change key words and metaphors. Rather than using the word “worldviews” as was done in previous years, the new key words to be used for this lesson were “journey” and “search for meaning”. The metaphor of the snakes and ladders game was used to emphasise this journey and search idea. Strategy No. 16 – Choose an approach to suit the new emphasis - this involved students in the process of discovery rather than simply telling them “these are the dominant ‘meanings of life’ or ‘worldviews’ in our world today. Strategy No. 21 – Change the student interaction. Student interaction involved playing snakes and ladders, posting post-it notes on the board, categorising the post-it notes as a class, and think/pair/share activities rather than in the past when content was taught and discussed.

4.2.2 Observation

4.2.2.1 Results of Initial Survey

Table 4.1 (Part a) records the students’ General Interest levels in the subject, Biblical Studies.

Over half of the students (56%) from the class demonstrated an interest and curiosity (Question 2) in the subject. Two thirds of the students (67%) demonstrated a desire to respect and engage with the ideas and viewpoints raised in the subject (Question 3) and over three quarter of students (78%) were prepared to be changed by good ideas (Question 6).

Table 4.1 (Part b), records students’ pre-interest levels in the topic to be studied.

In question 10, over one third (37%) of students recorded that they were honestly not interested in the topic to be studied. However, half (50%) of the class agreed that they had a sense of respect for the topic (Question 13); nearly two thirds (63%) were prepared to think deeply about the topic (Question 14) and two thirds (62%) were prepared to be changed by good ideas (Question 15).
## Table 4:1 Summary of Initial Class Survey results - Cycle One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) General interest level in the Subject</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Do I seek to understand the teacher and topics taught in CD?</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Do I seek to actively listen and showing curiosity in CD?</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (33%)</td>
<td>5 (56%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Do I seek to respect and engage with the ideas and other viewpoints raised in CD?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>5 (56%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Can I see that CD may be relevant to me?</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Do I have a sense of respect for CD as a subject?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
<td>3 (33%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Am I prepared to think and be changed by good ideas in CD?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>6 (67%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Do I do my own thinking in CD and avoiding being influenced by “others”?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (44%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Do I avoid being distracted by others or other things in CD?</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>3 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>11 (15%)</td>
<td>25 (35%)</td>
<td>25 (35%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Pre-lesson interest level in the Topic</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9) Am expecting some good from this lesson?</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Am I honestly interested in the lesson topic?</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Am I prepared to engage and be involved in this lesson?</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Can I see that this topic may be relevant to me?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (37%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Do I have a sense of respect for the topic?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Am I prepared to think deeply about this topic?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Am I prepared to be changed by good ideas?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Am I likely to avoid being distracted by others or other things in this lesson?</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>5 (64%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
<td>14 (22%)</td>
<td>21 (33%)</td>
<td>21 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CD = Christian Development. The course name for Biblical Studies classes.
Table 4.2 Summary of End of Topic Survey – Cycle One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Lesson Engagement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Did I get some good from this lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Was the lesson interesting?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Was the lesson engaging?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Was the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Was the topic instructive &amp; relevant to me?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>5 (62%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Do I have greater respect for the importance of this topic now?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Did the lesson get me thinking?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Was I changed by good ideas?</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Was I focused (i.e. not distracted) throughout the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>8 (11%)</td>
<td>24 (33%)</td>
<td>31 (43%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Teacher Engagement</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10) Did the teacher thoughtfully deal with the difficult issues?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Did the teacher respect the class to make their own decisions?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Was the delivery manner engaging?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Did the teacher do or say things that helped me stay focused during the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>10 (32%)</td>
<td>18 (56%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(c) Christian Ideas</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14) Did this lesson feel “more Christian” than other CD lessons?</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Were you challenged to think differently about Christianity?</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Did you gain a new understanding of how Christianity thinks about the topic covered?</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Was the new understanding about Christianity positive?</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9 (28%)</td>
<td>12 (38%)</td>
<td>8 (28%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(d) Life Application</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18) Was there a clear and helpful life application from the lesson?</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Would I consider applying this life application to my life?</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) Would I be able to explain how I have been changed by this lesson?</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>7 (29%)</td>
<td>7 (29%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CD = Christian Development. The course name for Biblical Studies classes.
4.2.2.2 End of Topic Survey

At the end of the lesson the end of topic survey was conducted with the students in the last ten minutes of the lesson. Although nine students were present, only eight completed the end of topic survey, as one student had to leave the class early. Table 4.2 provides the results of this survey and it should be noted that for each of the sections of the Table, it was deemed appropriate to provide an average score for them. In relation to Lesson Engagement (Part a), over half of the students (53%) agreed that they found the lesson positively engaging. In particular, 62% of students agreed that they found the lesson engaging (Q3) and positively instructive and relevant (Q5). The majority, 62% of them agreed it got them thinking (Q7), with a large majority, 72% of students agreeing they found the lesson more engaging than normal CD (Biblical Studies) lessons (Q4), with 38% of the 72% strongly agreeing.

For Teacher Engagement (Part b) two thirds of the class (62%) agreed they were positive about the teacher’s engagement. Of particular note was that all students agreed that the teacher respected the class to make their own decisions (Question 11).

For Christian Ideas (Part c) two thirds of the students (66%) disagreed that they considered the Christian ideas to be significant in the lesson (Q 14-17) and two thirds of the students (63%) disagreed that the lesson did feel “more Christian” than other CD lessons. The majority of students (75%) disagreed that they were challenged to think differently about Christianity and the majority of students (75%) disagreed that they gained any new understanding of Christianity in the lesson (Q16).

For the Life Application section (Part d) almost half of the students (46%) agreed that there useful life applications from the lesson. In particular, 63% of students agreed that there was a clear and helpful life application from the lesson (Q 18) and 50% agreed that they would consider applying this life application to their life (Q 19). However, in seeming contradiction to these strong application results, only 25% agreed that they could explain how they were changed by the lesson (Q 20).

4.2.2.3 End of Topic Survey – Student Self Evaluation (Part e)

A table showing the results from Part e of the Survey, the students’ self-evaluations is included in Appendix 4. The results showed that:
1) The piece of work *taught* the majority of students that the meaning of life and life are very important; all have their own important views and these views are often very similar between people.

2) The piece of work made the majority of students *want to* achieve their goals in life; have a fulfilled life and live life the way that they want to.

3) The piece of work made the majority of students not *change their mind* about anything, although a few said it encouraged them live their life the way they want to.

4) The piece of work made the majority of students *think about* life, what other people think about the meaning of life and that the meaning of life does not have to be always negative or always positive.

### 4.2.2.4 Results of the Focus Group Interview

The results of the Focus Group interviews are reported below under the four categories of Lesson Engagement, Teacher Engagement, Christian Ideas and Life Application.

#### Lesson Engagement

Three of the four students (M2, F1, and F2) were frequently very positive about the engagement of the lesson. It made them think more about their life and they found it personally relevant and interesting. One student (M1) did not find the lesson engaging. He felt that the lesson was “a bit stagnant”, the mood wasn’t right and it was not that relevant to him. Three of the four students (M1, M2, and F1) wrote that they were not really changed by the lesson, while one student (F2) wrote that it “made me think more about my subconscious thoughts”.

#### Teacher Engagement

The majority of students said that they were engaged by the teaching and that the students were included into the discussions in an open minded way. Although M1 said he was not really engaged and was distracted by those around him.

#### Christian Ideas

The majority of the group answered that the lesson was not particularly Christian, although one student (F2) said that the inclusion of Bible passages throughout the lesson made it feel more Christian to them.
Life Application

Three of the four students (M1, M2, and F2) said that the lesson enabled them to come up with a life application from the lesson but all four of the students did not believe their thinking had been changed by the lesson, other than one student (F1) saying that it helped them to talk about their thinking.

4.2.2.5 Results of the Focus Group Review Discussion

Lesson Engagement

All four students highlighted the importance of hearing other people’s views on the topic and how much they enjoyed discussions. The best part of the lesson was considered to be the advertisements watched, the discussion and hearing different views on the meaning of life which the post-it notes encouraged.

The Monty Python Meaning of Life clip was considered a bit random and did not fit with the rest of the lesson, although one boy (M1) enjoyed it. More discussion was something suggested by all four students to help improve the engagement of the lesson next time.

Christian Ideas

Three of the four students (M1, M2, and F1) indicated that the lesson did not feel more Christian nor did the application of the lesson seem to relate specifically to Christianity. Their response was that everybody has a life, whether you are Christian or not, the meaning of life matters to us all. It felt relevant whether you were Christian or not Christian. The Bible passages did not make it feel more Christian to the non-Christians. However, F2’s response was fascinating. The lesson felt more Christian to her because of the use of Bible passages throughout the lesson and this enabled her to see the connection of the lesson to the Bible. She reflected that this impact was due to the fact that she was a Christian.

Life Application

The group thought the lesson encouraged thinking outside general everyday life. It encouraged them to think more about “life”. One student (F2) said it helped her bring the subconscious to the conscious level more and that the lesson “felt more Christian” because of the Bible passages,
and it ‘applied differently to her as a Christian, as she could connect with the Bible ideas from Ecclesiastes in the lesson’. However, although they all agreed their thinking had increased on the topic, they did not believe their life had been changed as a result of the lesson.

General Questions

All the students found the survey process helpful, saying that it made them think more about the lesson and how it was relevant to them. The group indicated that this class was more difficult than a normal class, as there were a large number of students absent for various reasons. They believed the class would have been more engaged with more students present.

4.2.3 Reflections Cycle One

Based on the survey results including the self-evaluations, open-ended questions and the Focus Group review the following areas were considered important for improvement in Cycle Two to increase the effectiveness of the WIL approach in engaging students thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life.

1) Seek to improve the meaning, significance and purpose of the Bible passages used in the lessons, so that more of the class may see their relevance and purpose to life. (Seeing Anew)

2) Seek to improve engagement levels by including more discussion into the lesson that enables students to hear each other’s views. (Strategies for engagement)

3) Use strategies to help students see the Christian principles emerging from the lesson. (Reshaping Practice)

4) Use strategies to not only encourage students to think about life applications from the lesson but how they could be helpfully challenged to adopt these life application lessons. (Reshaping Practice)
4.3 Cycle Two

4.3.1 Planning and Action

The lesson plan (Appendix 8) of the 60 minute lesson in Cycle Two focused on the big question: “What is Living Life to the Full – for you?” Students were given a one-minute briefing about the topic before the initial survey was given. This lesson plan continued to use the WIL strategies of: Seeing Anew; Choose Engagement; and Reshape Practice and included refinements to these strategies identified in the Reflections on Cycle One. These strategies and how they related to the lesson are listed in Appendix 10.
### Table 4:3 Summary of Initial Class Survey results - Cycle Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a) General interest level in the Subject</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Do I seek to understand the teacher and topics taught in CD?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Do I seek to actively listen and show curiosity in CD?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Do I seek to respect and engage with the ideas and other viewpoints raised in CD?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>8 (73%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Can I see that CD may be relevant to me?</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Do I have a sense of respect for CD as a subject?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Am I prepared to think and be changed by good ideas in CD?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Do I do my own thinking in CD and avoiding being influenced by “others”?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>3 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Do I avoid being distracted by others or other things in CD?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>26 (30%)</td>
<td>38 (43%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b) Pre-lesson interest level in the Topic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Am I expecting some good from this lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Am I honestly interested in the lesson topic?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Am I prepared to engage and be involved in this lesson?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>7 (64%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Can I see that this topic may be relevant to me?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Do I have a sense of respect for the topic?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Am I prepared to think deeply about this topic?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>3 (28%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Am I prepared to be changed by good ideas?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Am I likely to avoid being distracted by others or other things in this lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>34 (39%)</td>
<td>30 (34%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CD = Christian Development. The course name for Biblical Studies classes.
4.3.2 Observation

4.3.2.1 Results of Initial Survey

Table 4.3 (Part a) records the students’ General Interest levels in the subject, Biblical Studies.

Over half of the students (55%) from the class demonstrated an interest and curiosity (Q 2) in the subject. Over three quarters of the students (82%) demonstrated a desire to respect and engage with the ideas and viewpoints raised in the subject (Q 3) and nearly one half of students (46%) were prepared to be changed by good ideas (Q 6).

Table 4.3 (Part b), records students’ pre-interest levels in the topic to be studied.

Over half of the students (64%) were prepared to positively engage with the topic (Q 11); two thirds (64%) had a sense of respect for the topic (Q 13); and nearly half the class (46%) were prepared to think deeply about the topic (Q 14) and 45% were prepared to be changed by good ideas (Q 15).
Table 4.4 Summary of End of Topic Survey – Cycle Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Lesson Engagement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Did I get some good from this lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Was the lesson interesting?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Was the lesson engaging?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Was the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Was the topic instructive &amp; relevant to me?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Do I have greater respect for the importance of this topic now?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Did the lesson get me thinking?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Was I changed by good ideas?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Was I focused (i.e. not distracted) throughout the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>22 (22%)</td>
<td>39 (39%)</td>
<td>32 (32%)</td>
<td>6 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) Teacher Engagement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10) Did the teacher thoughtfully deal with the difficult issues?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Did the teacher respect the class to make their own decisions?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>7 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Was the delivery manner engaging?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>7 (64%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Did the teacher do or say things that helped me stay focused during the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>11 (25%)</td>
<td>17 (39%)</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c) Christian Ideas</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4) Did this lesson feel “more Christian” than other CD lessons?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Were you challenged to think differently about Christianity?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Did you gain a new understanding of how Christianity thinks about the topic covered?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Was the new understanding about Christianity positive?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>7 (64%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>16 (36%)</td>
<td>17 (39%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d) Life Application</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8) Was there a clear and helpful life application from the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Would I consider applying this life application to my life?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0) Would I be able to explain how I have been changed by this lesson?</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (46%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
<td>12 (36%)</td>
<td>14 (43%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CD = Christian Development. The course name for Biblical Studies classes.
4.3.2.2 End of Topic Survey

As in Cycle One the nine questions related to Lesson Engagement in Part a of Table 4.4, so it was deemed appropriate to provide an average score for the area of Lesson Engagement. In doing so it was noted that on average over one third of students (39%) agreed that they found the lesson positively engaging. In particular, 55% of students agreed that they found the lesson positively interesting (Q2) and 46% positively instructive and relevant (Q5). Nearly half the class, 46% agreed it got them thinking (Q7) with a third of the class, 36% of students agreeing they found the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons (Q4).

Similarly, for Teacher Engagement in Part b, an average score was given with two thirds of the class (66%) agreeing they were positive about the teacher’s engagement. Of particular note was that 91% of students agreed that the teacher respected the class to make their own decisions (Q11).

Again for Christian Ideas in Part c of Table 4.4, an average score was provided with nearly half of the students (45%) disagreeing that they considered the Christian ideas to be significant in the lesson (Q10-13) and two thirds of the students (64%) disagreed that the lesson felt “more Christian” than other CD lessons (Q10). Over one half of the students (55%) disagreed that they were challenged to think differently about Christianity (Q11) and nearly one half of students (46%) disagreed that they gained any new understanding of Christianity in the lesson (Q12).

An average score was provided for the items which formed part of the Life Application section in Part d of Table 4.4. Nearly half of the students (49%) agreed that there were useful life applications from the lesson. In particular, 64% of students agreed that there was a clear and helpful life application from the lesson (Q 18) and 55% agreed that they would consider applying this life application to their life (Q 19). However, in seeming contradiction to these strong application results, only 27% agreed that they could explain how they were changed by the lesson (Q 20).
4.3.2.3 End of Topic Survey – Student Self Evaluation (Part e)

The summary results below (refer Appendix 5 for detailed results) records the predominant responses of seven of the eleven students, as four students chose not to complete the Part e section

1) The piece of work *taught* the majority of students of what it means to Live Life to the Full and what are some different ways people seek to Live Life to the Full (good and bad)
2) The piece of work made the majority of students *want* to live their life to full, but consider the repercussions and examine more deeply their philosophy of life.
3) The piece of work made the majority of students *not change their mind* about anything, although a couple said it made them want to think more about how they want to live their life.
4) The piece of work made the majority of students *think about* life, the future and how I am going to live my life.

4.3.2.4 Results of the Focus Group Interview

The results are recorded under the four categories of Lesson Engagement, Teacher Engagement, Christian Ideas and Life Application.

Lesson Engagement

The responses were very positive about the engagement of this lesson. Three of the four students (M1, M2, and F3) regularly got good ideas, found it interesting, engaging and relevant. However, one of the four students (F2) did not find it particularly engaging and relevant to them. Interestingly this was one of the students who was most positive about the lesson in Cycle One.

Teacher Engagement

All four students were engaged by the teacher and thought there were good examples, good sharing of views and the lesson encouraged deep thinking about significant things.

Christian Ideas

The majority of the group repeatedly answered that the lesson was not particularly Christian. One student (F2) mentioned that the lesson felt “more ethical than Christian”.

Life Application

Three of the four students (M1, M2, and F2) said that the lesson enabled them to come up with a life application from the lesson but all four of the students did not believe their thinking had been changed by the lesson, other than one student (F1) saying that it helped them to talk about their thinking.

Three of the four students (M1, M2, F3) said that the lesson enabled them to come up with a life applications from the lesson that were focused on living their life to the full, but to also be mindful of going overboard. Two of the four students (M1, M2) said that their thinking had been changed by the lesson. It encouraged them to make the most of their life.

4.3.2.5 Results of the Focus Group Review Discussion

Lesson Engagement

The group were generally very positive about the lesson. The male student (M1) who was negative last lesson was very positive this lesson. While one female student (F2) who was very positive last lesson was neutral and more negative this lesson. The post-it notes were considered an effective way for everyone to contribute. The King Solomon and Kerouac examples were considered helpful and real examples that they could connect to.

The seating arrangement was mentioned as an area for improvement. Generally the class sit in a U shape but in this lesson they sat in rows and it hampered group discussion somewhat they thought. One girl (F2) thought the lesson contradicted itself as she said: “some parts contradicted, it felt like in some parts of the lesson we were encouraged to live life to the full but then in other parts we were discouraged from living life to the full because of the dangers of living life to the full.”

Christian Ideas

Two of the four students (M1, M2) said that it did not feel more Christian. But one girl (F3) did say that it “reminded me of the Kirrikee (school camp) Bible talks in year 7 & 8, where you would do a game or activity and then it would be reconnected back to a Bible verse”. This was said as a very positive statement, she said “I liked it”. The girl who said she was a Christian in Cycle One Focus Group interview (F2) said that it felt skewed towards ethics rather than being
Christian. A general observation from the researcher in this discussion was that the “non-Christian” students liked a “touch” of the Bible that involves wisdom and ethics, while the Christian student (F2) often preferred a more explicit connection to the Bible.

Life Application

The general response to the lesson was, “to not let living life to the full get out of hand”. To live a “balanced life to the full” and avoid the extremes of the Kerouac example. F2 said that “it had not impacted her approach to life”. F3 commented that “helpful seeds were sown” and that “moderation was important for them to consider at this stage of life”.

General Questions

All the students found the survey process “fun” and that it was “nice to think about the lesson at the end”. With respect to improving the lesson in the future they said that it was good not to “push something too far” and it was good to “sow seeds” and encourage “moderation” in the area of living life to the full. They considered it a lesson focused on “general wisdom” and “ethics” about living a life to the full rather than a “specifically Christian lesson” about living a life to the full.

4.3.3 Reflections Cycle Two

Based on the survey results including the self-evaluations, interviews and the focus group review made after Cycle Two the areas that were considered important areas for improvement in Cycle Three to increase the effectiveness of the WIL approach in engaging students thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life were as follows:

1) Use strategies to facilitate better discussion. The focused group believed that the class being set up in a U shape helps discussion. Thus this classroom seating arrangement should be incorporated into the next lesson to promote better discussion. (Strategies for Engagement)

2) Use strategies to help students see the Christian principles emerging from the lesson. Make a stronger connection between the Bible passages used in the lesson and the application expected. (Reshaping Practice).
3) Building on point two above, strategies need to be used to not only encourage students to think about life applications from the lesson but how they could be helpfully challenged to adopt these life application lessons. (Reshaping Practice)

4.4 Cycle Three

4.4.1 Planning and Action

The planning of the 60 minute lesson in Cycle Three focused on the big question: “Which of the major answers for Living Life to the Full is most appealing to you? (A time for answers)”. The lesson plan (see Appendix 9) once again used a number of the WIL strategies from: Seeing Anew; Choose Engagement; and Reshape Practice. These strategies and how they related to the lesson are listed in Appendix 11.

4.4.2 Observation

As the results did not differ much in the Initial surveys between Cycle One and Two it was considered unnecessary to conduct this Initial survey again for Cycle Three.
Table 4.5 Summary of End of Topic Survey – Cycle Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Lesson Engagement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Did I get some good from this lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Was the lesson interesting?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Was the lesson engaging?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Was the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Was the topic instructive &amp; relevant to me?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Do I have greater respect for the importance of this topic now?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Did the lesson get me thinking?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Was I changed by good ideas?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Was I focused (i.e. not distracted) throughout the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>35 (39%)</td>
<td>41 (46%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) Teacher Engagement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10) Did the teacher thoughtfully deal with the difficult issues?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Did the teacher respect the class to make their own decisions?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Was the delivery manner engaging?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Did the teacher do or say things that helped me stay focused during the lesson?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>13 (33%)</td>
<td>15 (38%)</td>
<td>8 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c) Christian Ideas</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14) Did this lesson feel &quot;more Christian&quot; than other CD lessons?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Were you challenged to think differently about Christianity?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Did you gain a new understanding of how Christianity thinks about the topic covered?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Was the new understanding about Christianity positive?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>11 (28%)</td>
<td>16 (40%)</td>
<td>8 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d) Life Application ideas</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18) Was there a clear and helpful life application from the lesson?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Would I consider applying this life application to my life?</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) Would I be able to explain how I have been changed by this lesson?</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>13 (43%)</td>
<td>12 (41%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CD = Christian Development. The course name for Biblical Studies classes.
4.4.2.1 End of Topic Survey

As previously it was deemed appropriate to provide an average score for each of the four areas. Lesson Engagement in Part a: on average over one half of students (51%) agreed that they found the lesson positively engaging. In particular, 70% of students agreed that they found the lesson positively interesting (Q2), engaging (Q3) and 40% positively instructive and relevant (Q5). Over half the class, 60% agreed it got them thinking (Q7) with nearly two thirds of the class, 60% of students agreeing they found the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons (Q4).

Similarly, for Teacher Engagement in Part b, an average score was given with over half of the class (58%) agreeing they were positive about the teacher’s engagement. Of particular note was that 80% of students agreed that the teacher respected the class to make their own decisions (Q11) and 70% agreed that the delivery manner of the teacher was engaging.

Again for Christian Ideas in Part c, an average score was provided with over a third of the students (38%) disagreeing that they considered the Christian ideas to be significant in the lesson (Q14-17) and nearly two thirds of the students (60%) disagreed that the lesson felt “more Christian” than other CD lessons (Q14). One half of the students (50%) disagreed that they were challenged to think differently about Christianity (Q15). However on the positive side, 30% (compared to 0% for lesson 1 and 27% for lesson 2) of students agreed that they gained a new understanding of how Christianity thinks about the topic covered (Q16) and 40% (compared to 12% for lesson 1 and 18% for lesson 2) of students agreed that the new understanding about Christianity was positive (Q17).

An average score was provided for the items which formed part of the Life Application section in Part d, nearly half of the students (41%) agreed that there were useful life applications from the lesson. In particular, 60% of students agreed that there was a clear and helpful life application from the lesson (Q 18). However, only 30% agreed that they would consider applying this life application to their life (Q 19) and similarly, only 30% agreed that they could explain how they were changed by the lesson (Question 20).
4.4.2.2 End of Topic Survey – Student Self Evaluation (Part e)

A table showing the results from Part e of the Survey, the students’ self-evaluations is included as Appendix 6. The results showed that:

- The piece of work taught the majority of students the different ways to Live life to the Full and different ways to approach the Meaning of Life.
- The piece of work made the majority of students want to think more about the different ways to live life to the full and one student said they “chose one” and one said “live a balanced (secular) life to full”.
- The piece of work made the majority of students not change their mind about anything, although one student said it changed their mind about which way of thinking they prescribe to.
- The piece of work made the majority of students think about a particular worldview answer in more detail.

4.4.2.3 Results of the Focus Group Interview

For this lesson the class of ten students were asked to complete the Focus Group interview questions. The summary results of this survey follows.

Lesson Engagement

The responses were very positive about the engagement of this lesson. Six students said they got good ideas, eight of the ten found it interesting, engaging and four of the ten were encouraged in their thinking by the lesson. However, only two of the ten said they found it instructive and relevant to them and only two of the ten indicated their thinking had been changed by the ideas proposed.

Teacher Engagement

The majority of the students (seven of the ten) were engaged by the teacher and thought there were good examples and a good sharing of views. However, one student “felt as though the lesson jumped from one view to another without going into enough depth”.

Christian Ideas

Half of the students (five students) indicated that the lesson did not feel “more Christian” than normal Biblical Studies lessons, although one student wrote: “yes and no, there was talk about the Christian way being better”. The majority of students did not agree that they were challenged to think differently about Christianity and the majority did not gain a new understanding of how Christian thinking impacts the topic.

Life Application

Three responses said that the lesson enabled them to come up with a life application from the lesson while one said “maybe”. While six said they had not had their thinking changed by the lesson, with four students not responding to this question.

4.4.3 Reflections Cycle Three

Based on the survey results, self-evaluations, and the class Focus Group interview questions made after Cycle Three the areas that were considered important areas for improvement to increase the effectiveness of the WIL approach in engaging students thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life were as follows:

1) More time for some of the activities to provide more depth in what is being taught (Seeing Anew)

2) More strategies to encourage students to think about life applications from the lesson and how they could be helpfully challenged to adopt these life application lessons. (Reshaping Practice)

This chapter has outlined the results and analysis of the three cycles of Action Research. The next chapter will discuss the results.
CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results recorded in Chapter Four with reference to the relevant literature and in answer to the research question: How effective is using the What If Learning approach in engaging Year 12 students in thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life in Biblical Studies? The discussion follows a similar pattern to the Results Chapter by discussing the results related to each of the three cycles of research.

In each of the lessons in the three cycles of this Action Research Study a variety of strategies from the three integrated components of the What If Learning (WIL) approach, namely Seeing Anew, Engaging and Reshaping Practice, were used. Strategies from these three components were chosen to engage students in order to assess the effectiveness of engaging students in the big questions of life.

5.2 Cycle One

The topic in the first Cycle focused on: What is the Meaning of Life – for you? A comparison of the initial survey with the end of the lesson survey results showed that there was some improvement in the students’ response to aspects of the lesson. In particular, over half the students agreed that they found the lesson positively engaging and almost three quarters of students compared with one third in the initial survey found the lesson more engaging than normal Biblical Studies lessons.

Questioning was one of the strategies that the teacher used to engage the class and like Jesus he tried to adopt a critical thinking approach in his teaching with questions which were not answerable with simple ideas (Lee, 2010). Further, like Jesus, the teacher asked questions to review general principles and to inspire deep thinking (Lee, 2010).

However, over two thirds of the students indicated that the Christian Ideas discussed in this lesson were not significant and the majority of students disagreed that they were challenged to think differently about Christianity and that they gained any new understanding of Christianity in
the lesson. This was an area of weakness that the teacher tried to improve in Cycle Two by using more strategies to help students see the Christian principles emerging from the lesson. However, it was noted that the WIL approach is based on a “community of practice…that works together over time at some shared enterprise” (WIL, 2016, p.1). This was the first lesson that the WIL approach was used and more time was needed to develop the class into such a community.

Responses to the Life Application section of the survey showed that nearly half of the students agreed that there were useful life applications from the lesson with half indicating that they would consider applying a life application. However, in seeming contradiction to these results, only one quarter agreed that they could explain how they were changed by the lesson. The Focus Group shed further light on these results. They thought the lesson encouraged them to think more about “life” with one student saying it “made me think more about my subconscious thoughts”. However, all four of the students did not believe their thinking had been changed by the lesson, other than one student saying that it helped them to talk about their thinking.

Maple (1997) argues that many young people are two generations away from church and its associated Christian worldview and that it is unrealistic to expect that anything other than extended, purposeful contact can lead to enduring faith commitments (p.203). This is a helpful observation to consider when reflecting upon the “life application” impact of a single lesson on a big topic such as, “the meaning of life”.

According to the Focus Group the best part of the lesson was considered to be the advertisements watched, the discussion and hearing different views on the meaning of life which the post-it notes encouraged. Thus by reshaping his practice to include a variety of strategies, the teacher/researcher was encouraged by this response. Hattie’s (2012) research-based conclusions about processes for learning likewise demonstrated that material presented in verbal, visual and multimedia form provide a richer representation for students than a single medium.

More discussion was something suggested by all four students to help improve the engagement of the lesson next time. It was noted by the teacher/researcher that he had spent about half of the lesson in direct teaching of the class. Collier (cited in Cooling, 2000) is critical of direct teaching or as he calls it a transmission model of religious education that fails to connect with the interests and experience of students. Cooling (2000) also indicates that such approaches can encourage an active resistance to learning about religion and help create unnecessarily negative reactions towards Christianity.
Although the teacher/researcher in drawing from the WIL approach had tried to provide “Christian ways of seeing the world” and shape a Christian vision of learning, three of the four students interviewed, who professed to be non-Christians indicated that the lesson did not feel more Christian than normal Biblical Studies lessons nor did the application of the lesson seem to relate specifically to Christianity. Their responses included: “everybody has a life, whether you are Christian or not; the meaning of life matters to everyone; the lesson felt relevant whether you were Christian or not; the Bible passages did not make it feel more Christian”. However, the Christian student said the lesson felt more Christian to her because of the use of Bible passages and this enabled her to see the connection of the topic to the Bible. Collier and Dowson (2008) highlight the struggles of teaching Christian concepts to youth today who have little conceptual familiarity with Christian concepts.

In summary, the results from Cycle One showed that the WIL approach was effective in engaging Year 12 students in thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life as it encouraged greater involvement and engagement of the students. However, as student feedback indicated there was a need for more time for discussion. The WIL strategies also encouraged students to think more deeply about ‘life’ and the ‘meaning of life’ as the lesson intended. However, the strategies used from the WIL approach did not appear to encourage a specifically Christian response, meaning a specifically Christian way of viewing the world or a Christian way of living.

5.3 Cycle Two

The topic in the second Cycle focused: “What is Living Life to the Full – for you?” In preparing for this lesson the teacher/researcher endeavoured to particularly focus on strategies for encouraging students in a Christian way of viewing the world and a Christian way of living which were a weakness in the first cycle. By placing so much emphasis on this aspect the teacher/researcher omitted to include more time for discussion but did endeavour to make the lesson engaging nevertheless.

The Cycle Two results indicated a decrease in engagement levels in comparison to the first Cycle lesson. It would appear that this related particularly to there not being enough time allocated to discussion. However, similar results to those in Cycle One related to teacher engagement levels
and respect for the class to make their own decision, with three quarters of the class indicating that the teacher’s delivery manner was engaging.

Three of the Focus Group commented they found the lesson interesting, engaging, and relevant. All four students thought there were good examples, good sharing of views and the lesson encouraged deep thinking about significant things. The post-it notes were considered an effective way for everyone to contribute. The King Solomon and Kerouac examples were considered helpful and real examples that they could connect to, particularly the Kerouac example. However, the seating arrangement was mentioned as an area for improvement by the Focus Group as generally the class sit in a U shape but in this lesson they sat in rows and it hampered group discussion. Gonzalez (2015) advocates helpful formats for structuring a class discussion to make it more engaging, more organized, more equitable, and more academically challenging.

There was in a slight increase in students’ perceptions related to the significance of Christian ideas in Cycle Two. Of particular note was that in the Cycle One lesson no students indicated that they had gained a new understanding of how Christianity thinks about the topic, while in the Cycle Two lesson nearly a third of the class indicated that they gained a new understanding of Christianity in the lesson. This encouraging result appeared to relate to the emphasis the teacher gave to strategies in Reshaping Practice in planning the lesson.

This Reshaping Practice improvement involved an attempt to better connect the Bible to the lives of the students, so they that could see more clearly the Bible’s relevance and purpose for them. This was done by using a comparison of the stories of two people, King Solomon and Jack Kerouac. Shortt (2014) argues for the importance of story in the classroom and that it was Jesus most often used method of teaching (2014, p. 252).

However, what seemed to happen by using these two stories was that the powerful secular life story of Jack Kerouac resonated much more strongly with students than did the life story of King Solomon from the Bible. The Jack Kerouac story contained more of the classic tension and structure characteristics of a good story (i.e. beginning problem/plot development and tensions/resolution) while the King Solomon story sought to engage students primarily by using a dramatic reading of the Bible and perhaps failed to make the Solomon story itself engaging. Egan (1986) points out that a defining feature of stories, as distinct from other kinds of narratives – like histories – is that they fix how we should feel by the use of already understood abstract qualities like good/bad, loyalty/betrayal, courage/cowardice, honour/selfishness and
this provides us with a rare security and satisfaction (p.14). Egan also highlights that stories engage us affectively as well by satisfying some conflict set up by their beginning, i.e. they have a resolution (p.30-38). It appears that this was not done effectively with the King Solomon story.

Similar positive results were recorded for Life Application in the Cycle Two lesson as in Cycle One. However, similarly to the Cycle One lesson, only one quarter of class agreed that they could explain how they were changed by the lesson. It is worth noting that the change that occurred in the disciples of Jesus was also slow and inconsistent. Kraft (1996) considers the example of Peter talking to Jesus at the end of the gospel of John where Jesus encourages Peter to “feed my sheep” after his departure (John 21:15) and Kraft notes that by this time in Jesus ministry, he has a close relationship with his disciples. Thus three years of intense personal relationships between Jesus and the disciples had occurred by this point and Kraft helpfully points out that: “people are opened up to change through the development of friendship with and respect for the change agent.” (p.191)

One of the Focus Group thought the lesson contradicted itself as some parts of the lesson encouraged her to live life to the full but then in other parts she was discouraged because of the dangers of living life to the full. Interestingly Bailey (1983) states that when Jesus used parables to challenge hearers he had clarity of purpose and a specific goal in mind in using them. He sought to move the listeners towards a particular response (p.37). The Cycle Two lesson did not appear to have been clear enough to this student in the particular response encouraged.

Most of the Focus Group perceived that the lesson was not particularly Christian and two of the four students indicated that the lesson did not feel more Christian than normal Biblical Studies lessons. One student indicated that it felt more ethical than Christian. However, one girl very positively indicated that the use of a game or activity to connect with a Bible verse reminded her of the school Christian camp talks in Years 7 and 8. It appeared that the three professed non-Christian students liked a “touch” of the Bible that connected with wisdom and ethics, while the professed Christian student preferred a more explicit connection to the Bible.

The Focus Group responses for the Life Application section showed a marked improvement from the Cycle One lesson where all four students did not believe their thinking had been changed by the lesson, whereas in the Cycle Two lesson three of the students stated it enabled them to come up with a life application and two of these said that their thinking had been changed by the lesson. The lesson had encouraged them to make the most of life but to not let living life to the full get out of hand and to avoid the extremes of the King Solomon and Jack
Kerouac examples. The non-Christian students also said that it was good not to push the Christian message too far and they appreciated the lesson being generally focused on general wisdom and ethics.

Although the survey results indicated that student engagement levels for the Cycle Two lesson appeared to decrease, this appeared to be more in relation to a reduction in opportunities for discussion. There was an improvement in students’ appreciation and understanding of the connection to Christian Ideas and to life application. However, further strategies from the WIL approach were needed to help students see that the Christian principles emerging from the lesson and the applications expected were being derived from the Bible and that the Bible was not ancillary or tangential to the lesson. This was necessary to help students see that the ethical principles developed in the lesson were primarily from the Bible and not just general life observations. Similarly, although life application was improved, further strategies were needed to not only encourage students to think about life applications but how they could be helpfully challenged to adopt these life applications from the lesson.

5.4 Cycle Three

The topic in the third Cycle focused on: “Which of the major answers for Living Life to the Full is most appealing to you? (A time for answers)”. In the planning for this lesson the teacher/researcher took note of the strengths and weaknesses of Cycle Two and particularly focused on more opportunities for discussion, more intentional explanations of the Christian ideas in the lesson being derived from the Bible and a greater challenge upon students to respond to the ideas raised in the lesson. In this Cycle the teacher/researcher involved the whole class as the Focus Group. In addition to the WIL strategies for learning, the teacher/researcher drew from other approaches which focused on structuring the curriculum for the lesson, such as Guinness’ (2001) ‘life as a journey’ approach and Oppewal’s (1985) ‘three phases’ approach of: ‘consider, choose and commit’.

The lesson revolved around the comparison of six of the world’s major answers to what it means to live life to the full for them. This lesson included the methodological structures of Guinness (2001) and Oppewal (1985) in addition to the WIL strategies in an effort to promote more discussion with students and also to move students to a ‘meaningful response’. Guinness’ (2001) ‘life as a journey’ stages of examination (A Time for Questions; A Time for Answers; A Time for
Evidence; and A Time for Commitment) and Oppewal three phases of “consider, choose, and commit” utilised in the lesson more intentionally moved students to consider the new information, choose a response and commit to a particular course of action (1985).

The survey results at end of the lesson indicated that the engagement levels of the Cycle Three lesson had improved from those in Cycle Two with half of the class finding the lesson positively engaging, nearly two thirds of the class found the lesson more engaging than normal Biblical Studies lessons and nearly three quarters of the class found the lesson interesting and engaging. In addition, the Focus Group (all ten students in the class) were very positive about the engagement of this lesson. Six students said they got good ideas, eight found it interesting and engaging and four were encouraged in their thinking by the lesson. The majority of the students were also engaged by the teacher and thought there were good examples and a good sharing of different viewpoints.

Similar results were recorded for teacher engagement in Cycle Three as in the previous two cycles. Over three quarters of the class agreed that the teacher respected the class to make their own decisions which was lower than in the previous cycles. However, most of the class indicated that the delivery manner was engaging. The Focus Group indicated a positive response to the content of the lesson. The Charis project believes that Christian practices in the classroom are more significant than curriculum content for the integration of faith and learning (see Smith and Carvill, 2000; Smith and Smith, 2011; Cooling and Green, 2015) but the results from this lesson appear to show that it was the curriculum content presented in the lesson that engaged and challenged students. However, this curriculum content was presented in an engaging way using strategies from the WIL approach.

The survey showed a small increase in students’ perceptions related to the significance of Christian Ideas indicated by 22% of the class. However, of particular note was that 40% of students indicating their “new understanding about Christianity” was positive (Q17). The improvement in this area appears to relate to the curriculum content of the lesson as students were able to see more clearly how the Christian view on the topic differed to the other major worldviews. Thus by using the WIL Reshaping Practice strategy No. 23: “Provide contrasts and set up dissonance (clashes)”, helped encouraged students to meaningfully think through a Christian way of viewing the world and Christian way of living.

Just under two thirds of the class agreed that there was a clear and helpful life application from the lesson with just under one third of the class indicating that they would consider applying this
life application to their life and one third of the class agreed that they could explain how they were changed by the lesson. However, one fifth of the class ‘strongly’ indicated that they would not consider applying the life application of the lesson to their life which contrasted with no students in the Cycle Two lesson. Schaeffer’s (1968) assertion that the truth of reality hurts when an inconsistent worldview is deconstructed may have impacted these students. In addition, in the Scriptures, people often appear ready to accept Jesus’ ethical advice but when they are challenged to change their entire worldview and follow Jesus they can become angry or sad (Luke 4:16-30; Luke 18:18-23). This lesson, in comparison to the other two lessons, did challenge the students more strongly to consider accepting Jesus and the Christian way of life.

Four of the ten Focus Group students indicated that they learnt new things about the different worldviews and eight students were very positive in hearing about these different worldviews. The Focus Group also found the teaching methods used in the class engaging; and particularly mentioned he post-it notes, the worldview videos, the Who wants to be a Millionaire game and the PowerPoint. Thus using the WIL Strategies for Engagement No. 4 (to experience delight, reflection and wonder) and No. 13 (to critically engage with examples activities and tasks) appear to have had a positive impact.

One student enjoyed how the lesson was constantly moving forward while another felt that the lesson jumped from one view to another without going into enough depth. Thus for one student the WIL Strategy of Engagement No. 10 (to consider contrast and dissonance) appeared to have been helpful but for the other student the WIL Reshaping Practice No 20 (plan time and space for reflection) could have been applied more helpfully. By combining the WIL strategies with Guinness’ (2001) and Oppewal’s (1985) curriculum structural approaches, the lesson appeared to make a greater impact on helping students think through a meaningful response to life’s big questions.

The classroom seating arrangement of a U shape proposed in WIL Strategies for Engagement No. 1 (Change the layout of the room) facilitated better discussion. It appeared that students were also able to see more clearly the Christian principles emerging from the lesson with a stronger connection between the Bible passage and the application expected being made. Strategies were also used to not only encourage students to think about life applications but also how they could adopt these life applications to their life lessons.

In summary, at the end of the Cycle Three lesson, the WIL approach was considered to have been effective in ‘engaging’ students in the lesson. The WIL strategies employed in the lesson, in
conjunction with the curriculum frameworks of Guinness (2001) and Oppewal (1985) helped encourage students to think through a meaningful response to one of life’s big questions by considering some of the world’s most popular answers to the question.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the results show that using the WIL approach enhanced the engagement of students in each of the lessons in the three cycles and encouraged students to think through a meaningful response to some of life’s big questions. However, the WIL strategies used in this study did not appear to encourage a particularly Christian response, meaning a specifically Christian way of viewing the world or a Christian way of living. In Cycle Three it appeared that using curriculum structure approaches, such as those of Oppewal, (1985) and Guinness, (2001), encouraged this aspect of a meaningful response to the big questions of life.
CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This research study examined the effectiveness of the What If Learning approach with Year 12 students in engaging them in a meaningful response to life’s big questions in Biblical Studies. The research considered a “meaningful response” to be: firstly, whether the lesson provided students with helpful life applications; secondly, whether the lesson encouraged students to think more deeply about applying these life applications to their life; and thirdly, whether the lesson encouraged a specifically Christian response, that is a Christian way of viewing the world or a Christian way of living.

Action Research was the methodology used with three cycles consisting of one lesson each with a Year 12 Biblical Studies class. Data was analysed from class surveys completed by the students during each cycle, followed by focus group interviews and focus group reviews. The data was analysed in relation to improvement in the students’ engagement in thinking and a meaningful response as a result of that thinking.

The students’ responses showed overall an improvement in the engagement levels of the lesson and responsiveness to the life application ideas raised in the lesson. There was also an improvement in students’ engagement levels with the Christian ideas raised in the lesson, in Cycle Three which appeared to be related more to the particular curriculum structural approaches of Oppewal (1985) and Guinness (2001), which provided the basis for the WIL strategies in the final cycle. It would appear from the results of this study, that the WIL approach was effective in engaging the students in the lesson. With respect to students thinking through a meaningful response to the big questions of life, and encouraging a Christian response to viewing the world or a way of living, the WIL approach did not appear as effective, as in each cycle only a minority of students responded positively with over one fifth of the class responding positively in the final cycle.

As Christian content was more specific in the final cycle it appeared that the ‘Christian content’ of the lesson had more impact than the ‘Christian pedagogy’. The What If Learning approach regards the intentional development of Christian pedagogy in the classroom more significant than curriculum content for the integration of faith and learning (Cooling & Green, 2015, p.97; Smith and Carvill, 2000; Smith and Smith, 2011) and in this study the Christian pedagogical
approaches appeared to impact the engagement levels of the lessons supporting the Christian content of the lesson.

6.2 Limitations

The Action Research Study had several limitations. Firstly, in relation to subjectivity of collecting data through the student surveys and interviews where individuals are prone to developing subjective meanings to their experiences rather than objective meanings (Creswell, 2014). Secondly, this study was completed by the researcher within his own classroom context which is not generalizable to other classroom contexts. It was also noted that different Biblical Studies classes can respond very differently to the same lesson due to the different relationship dynamics at work in different classes. Thirdly, the sample size was affected by student absences, which made the sample size very small (on average 10 students as opposed to the full 18 students in the class). This also meant that consistency between the surveys was affected in the different cycles, as different students took part in different lesson surveys. Finally, there was the potential bias of the researcher who as an Anglican clergyman with strong theological convictions brought certain biases to this study. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, these biases may have shaped the way the researcher viewed and interpreted the data (Creswell, 2014).

6.3 Recommendations for Further Study

The following recommendations are made as a result of this study.

Further research using the Pre lesson and End of Topic surveys for other Biblical studies lessons. In addition, research with other biblical studies classes to evaluate the effectiveness of the WIL approach on the students’ engagement levels in those classes. A research study across year groups to see if the engagement and response levels vary significantly across the year groups in biblical studies would also be helpful.

Evaluating the effectiveness of using the WIL approach in other subject disciplines would also be a worthwhile study, particularly when seeking to teach the subject from a Christian perspective.

The survey results collected from such studies could provide a helpful resource for continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of the WIL approach across subject disciplines and also year groups. It
could also highlight over time whether the WIL approach is seen positively or negatively by the students and their teachers.

6.4 Conclusion

This Action Research Study has shown the effectiveness of the What if Learning Approach in improving engagement levels of Year 12 students in Biblical Studies lessons in thinking through the big questions of life. The findings showed positive results for student engagement, for providing helpful life applications for students and encouraging students to think more deeply about applying these life applications to their life. However, the WIL approach did not appear to specifically encourage a meaningful Christian response that is a Christian way of viewing the world or a Christian way of living.

In conclusion, this study was of great benefit to the researcher who has spent many years seeking to positively engage Year 12 student’s biblical studies lessons. The findings of the research encouraged the researcher to persist with the WIL approach as a helpful tool to be used to improve the engagement levels of lessons. As a result of the study the researcher believes that the emphasis on pedagogical approaches as a way to “teach Christianly” is not as important as the content of what is taught. Having said that, he also realises that “how we teach” can undermine “what we teach” (i.e. our message), thus teachers need to reflect upon classroom pedagogical practices to consider whether they are undermining the Christian message being presented in the lessons.
REFERENCES


Cooling, T., & Green, E.H. (2015). Competing imaginations for teaching and learning: The findings of research into a Christian approach to teaching and learning called What If Learning. *International Journal of Christianity & Education, Vol. 19*(2) 96–107, agepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav


### APPENDIX 1a - Initial Class Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) General interest level in the Subject</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1)</strong> Do I seek to understand the teacher and topics taught in CD?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2)</strong> Do I seek to actively listen and showing curiosity in CD?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3)</strong> Do I seek to respect and engage with the ideas and other viewpoints raised in CD?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4)</strong> Can I see that CD may be relevant to me?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5)</strong> Do I have a sense of respect for CD as a subject?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6)</strong> Am I prepared to think and be changed by good ideas in CD?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7)</strong> Do I do my own thinking in CD and avoiding being influenced by “others”?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8)</strong> Do I avoid being distracted by others or other things in CD?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Pre-lesson interest level in the Topic</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>9)</strong> Am expecting some good from this lesson?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10)</strong> Am I honestly interested in the lesson topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11)</strong> Am I prepared to engage and be involved in this lesson?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12)</strong> Can I see that this topic may be relevant to me?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13)</strong> Do I have a sense of respect for the topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14)</strong> Am I prepared to think deeply about this topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15)</strong> Am I prepared to be changed by good ideas?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16)</strong> Am I likely to avoid being distracted by others or other things in this lesson?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CD = Christian Development. The course name for Biblical Studies classes.
APPENDIX 1b - End of Topic Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Lesson Engagement

1) Did I get some good from this lesson?
2) Was the lesson interesting?
3) Was the lesson engaging?
4) Was the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons?
5) Was the topic instructive & relevant to me?
6) Do I have greater respect for the importance of this topic now?
7) Did the lesson get me thinking?
8) Was I changed by good ideas?
9) Was I focused (i.e. not distracted) throughout the lesson?

Totals

b) Teacher Engagement

10) Did the teacher thoughtfully deal with the difficult issues?
11) Did the teacher respect the class to make their own decisions?
12) Was the delivery manner engaging?
13) Did the teacher do or say things that helped me stay focused during the lesson?

Totals

c) Christian Ideas

14) Did this lesson feel “more Christian” than other CD lessons?
15) Were you challenged to think differently about Christianity?
16) Did you gain a new understanding of how Christianity thinks about the topic covered?
17) Was the new understanding about Christianity positive?

Totals

d) Life Application

18) Was there a clear and helpful life application from the lesson?
19) Would I consider applying this life application to my life?
20) Would I be able to explain how I have been changed by this lesson?

Totals
c) Student Self-Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>This piece of work…</th>
<th>(Finish the sentence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…taught me about…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…makes me want to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…has changed my mind about.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…made me think about…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 2 - Interview Questions

### a) Lesson Engagement

1. Did you get any good ideas from this lesson? If so what are they?
2. Was the lesson interesting? Why? Why not?
3. Was the lesson engaging? Why/Why not?
4. Was the topic instructive & relevant to you? Why/why not?
5. Do I have greater respect for the importance of this topic now? Why or why not?
6. Did the lesson get me thinking? If yes how?
7. Did your thinking change as a result of the ideas proposed? If yes, how did your thinking change?
8. Were you distracted by others or other things in the lesson? Please explain how you were distracted if Yes.

### b) Teacher Engagement

9. What were the difficult issues if any in this lesson? If there were difficult issues how did the teacher deal with them?
10. Did the lesson allow students to make their own decisions on the topic? How or how not?
11. Was there anything in the lesson that distracted you from thinking deeply about the topic? If so please explain.

### c) Christian Ideas

12. Did this lesson feel “more Christian” than other CD lessons? If so how?
13. Was the lesson more engaging than normal CD lessons? If so how?
14. Were you challenged to think differently about Christianity? If so how?
15. Did you gain a new understanding of how Christian thinking impacts on the topic covered? If so what new understandings did you gain?

### d) Life Application Ideas

16. Can you provide a life application from the lesson? If so what is it?
17. Do you believe your thinking has been changed by this lesson? If so please explain how.
APPENDIX 3 - Focus Group Review

a) Focus Group Review Questions of lesson
1) What was the best part of the lesson for them?
2) What was the worst part of the lesson for them?
3) Give at least one suggestion as to how they think the lesson could be improved next time?
4) Did the lesson feel “more Christian” than other CD lessons? Why/Why not?
5) Was there a clear and helpful life application from the lesson? What was it?
6) Would you consider this life application specifically related to Christianity? Why/Why not?

b) Focus Group Review Questions of the survey process
7) Any other thoughts/comments you would like to make in response to the Focus Group Review?
8) Was it helpful in anyway?
9) How could it be improved next time?
## APPENDIX 4 - End of Topic Survey - Student Self-Evaluation
### Cycle One Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>This piece of work/lesson....</th>
<th>(Finish the sentence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of Life</td>
<td>1)....taught me about....</td>
<td>1. How important is our life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. My own perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. MOL can be similar between people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. The MOL and how to examine it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. My life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. What’s important and what my priorities are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Everyone’s different opinions on the MOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. The Marxist revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) ...makes me want to...</td>
<td>1. Learn more about life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Live my life the way I want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Set goals to achieve happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Strive for my goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Finish school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Achieve my MOL and have a fulfilled life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Go to a rave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3)...has changed my mind about.</td>
<td>1. MOL has changed my mind about how it is going to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Live my life the way I want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Nothing really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. What can I do with a lifespan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Not much, wasn’t really the focus of this class for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Nothing really, I just understand different views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4)...made me think about...</td>
<td>1. MOL made me think about it doesn’t have to only be negative or positive always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. What lies ahead of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. The meaning of my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. What other people’s life goals are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Hula hooping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: The numbers 1 – 8 represent the same students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>This piece of work....</th>
<th>(Finish the sentence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Life to the Full</td>
<td>1)...taught me about</td>
<td>1. Life&lt;br&gt;2. Living life&lt;br&gt;3. Not to be like Kerouac&lt;br&gt;4. The meaning of Living Life to the Full&lt;br&gt;5. How to live life to the fullest&lt;br&gt;6. The good and bad outcomes of living full life&lt;br&gt;7. Jack Kerouac and the different ways to ‘live life to the fullest’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2)...makes me want to...</td>
<td>1. Live Life&lt;br&gt;2. Continue living life&lt;br&gt;3. N/A&lt;br&gt;4. Examine more deeply my life philosophy&lt;br&gt;5. Live life&lt;br&gt;6. Live more to the full but still consider the repercussions&lt;br&gt;7. Not live my life like Jack Kerouac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: The numbers 1 – 7 represent the same students.
**APPENDIX 6 - End of Topic Survey - Student Self-Evaluation**  
**Cycle Three Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>This piece of work....</th>
<th>(Finish the sentence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Different worldview answers to living life to the full (A time for answers) | 1)....taught me about.... | 1. The different ways to live life to the full  
2. Nothing really  
3. About different ways of life  
4. The different ways of approaching the meaning of life  
5. The different ways of thinking  
6. Not much                                                               |
|                                                                       | 2)...makes me want to... | 1. Choose one  
2. Same as before  
3. Live a balanced life (secular option)  
4. Think more about the meaning of my life  
5. Think more deeply about them  
6. N/A                                                                    |
|                                                                       | 3)...has changed my mind about. | 1. Nothing really  
2. Nothing  
3. Nothing  
4. Not much  
5. Which way of thinking I prescribe to  
6. Nothing                                                               |
|                                                                       | 4)...made me think about... | 1. How to best live life to the full  
2. Eastern religions  
3. The pointlessness of the Eastern Way  
4. Not much, other worldviews  
5. Which way of thinking I prescribe to  
6. Not much                                                               |

NB: The numbers 1 – 6 represent the same students.
APPENDIX 7 - Cycle One – Lesson Plan

Year 12 Lesson 1 – What is the “Meaning of Life” – for you?
Hand out pre-lesson survey and fill in (5min)
Survey explanation

A) Intro topic (10min)
1) Let Monty Python Introduce our topic (Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life)
2) Play Snakes and Ladders - the Meaning of Life at end and the Unexamined Life at the beginning.
   (at conclusion explain that Os Guinness says there are four stages towards the meaning of life,
   but we will get to that later)
3) Students read the Ecclesiastes passages. Ecclesiastes 1:2-5 (Life is meaningless) and 3:11 (God
   has set eternity in the hearts of man). Students were encouraged to see the tension that is present
   within these two passages written by the writer of Ecclesiastes.

B) Watch and Reflect (10min)
Watch the four adverts: Levi, Louis Vuitton, Corona, and Samsung
Stop after each one. Briefly. What do you like?
At conclusion: Write one word on a post-it that most resonates with you from the adverts (stick on
board)?
Words provided on power point to assist – e.g. search, journey, passion, joy, experience, freedom,
meaning, friends, individuality, life to the full, fun, creativity etc.

C) Engagement: Meaning of Life for me? (10min)
We all want to live meaningful lives, we all are very interested in our journey on life. The meaning in life
for us can change dramatically over our life time. Significant events and people we meet can change it.

1) Finish this statement on a post it (anonymous, but answer seriously so we can have a good
discussion)
The Meaning of life for me is ………………………………………………………………………

2) Seek to categorise these in some way. Work together on white board or desk. Can we
categorise them? (students come up with own category descriptions)
3) Which category do you want to focus on next lesson? (class vote)

D) Reshape Practice (10min)
1) Back to Snakes & Ladders (with stage descriptions added)
Today you have all left base. You have all begun to examine your life. The goal for the next lesson is to
begin to ask questions of it.

2) Ecclesiastes 3:11. “Eternity in the hearts of man, yet they cannot fathom what God has done
   from beginning to end”. The Bible highlights for us that the search for meaning in life is present
   in our hearts but also that it will also be very difficult for us to understand it.
3) Think/Pair/Share: What is the value of examining your life and thinking about the meaning of
   life? Why don’t we think more about the meaning of life?

Hand out end of end of topic survey and fill in (10min)
All Student given the End of Topic survey (Appendix 1b) and given 10 minutes to complete.
After the lesson. The Focus Group will meet to answer Focus Group survey questions individually and
then answer specific Focus Group review questions as a group.
APPENDIX 8 - Cycle Two – Lesson Plan

Year 12 Lesson 2– What is “Living Life to the Full” – for you?
Hand out pre-lesson survey and fill in (5min)
Survey explanation
Room set-up. Q marks around the room. Question on PowerPoint. Why is it good to question our meaning in life? (“’Turn! Turn! Turn!’” To Everything There is a Season, playing in the background).

A) Intro topic (10min) - What does it mean to live life to the full – for you?
1) We are on a journey. I am taking a week at a time and see where we end up. But I am using the general Snakes and Ladders approach with the Meaning of Life. Today “A Time for Questions”.
2) Provide Meaning of Life answers on PowerPoint from last lesson. Remind them that this lesson we are looking at their dominant response. Live life to the full.
3) Introductory activity. What does it mean to live life to the full – for you? Write answers on post-it notes. Stick answers on question marks around room. Teacher read a selection of answers out.
4) Explain in this lesson we are going to consider 2 further big Questions: 1) What are the benefits of living life to the full? 2) What are the challenges of living life to the full?

B) What are the benefits of living life to the full? (20min)
1) Watch Ford motor car advert. Briefly discuss meaning of advert and Robert Frost Poem. (3min)
2) On PowerPoint display Q- What are the benefits of living life to the full? (1-2minute brainstorm of answers written on board)
3) Where did this idea of living life to the full start? Not New! In 900BC - Ecclesiastes Drama (King Solomon) (5min)
4) More recently it really got going in 1947 - The story of Jack Kerouac (On the Road) - The history of “living life to the full”. (It was not part of the traditional modern societies. Societies more rooted in family, religion and stability). Show quote about his philosophy and watch movie trailer of On the Road. (5min)
5) Show modern Example of Jack Kerouac influence – The Levi Advert (with words, Charles Bukowski, the Laughing Heart) Beat Generation poem (3min)
6) Question briefly discuss again: What is the appeal to us of living life to the full? (2min)

C) What are the Challenges of Living Life to the Full? (10min)
1) Final episode of the Jack Kerouac story (read quote from book on PowerPoint and explain)
2) Final episode of the King Solomon story (explain how things ended badly for King Solomon)
3) Complete worksheet – what do you consider to be the top three challenges of living life to the full?
(some ideas: desire for freedom and autonomy can lead to loneliness, lack of belonging and fixedness, we lose joy in the mundane, we expect life to always exciting/exhilarating, general feeling of dissatisfaction, too individualistic, empty after the highs, drown in a sea of choice, we become restless, we hit despair when we don’t find it, money/sex/power are empty in the end, risky ignores social fabric of our existence, self-abuses privilege, we need limitations to protect us from ourselves, no destination at the end of the road. We need a hope & joy beyond this life to really live life to the full)

D) Reshape Practice (2 min)
1) Final Q on worksheet. How would I reshape my idea of “living life to the full” based on this lesson based on King Solomon and Jack Kerouac's example?

Hand out end of topic survey and fill in (10min)
All Student given the End of Topic survey (Appendix 1b) and given 10 minutes to complete.
After the lesson. The Focus Group would meet to answer Focus Group survey questions individually and then answer specific Focus Group review questions as a group.
APPENDIX 9 - Cycle Three – Lesson Plan

Year 12 Lesson 3 – Which answer for “Living Life to the Full” most appealing to you?

Seeking answers that gives meaning to the question.
1) This stage is often comparative. Which one provides the most illuminating/challenging answer?
2) Can be narrowed down. There will be 1001 answers in the room about what the Meaning of Life is and also what Living Life to the Full is. But there are really only three big families of faith.
   1) Eastern Family (Hinduism > Buddhism> New Age Religion - an impersonal ground for our being)
   2) Secular Family (Chance. Chance + Time + matter = Us (naturalists and materialists)
   3) Abrahamic Families (Judaism & Christian Faiths. Also Islamic. Personal infinite God)

1) Introduction (2min)
Going to discuss the major “Living Life to the Full” answers today under these six categories. Each is creative & interesting and worthy of years of study. But we are doing a fly-by of them today.
   E) Life is Meaningless – Life to the Full (Nihilism)
   F) Life without Limits – Life to the Full (Existentialism)
   G) Balanced Life – Life to the Full (Universalism)
   H) Jewish – Life to the Full (Jewish Religion)
   I) Eastern – Life to the Full (Hindu & Buddhist Religions)
   J) Christian – Life to the Full (Christian Religion)
Interestingly King Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes experiments with most of these bar the Eastern and Christian religions. So he is going to be our Philosophical guide.

2) Intro activity (6 Minutes)
Game of “Who wants to be a millionaire?” (We love answers! We all want to know the answers)

3) Recap last lesson (2min)
Benefits & Challenges from last lesson (recap). Show class responses from last week on PowerPoint

4) Choose Engagement (25-30min)
   a) Here are the 6 major answers to what it means to live life to the full.
   b) Go through each answer (4-5 minutes each). Give a quick summary of how they understand life to the full using Ecclesiastes Bible verses/Quotes/Diagram and video clip on PowerPoint.
   c) After each answer, student write on post-it note why they would or would not accept or follow this particular worldview. Stick answer under the cross or green tick.

5) Reshape Practice(3 min)
Concluding question of PowerPoint? What more evidence would you like for one of these answers? Write your answer on post-it note and stick it on board. We will look into one of these next lesson.

Lesson Review (15 minutes)
   a) Hand out end of topic survey and fill in (5min)
All Student to be given the End of Topic survey (Appendix 1b) and given 5 minutes to complete.
   B) Students all given Focus Review Questions this lesson (10min). 10 minutes to complete.
Strategies for Seeing Anew

The same three strategies from lesson one were again identified from Seeing Anew to provide motivation and challenge. Strategy No. 3 – Towards curiosity about life’s big questions involved placing ten A3 posters on the walls of the classroom with a big question mark on each. At the beginning of the lesson the following question was also showing on the power point to raise interest levels: “Why is it good to question our meaning in life?” In addition, the famous Byrd’s song “Turn! Turn! Turn!” (To everything there is a Season) was playing in the background. Using the students’ dominant answer of “live life to the full” to the question – what is the meaning of life? - the teacher/researcher used the following question in the lesson to stimulate curiosity and encourage discussion: What does it mean to live life to the full - for you? Students’ placed their post-it note answers to this question on the A3 question mark posters around the room.

Strategy No. 4 – Towards meaning, significance and purpose involved watching an advertisement produced by Ford motor cars that was based on the Robert Frost poem, “The Road Not Taken”, the poem has an underlying challenge of: Which road in life will you take? The advert was used as an ideas generator for the class to do a one-minute brainstorm of the question: “What are the benefits of living life to the full? Two examples of historically famous people who sought to live life to the full were used namely, King Solomon, arguably the writer of Ecclesiastes and Jack Kerouac, who arguably started the “ruck-sack revolution” in the 1950s.

Strategy No. 6 – Towards being challenged and changed involved asking students to consider the question: what are the challenges of living life to the full?

Strategies for Engagement

Four strategies were identified. Strategy No. 4 – to experience delight, reflection & wonder as outlined above students entered the room with the song, To Everything There is a Season playing in the background, and the award winning advertisement by Ford cars was shown.

Strategy No. 7 – to pursue big questions involved students writing on post-it notes what it meant for them to live life to the full and then sticking their responses on the question mark posters around the room and for the other students to read then to provoke discussion. Students also did a one minute brainstorm as a class after watching the Ford motor car advert considering
the question, what are the benefits of living life to the full? Finally, the life examples of King Solomon (Biblical figure) and Jack Kerouac (Beat generation hero) were used as case studies to consider the question: What are the challenges of living life to the full?

Strategy No. 13 - to critically engage with examples, activities and tasks. As outlined earlier a key part of this lesson was to engage with the two famous people from history who sought to live “life to the full without limits”.

A different strategy to that used in Cycle One was Strategy No. 16 - to help learners approach learning in relational terms which was included to encourage students to think about life applications from the lesson which was one of the improvements recommended from Cycle One. For this strategy the relational life of Jack Kerouac was used and students were challenged to see for themselves that living life to the full (without limits) can end up destroying relationships and the lives of those we love.

Strategies for Reshaping Practice

Six strategies were chosen from this Reshaping Practice section of the WIL approach and these strategies linked well with those chosen for Seeing Anew and Engagement. Strategy No. 3 - Change or create display which included the A3 posters and question marks.

Strategy No. 6 – Create the appropriate atmosphere which related to the planned activities, namely, the Ecclesiastes drama, watching “The Road Not Taken” based advertisement and considering the life of Jack Kerouac.

Strategy No. 9 - change examples and illustrations to match your framework. Jack Kerouac and King Solomon were chosen to provide some life application and Christian principles as outlined above.

Strategy No.13 – Change key words and metaphors. As for the lesson in Cycle One, rather than using technical worldview terms such as “existentialism” the new key words to be used in this lesson were: “Living Life to the Full” and “YOLO” as another way of describing this way of life.

Strategy No. 16 – Choose an approach to suit the new emphasis and Strategy No. 26 -model a new emphasis. - the new emphasis involved students more in the process of discovery through discussion rather than simply telling them these are the good things and these are the problems with “living life to the full”.
APPENDIX 11 - WIL strategies of: Seeing Anew; Choose Engagement; and Reshape Practice – Cycle Three

Strategies for Seeing Anew

The same three strategies used in Cycles One and Two were again identified to provide motivation and challenge. Strategy No. 3 – Towards curiosity about life’s big questions involved six large posters (double A3 size) stuck to the walls with six different life to the full answers from different worldviews). Each answer had a large green tick and a large red cross on an A3 poster next to it. The following statement was also showing on the power point to raise interest levels: “A Time for Answers”. Playing in the background was the theme song music for “Who wants to be a millionaire”. The snakes and ladder image was shown to remind students that this lesson represented stage 2 of the Snakes and Ladders Meaning of Life Journey – “a time for answers”.

Strategy No. 4 – Towards meaning, significance and purpose involved looking at the answers for what it means to live life to the full for six of the world’s major worldviews. Students were shown a quote or Scripture passage, a diagram and a short movie/YouTube clip for each of the six worldviews to help explain simply and engagingly what it meant for that worldview to “live life to the full”. Strategy No. 6 – Towards being challenged and changed. After being made aware of each worldview students were challenged to provide answers to why they would or would not follow a particular worldview which involved putting their answer under either a red cross or a green tick for that particular worldview

Strategies for Engagement

Strategy No. 4 – to experience delight, reflection & wonder. The lesson began with a live game of “who wants to be a millionaire” with three students chosen to play the game which went for a few minutes. The activity highlighted that we all love answers and we want to know the answers. The students were then told that the focus of this lesson would be looking at six of the world’s major answers to the question: What does it mean to live Life to the Full?

Strategy No. 6 – to extend their ways of participating involved providing students with six brief and engaging answers as outlined in Strategy 4 (Seeing Anew) from the perspective of six of the major worldviews of Western society (Nihilist, Existentialist, Universalist, Jewish, Eastern (Hindu/Buddhist) and Christian).to the question – What does it mean to Live Life to the Full?
Strategy No. 10 - to consider contrasts and dissonance (clashes between different worldviews). The teacher to read out a selection of student answers, highlighting the different views of students in the class. Strategy No. 13 - to critically engage with examples, activities and tasks was outlined above in Strategy 4 (Seeing Anew).

**Strategies for Reshaping Practice**

Eight strategies were chosen. Strategy No. 1 – Change the layout of the room. The classroom desks were arranged in a U shape to enable better student discussion and interaction. Strategy No. 2 – Make tangible changes to the environment to support new perspective. The A3 posters with green ticks and red crosses as outlined earlier were used and a variety of visuals were provided to help introduce the various worldviews.

Strategy No. 6 – Create the appropriate atmosphere which related to activities already planned as part of Seeing Anew and Engagement for example, the theme music for “who wants to be a millionaire”.

Strategy No. 9 - change examples and illustrations to match your framework. Engaging examples and illustrations of the various worldviews were used.

Strategy No. 13 – Change key words and metaphors. Rather than using the words “Nihilist”, “Existentialist”, “Universalist” etc. initially, a phrase was used for each which then was matched with the worldview name.

Strategy No. 21 – Change the student interaction. The lesson sought to involve students more in making a reasoned decision as to why or why not they would accept or follow a particular worldview.

Strategy No. 22 – ask big questions/change your questioning. The lesson began with a big question: Which of the major answer for “Living Life to the Full” is most appealing to you? The lesson ended with a big question: Which “Life to the Full” answer would you like more evidence for in the next lesson?

Strategy No. 23 – provide contrasts and set up dissonance (clashes). Teachers can provoke thinking by creating contrasts and dissonance. Dissonance is about creating difference or conflict.