

RD 700 EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION: MASTER OF ARTS IN BIBLICAL LANGUAGES AND EXEGESIS

Program Coordinator: David Miller, PhD | dmiller@briercrest.ca

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION

Experiential Integration (EI) is a non-credit component required for all Master's level programs at Briercrest Seminary. This syllabus outlines the philosophy and specific EI requirements for the MABLE (Master of Arts in Biblical Languages and Exegesis) program. Experiential Integration is designed to take the knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired in curricular studies and to incorporate what students have learned into a practical ministry or work context where biblical and/or theological reflection is required. Although no tuition credit is charged for EI, a one-time \$150 processing, registration and supervision fee is billed to the student's account at the time he or she enrolls in the EI.

EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION PREREQUISITES

Students enrolled in the MABLE degree are encouraged to begin thinking early in their program about opportunities to fulfill the EI component. However, students must have successfully completed 30 credit hours (i.e., 50% of a 60-hour program) before beginning EI, although exceptions may be granted in unusual circumstances. In such instances, it is up to the student to provide a compelling case for why the EI should commence before s/he reaches the 30-credit hour minimum. Also, students must have a completed contract signed by the Program Coordinator *before* embarking on their EI plans. In other words, students should not expect ministry or professional experience that pre-dates the EI contract to count toward their EI requirements.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Experiential Integration is an important component of the graduate programs at Briercrest Seminary. While we acknowledge that many students come to seminary with significant life and ministry experience, it is also sometimes difficult to know how to use new theological and biblical knowledge, skills and perspectives in a practical ministry setting. Thus, at Briercrest we give focused attention to learning how to "bridge" intensive theological study with the concerns and realities of service within the Church, the people of God.

Beyond the need to bridge formal education with life and ministry experience, we also believe the EI provides opportunities for students to identify their own spiritual, academic and relational strengths and weaknesses, and to give focused attention to these in the remainder of the program and beyond. While we are committed to providing academic training, we also recognize that it is possible

to gain academic expertise apart from spiritual and relational development. Thus, the EI provides an opportunity to integrate relational and spiritual growth with academic development. Our prayer is that EI may foster in you the desire to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

Finally, the EI also provides opportunity for students to think carefully about their own development toward the learning outcomes articulated for students of Briercrest Seminary. These outcomes are as follows:

Briercrest Seminary Learning Outcomes for All Seminary Graduates

Students will graduate:

- Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
- Preparing to serve God’s kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God’s kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
- Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

Degree Specific Outcomes - MABLE

- Demonstrate skill in sight translation of biblical Hebrew and Greek texts
- Demonstrate skillful exegesis of both Testaments
- Articulate the major themes of both Testaments, and show the literary and theological relationship(s) of smaller passages to the larger whole of Scripture.

Although these three outcomes will be assessed in a variety of ways, students should develop their EI proposal in ways that anticipate how the above learning outcomes can be strengthened through the activities in which they chose to be involved.

COURSE COMPLETION

As a non-credit component of the MA program at Briercrest, there is no final grade assigned to the Experiential Integration. However, the Program Coordinator must be fully satisfied that the terms of the contract have been fulfilled. Once the Program Coordinator is satisfied that the student has completed the requirements, he or she will send an email or letter that will be submitted to the Registrar and copied to the student, indicating successful completion of the EI component. At that point, the Experiential Integration component will show up on the student’s transcript.

EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements

1. Students may enroll in the Experiential Integration if they meet the prerequisites outlined above.
2. Students must be actively involved in a significant period of “field experience” over a period of approximately four to eight months, depending on the types of experience involved. More intensive situations (e.g., summer short term mission trip, summer full-time pastoral position) may also be considered with the program coordinator’s approval. Although it is difficult to quantify the exact number of hours required for EI, it may be helpful to think in terms of 150 – 250 hours.
3. Students will typically identify a faculty member who can act as an advisor to help them fulfill the research and teaching components of the EI requirements (see “Activity Requirements” below). This faculty member will also evaluate their teaching component. If the student fulfills their EI by finding other activities, other arrangements will be made to identify a supervisor who can report back to the MABLE coordinator.

Pre-Activity Requirements

1. Experiential Integration Contract

All students are required to prepare, in conjunction with the program coordinator, an Experiential Integration Contract indicating activities envisioned for the EI according to the guidelines outlined below. Two signed copies of the Contract should be submitted to the Academic Services office¹ at least two weeks prior to commencement of the first month of the defined contract. One copy will be returned to the student, signed by the Program Coordinator.

Preparing to write the Contract

Before writing the contract, take time to reflect on and pray about your own personal growth and development. In so doing, note the following factors:

- a) *The Experiential Integration General Objectives*. The goal of this course is to allow you to practice the concepts that you have learned in the classroom.

¹ Mailing address: Academic Services, Briercrest College and Seminary, 510 College Dr., Caronport, SK S0H 0S0. Email address: seminary@briercrest.ca.

- b) *The MABLE Program Emphasis.* As you plan your activities for the Experiential Integration course, you should do so in light of the degree program in which you are enrolled. Your activities should provide opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge being gained in the MABLE degree.
- c) *The range of opportunities available in your ministry context.* While you might have some “ideals” of what you would like EI to include, there are also obvious limitations to your own geographical and ministry context. Nevertheless, seek to be creative about what avenues you could pursue to help you gain experience in the area of your major. Talking with your pastor, elders, or ministry leaders might stimulate fresh ideas.
- d) *Areas of personal strength and weakness.* The EI contract should outline experiences that play both to your strengths *and* weaknesses. The goal of Briercrest Seminary is to help you to become more adequately prepared for ministry. Seek to focus on these areas as you develop your ministry contract.

Writing the Contract

There are no specific restrictions on how a contract should be assembled, but TWO copies of the contract should be made (one for the student, one for the program coordinator) and should include the following items:

- a) Name, address and contact information
- b) MABLE program identification
- c) Location of Experiential Integration
- d) Field Supervisor’s name, position and contact information (if applicable)
- e) Anticipated year of graduation
- f) A brief (approx. one to two page) assessment of strengths and weaknesses as it pertains to your past and present ministry experience/context
- g) An identification of significant goals and objectives to accomplish in the EI
- h) A delineation (with explanation as necessary) of the anticipated activities and time commitments for fulfilling the EI component. This should also include the relative “weight” given to each activity: What percentage of the overall total do you anticipate the activity will fulfill?
- i) A delineation of how each of the activities will be “documented” in the final EI portfolio.
- j) The “contractual statement” on a separate page attached to the end of the contract (see Appendix for contract page).

2. Pre-EI Reflective Reading Assignment

An important focus of Experiential Integration for MABLE students will be on matters of pedagogy and oral communication. It is assumed that communication of academic work to people without the benefit of theological education in “lay” or “non-churched” settings will require practice. To facilitate reflection on the challenges of teaching and communicating biblical and theological material in “lay” settings, you are required to read ONE of the following books. If there is an alternate book (which you have not read before) that you are interested in and feel may be beneficial, let the program coordinator know and this can be arranged.

Suggested Books:

Bain, Ken. *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Brueggeman, Walter. *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth, et al. *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

Lowman, Joseph. *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*. 2d ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

Palmer, Parker J. *To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1983, 1993.

Jones, L. Gregory and Stephanie Paulsell. *The Scope of our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

In a four-page reflective paper, 1) identify the book you have read; 2) outline some of the most important things learned about communication or teaching, specifically as you think about teaching biblical or theological content (about two pages); and 3) list four or five concrete things related to oral communication and teaching that you will try (i.e., things you haven’t tried up until this point) to do at some point during your EI. This report should be submitted prior to the beginning of your actual EI activities.

Activity Requirements

1. Experiential Integration Activities

The bulk of the Experiential Integration consists of actual engagement in activities that support the application of knowledge and skills gained through the student's seminary studies.

For the MABLE degree, the student will typically fulfill the EI requirements in two ways.

First, students will acquire some level of teaching experience in Briercrest College (or another Christian education context). Students will work closely with a professor or another Christian education supervisor in order to develop their teaching skills.

Second, students will teach in some capacity in a church setting (e.g., preaching, Sunday school, leading a Bible study). Students will document how they have re-formed their academic work on a passage or series of texts into teaching which is helpful and clear in a non-academic setting.

These are typically the means by which students will fulfill their EI requirements, but other options are possible. If a student is able to be involved in a translation project or help design a new course (for example), these activities would fulfill their EI requirements.

2. Supervisor Discussion, Half-way Report, and Self-evaluation

The student should attend a monthly meeting with the field supervisor for discussion and evaluation of their progress. If the program coordinator is functioning as the field supervisor, and the student is not on campus, it is advisable to set up a monthly phone-call.

At a time agreed upon between the student and the Program Coordinator, a 3-4 page "half-way" report of activities engaged in and a self-evaluation of how things are going should be submitted to the Program Coordinator. The self-evaluation should be brief and honest, indicating both successes and failures. Where possible, the student should be aiming to include comments from the field supervisor as well. The objective of this assignment is to provide a truly evaluative opportunity that will enhance student growth and learning and ensure that the EI is staying on track.

Post-Activity Requirements

1. EI Documentation Portfolio

From the outset, students should be thinking about how they will document that they have engaged in these activities. Levels of documentation will vary depending on the activity, but should include, when applicable, a letter from a field supervisor (e.g., a pastor or church leader outlining the student's involvement). Other items to include are outlines of material presented, a dated "diary or journal" of activities. Although documentation will vary greatly with differing activities, it is nonetheless vital for completion of the EI. All documentation must be submitted in

an EI Documentation Portfolio (most likely presented in a binder or Duo-tang format) at the end of the contract as evidence that the activities have been completed.

2. Self-Evaluation Report

Once all activities have been completed and documented, the student should write a final 4-6 page self-evaluation which includes the following elements:

- a) A brief summary of the high points of the activities;
- b) An evaluation of personal strengths and weaknesses discovered in the process of doing the activities;
- c) An assessment of how well the goals and objectives set at the outset were met;
- d) Any observations of things learned or clarified in reference to the student's own future ministry direction.

APPENDIX: CONTRACTUAL STATEMENT

In fulfillment of the requirements of the Briercrest Seminary Experiential Integration component for the MABLE program, for my personal growth, and in preparation for greater usefulness in the cause of Christ in the world, I _____ contract to fulfill the program of Experiential Integration for the period of _____ to _____ hereafter outlined.

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

PROGRAM COORDINATOR SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____