Sociological Methodology: Interpreting Changing Cultures

Rachel Gonatas

Omega Graduate School

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Dr. Kenneth Schmidt Ph.D.

Assignment

100 Day – Essay

Complete the Hidden Threads assignment as detailed below and explained in class. Requirements

1. Topic Selection and Approval:

a. Email your topic and a rough outline to Dr. Schmidt for feedback and approval well in advance of the assignment due-date deadline. (schmidt@umassglobal.edu)

b. Schedule a meeting with Dr. Schmidt to review feedback. (schmidt@umassglobal.edu)

c. After receiving approval of the topic and rough outline, submit a rough draft to Dr. Schmidt in advance of the turn-in deadline

(schmidt@umassglobal.edu). He will provide the feedback necessary for preparing the final paper.

2. The Essay – This paper should be approximately 5-7 double-spaced pages in length and may be longer. Provide an appropriate (and interesting) title for your essay. Write a short paragraph introducing the reader to the topic you will explore in your paper (i.e., This paper explores both theological and sociological dimensions of the obesity epidemic in the United States...). Then, follow the steps listed below:

(Develop each in paragraph form, and clearly explicate all concepts you will develop.) Follow this pattern and organize your work under headings, or using the numbers for the parts of the assignment listed below:

a. Identify a few concepts to be used for the interpretation of the problem you have chosen. (i.e., for a topic dealing with obesity, you might choose “hunger” or “emptiness.”) Define/explicate this concept(s), explaining how it will be employed in your analysis.

b. Identify sub-concepts that are related to the concepts you have chosen in #1. (i.e., for obesity sub-concepts might include, “gratification,” “satisfaction,” etc.) Define/explicate these sub-concepts, explaining how they offer additional analysis of your chosen problem. This extends your analysis beyond #1, offering additional depth and nuance.

c. Identify several biblical passages or concepts that provide meaning for these concepts and sub-concepts? (Perhaps something that addressed “food and drink that satisfy” ... or other passages that deal with such matters as being “filled with the spirit, “gluttony,” “fasting,” “feasting,” etc.) Drawing on these passages, and related theological ideas, explain their connection to the

d. concepts/sub-concepts you have employed in your analysis of the problem.

Note: this is not simply attaching Bible verses that “inspire” or “shed light on...” Rather, the emphasis should center on the conceptual and analytical. (I’m not as interested in “normative” [Christians must... Christians should...] approaches.)

e. Identify secular (i.e., sociological) studies that utilize or address these concepts and sub-concepts. (Supersize Me [a movie], The McDonaldization of Society by George Ritzer, Studies on anorexia or bulimia, etc.) Use these to develop your analysis sociologically. You can think of this as a very short “literature review.”

f. Explain how your analysis aids /offers insight into contemporary life/society. (i.e., the burgeoning fast-food industry, Western society’s focus on efficiency and calculability, etc.) Where is your chosen problem “visible” in contemporary society... what contemporary illustrations can you identify and briefly interpret using some of the analysis developed in #1- #4)?

g. How does your analysis make a contribution to Christian thinking on the topic/problem? (For example, understanding the relationship between appetite, indulgence, and a life of the Spirit, and then extending these ideas to areas other than just obesity and food.) What fresh new idea(s) can you offer to fellow Christians?

h. How does your analysis make a contribution to sociological thinking about this issue? Can you offer a new sociological insight or two derived from your analysis?

**Profession/Ministry Description:**

I am a school administrator/principal at a school for gifted students in 3rd through 8th grade.

**Description of the Context of the Selected Event**:

There are organizational and attention problems among gifted children due to a lack of executive

functioning skills.

There are organizational and attention problems among gifted children due to a lack of executive functioning skills. Executive functioning is a collection of abilities that enable us to function effectively. On a daily level, it is what allows a person to handle several overlapping intellectual and emotional responsibilities. These skills aid an individual's organization, goals, and priorities. They support flexible thinking and working memory. Executive function skills enable us to control our emotions in a healthy and productive manner (McNulty and Laurie, 2020).

Executive functioning issues make it difficult for students to manage their time and avoid procrastinating. Students with ADHD in particular have trouble managing their time according to the length of the project and the time it takes to arrange their ideas. Disintegrating students often exhibit skill deficiencies and unproductive practices in seven areas: organization, time management, study habits, mentality, stress, sleep, and screens. Identifying these areas and addressing psychological requirements, particularly for gifted students, can help create positive social change. Addressing social media and screen time can help students feel connected and relational, ultimately improving their mental health.

1.Executive functioning abilities that many gifted and talented, ADHD, and Twice-exceptional students lack include planning, prioritizing, organizing, impulse control, mood regulation, task starting, accessing working memory, self-monitoring, and the capacity to think flexibly. These abilities aid us in a variety of complex circumstances that arise in our everyday lives. For instance, working memory supports mental math, daily organizing, problem-solving, effectively responding to in-class questions, and remembering and following directions.

1.1. Executive functioning skills can be acquired through practice, with biology and experience being major contributors. These abilities are natural and present in the brain circuitry from birth, while other skills, like language development, can develop influenced by various circumstances. Effective social research requires understanding the scientific method, using systems thinking, and following research design and methodology. Some students' biological executive functioning may be stronger than others, and conditions play a role in certain talents' development (Guare et. al., 2012).

2. The brain continuously layers new neural connections, engaging in neuronal pruning to prepare for future development. This pruning occurs in the first three years and again in adolescence, contributing to peculiar behaviors in teenagers. Effective social research requires understanding the scientific method, using systems thinking, following research design and methodology, and matching appropriate research approaches ([Jannot](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Ddp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Jeannine+Jannot&text=Jeannine+Jannot&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books), 2021).

2.1. Executive functions consist of working memory, inhibition, set shifting, and fluency. Early interactions in education are crucial for developing these abilities. Pruning brain areas consolidates mental abilities and dissolves irrelevant gray matter connections. Frontal neural networks are essential for executive skills, but they are not the only ones. Preparation involves systems thinking, research design, methodology, and appropriate research approaches. Pruning unneeded brain matter sharpens the utilized and important parts of the brain (Porter et.al., 2000).

2.1.1 Working memory helps with mental math, daily organization, problem-solving, answering questions in class, remembering and following directions, and more (Tyler, 2020). Metacognition involves objective self-awareness, combining self-awareness with behavior monitoring to overcome challenges. It helps in defining social problems and promoting positive change through interdisciplinary sociological and theological analysis. Metacognition functions are connected to executive functioning processes.

2.2. Organizational skills therapy is designed for children and adolescents with ADHD to address their shortcomings in time and resource management. These issues, such as loss, procrastination, and work prioritization, worsen over time in individuals with ADHD. However, for developing individuals, these problems improve with brain maturation. Interventions for organizational skills involve behavioral strategies, with the executive function being the cornerstone. Organizational problems can negatively impact daily living, including academic achievement. Integrated sociological and theological analysis can help create positive social change, as organizational issues can have detrimental effects on daily life, including academic performance (Bikic, 2021, pp.1-11).

2.3. Organizational skills training remains a topic of ongoing research. Assessment tools like The Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF) and The Children's Organizational Skills Scale (COSS) help measure a child's executive function and organizational abilities. Preparation involves systems thinking, research design, methodology, and appropriate research approach for each social concern.

2.4. The knowledge base plays a significant role in individual memory performance, with low-IQ students exhibiting recall levels equivalent to high-IQ students when evaluated on their field of expertise. Preparation involves systems thinking, research design, methodology, and appropriate research approach for social concerns. Low-IQ students can remember as much as high-IQ students when tested on their knowledge in their field (Bjorklund et. al., 1994, pp.951-965).

3. The seven aspects of gifted and talented youth leadership include struggle and goal-setting, communication skills, group skills, trust and being trustworthy, decision-making skills, problem-solving ability, and responsibility. Leadership effectiveness may be limited by pathological perfectionism. To successfully lead, executive functioning skills are required.

Conducting a sociological analysis of a situation of concern to the family, church, or community lays a scientific foundation for interdisciplinary social research. We can transform and support executive functioning abilities that are essential for leaders to effectively lead (Dağyar et. al., 2022, pp.566-596).

3.1. Connecting with gifted children who are twice exceptional can be challenging due to the emphasis on inclusive education. High performance makes it easy to identify gifted and talented individuals, but it may be more difficult for subgroups with multiple difficulties. These students have many exceptionalities, making it difficult to single out gifted children experiencing complex challenges. Research shows that having too many common beliefs can make classwork too easy for these students (Gierczyk & Hornby 2021, p.85).

3.1.1 Gifted students often feel frustrated and rejected by the school system for failing to meet their needs. They may display rage, withdraw, or act defensively due to their unorthodox interests beyond the standard curriculum. Teachers should be aware of their students' experiences to better react to and regulate their emotions. Recognizing similarities and differences in learning approaches and perceptions can help bridge the gap between engaged and disengaged students. However, too much similarity can make classwork too easy for students, as too many common beliefs can make it unchallenging. Teachers should be aware of their students' experiences to better respond to and regulate their emotions (Germain‐Rutherford et. al., 2021, pp.9-22).

3.2. Instructors' teaching practices and students' learning strategies may not always align, affecting the quality of the learning experience and student engagement. A Christian interpretation of culture addresses this gap in naturalistic social theory, promoting faith integration and social research to address social issues. Understanding students' experiences helps instructors respond to and regulate emotions more effectively, while also preventing and encouraging motivational behaviors (2021).

3.2.1. A culture of competence, harmonious relationships, and an emphasis on monitoring giftedness are necessary for the information-educational environment and working with gifted children. Systematic thought, thorough analysis, study design, methodology, and the blending of relevant methodologies are all necessary for effective social research. It takes a good eye for observation, knowledge of the culture, and surroundings to provide organizational support for outstanding children (Karpova et. al, 2020).

3.2.2. When entering a classroom, it is often evident whether a teacher has prepared for the day by seeing the students' conduct, focus, and interactions. The dynamics of the pupils and the classroom may alter as a result of intentional acts and environmental tones. There is a necessity for order and preparation. The motivating elements of human nature that are founded in childhood come into connection with one through a pattern of profound concentration, according to Montessori’s observations. This trend often leads to exceptional accomplishment and lifelong learning. Through experiences and observations, she also understood the importance of focus. Concentration is aided by the teacher's spiritual conversion to the necessity to prepare the classroom environment to assist student concentration (Rathunde, 2001, pp. 11-44).

3.3. Digital storytelling gives students the opportunity to write to a real audience, which helps them grasp it by giving them themes to let them express their sentiments in fun and relaxing ways. In gifted students, digital storytelling improves writing abilities and fosters creativity. It supports students with their organization, fear of public speaking, and social awkwardness which would allow for accommodations in both learning and presenting (Tetik & Özer, 2022).

4. The recognition of the importance of classroom organization is growing, as children struggling with organizing often experience loss, forgetfulness, and inconsistency in content. Incorporating study and organizing skills into the curriculum can be beneficial, as they are crucial abilities that have been overlooked for too long. Using interdisciplinary sociological and theological analysis can help define social problems and promote positive social change. Encouraging children to arrange and discover order can help them develop strategies for thriving independently. Support is needed to develop these skills, as the order in one's environment helps maintain order within the child (Porter et. al., 2000).

4.1. Students' disorganization is influenced by various factors, such as their developmental stage, school structure, and parental involvement. They can learn organizing techniques but require specialized training, practice, and instructors who understand their learning preferences. Some children require more assistance to develop organizational skills that complement their learning styles. While they need specific instruction, practice, and knowledgeable teachers, they can acquire organizational strategies (2000).

4.2. The No Child Left Behind, Act of 2001 improved the school system by focusing on data collection and reporting, yet it reduced time for teaching, and valuing individual students' abilities. Standardized testing and data evaluations have led to a lack of valuable learning opportunities, valuing money over basic growth and development. Interdisciplinary social and theological research can help address these issues and promote positive social change, to alleviate how students are deprived of valuable learning opportunities as a result of standardized testing and data evaluations. Teachers are expected to focus on subject matter rather than organizational abilities. People may perceive increasing demands as aggravating. Interdisciplinary social research is built on sociological examinations of family, church, and community contexts. Some argue that adding more to a student's education detracts from the primary subject matter.

4.3. **“**But all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Christian culture provides a complete framework for a multidisciplinary social study that promotes human flourishing in the settings of family, church, and community. Social research creates world-changing transformations by merging religion and society. Order, structure, planning, and execution are evident throughout the Bible.

**“**For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.” Isaiah 28:10**.** This versefurther demonstrates God's consistent use of order throughout the Bible. It is the Ecclesiastes chapter three approach to order and comprehension of life and death, that gives anemphasis on order and mastery which is so crucial and sorely lacking in our educational systems. The order of mastery and consequently, the confidence to continue on to the next course is achieved through repetition and practice (Bibic et. al., 2021).

**Conclusion:** The regulating skills of exceptional students are not uniformly developed throughout adolescence. The planning segment becomes separated, which impairs self-control and decreases the efficacy of goal-setting. Gifted students do not all acquire the same self-control abilities as they near adolescence (Zakharova et. al., 2018, pp. 1734-1738).

Parents are frequently concerned as to why their child used to receive such exceptional grades and enjoy learning, but now refuses to do any homework and their grades are declining. Occasionally, they believe that something is wrong with their child, the teacher, or the school. The actuality of the circumstance is that the student lacks executive functioning. When students are younger, instructors execute all preparation and outline each step for them. Middle school students are granted more latitude and greater responsibility. The reality is that educators must partner with students at a young age in order to incorporate executive functioning into every class, even at the youngest ages. The "teach me so I can do it myself" philosophy used in Montessori approaches to learning, is essential for students to thrive in education and throughout life.

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