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Omega Graduate School

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**120 Day - Course Learning Journal**

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course and is an integration of the essential elements of the course within your professional field of interest. The objective of the *course* journal is to produce a degree of acculturation, integrating new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to communicate with your professor consistent with the Tutorial Methodology to express insights gained as a result of the course of study. Submit the course learning journal via DIAL.
The course learning journal should be 5-7 pages in length, and should include the following sections:

1. Introduction – Describe the expectations of the graduate program. Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate program as a whole, and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.
2. Personal Growth - Describe your personal growth–*how the course stretched or challenged you*– as well as your progress in mastery of course content and skills during the week and through subsequent readings – *what new insights or skills you gained.*
3. Reflective Entry - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or *adaptation and relevant application*) of new learning into your professional field. What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result of your study?
4. Future Expectations - Continue the journal by addressing questions and concerns you now have relating to the graduate program expectations.
5. Conclusion – Synthesize the three body sections above, evaluating the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional, religious, and educational goals.

**120-day Learning Journal**

**Introduction**

OGS courses SR 958 Research and Design Methodology II and III are strategically placed within the graduate program to instruct students on doing research for a dissertation and developing a correct design for the dissertation project. The classes coincided in my course work with Statistics three. Each of these classes were closely aligned topically and gave great perspective and clarity on how to design a research project both statistically and thematically. I am much more confident and prepared in starting work for my dissertation due to the time spent researching and analyzing methodology for research. Aligning the various elements of the dissertation has been explained and is being worked on through the course work. Having never done a dissertation, certainly not at a PhD level, the information provided, instruction given, and support provided have helped me understand more comprehensively and in detail the various steps toward a quality dissertation. I have learned a lot and am looking toward the next steps of the program in Core 7.

**Personal Growth**

 In beginning OGS, I really did not understand and or even have clarity on what a social science dissertation would look like, much less the work involved. There have been moments of bewildered frustration for me in understanding certain elements of the dissertation and yet with the patient help and insight of professors, encouragement of fellow students, and research I am much more comfortable in my understanding of the process, design, and specificity of the dissertation project. I have learned a lot to say the least and am excited to begin working on my dissertation.
 The research design is on one hand a very pragmatic equation oriented process, and yet on the other a very interestingly individualistic project. There is a framework which must be followed and in order to produce results which can be validated, the process and alignment of the dissertation is important to follow. Developing a clear thesis statement which aligns with the type of research being conducted and coincides with the instruments used to collect data, all have specific factors which must be carefully observed. Tying everything together is a very fascinating project I am looking forward to.

 The individualistic factor is fascinating to me as the topic and the variables used for the research is as unique in many ways as to how many authors there may be writing on any given issue. I have found the framework, once capably understood, to be helpful toward narrowing down the exact scope of research. The vast amount of information available allows for literally an almost infinite amount of research topics. This can be overwhelming. Understanding the processes and working through various topics to develop a precise research subject has been very interesting though at times stretching to say the least. I have been amazed at the assumptions I have made on various issues. Understanding with greater clarity the complexity of knowledge and application of that knowledge has helped narrow my research framework. This is exciting not only for the near future but also as I look ahead toward various research projects that I believe could develop from the initial dissertation research topic.

**Reflections**

 As a Pastor, of great concern to me is the area of leadership. The church appears to be adopting a synchronistic view of leadership where primarily, the use of results defines a leader’s effectiveness. Obviously, results are important. Defining what results is important, especially within the spiritual realm. Many leaders can accomplish material results, yet I doubt we would call them good leaders. Leadership must start internally and then be expressed externally. A question which will need historical background is that of spiritual formation. For a leader to form what exactly must take place within their lives? Furthermore, without Christ, how is change possible? Writing from a Christian biblical worldview the internal spiritual change that takes place within a believer is ultimately a work of Christ a believer participates in through an active faith. Various leadership styles, transformational, ethical, and others, are dependent in part upon the integrity and other-centered approach of leaders. To function fully in the manner presented by most leadership models, ultimately a leader must go through and be experiencing spiritual formation by the power of the Holy Spirit. If this is not the case, the level of leadership skill and effectiveness will not reach a full potential.

 Therefore, if the spiritual health or maturation of a leader is not of highest priority, then certain results may be attained but at what cost? Furthermore, how will other leaders develop through their observations of senior leaders? Pastors need role models as much as anyone and if the younger generations do not have spiritually mature pastors to role model their faith-walk with the Lord and resulting leadership practices, then the church will continue to flounder in many ways.

 The context of my life is the Church and leadership. The dissertation I will be writing involves research investigating the relationship between a leader’s spiritual maturity and or formation to their leadership style. The correlation research is necessary as most leadership models offer a bullet point list of practices that leaders need to follow for success. While those points may be valid, the spiritual formation of the leaders themselves must be addressed. Aligning the dissertation to reflect the correlation research model along with collecting the data, using the appropriate survey’s, defining the population and sample, and using the correct statistical equation such as Pearson’s “r,” to coincide with the correlation research, are all issues which are being put into practice. As I continue work through the design and alignment of my research project, I have learned quite a bit, and am excited to see how this research will ultimately be beneficial to the church and society.

**Future Expectations**

Looking forward to Core seven and the dissertation itself there are several expectations I have. First, tightening my design framework for the dissertation will be an exciting process. I have learned and continue to grow in my understanding of the research design and statistical methods used for social research. Ensuring alignment of my thesis, statistical research method, population and sample will all be important to complete. I also am looking forward to researching further on the topic of spiritual formation.
 Secondly, the theoretical design for the paper will be very interesting to establish. The gap in literature for research in the field of leadership is investigating the relationship between spiritual formation and leadership style. These two variables will be very interesting to examine as to the strength of a potential relationship. Working through the background or history of both topics is something I have been working on and will continue to research.

 Furthermore, the selection of validated instruments to use for the two variables will be important. I believe the MLQ instrument, which indicates leadership style (particularly transformational leadership), will be a good tool. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile instrument or the Faith Maturity Scale, will need to be reviewed to discern their appropriate use. Aligning these instruments with the correlation statistics design is an issue I will be working on.

 Lastly, developing the outline for my research will be exciting. I am looking forward to connecting all the various elements of the dissertation and seeing how everything ties together. The research itself has been a great learning experience. Framing the dissertation, gathering the data, and analyzing the results, all will be a great experience over the next period of time.

**Conclusion**

 Overall, the research design and methodology classes have been very helpful. I have learned I tremendous amount through the classes, assignments, and research. My understanding of how to do research, write, frame the dissertation, and use inferential statistics have all been enhanced. I am looking forward to continued learning throughout the dissertation process. I will be working to tighten the alignment of my funnel, explore opportunities for the sample from my population, secure excellent instruments to gather needed information to analyze, and complete the steps needed to accomplish the dissertation. My prayer is the research will be utilized to strengthen leaders both in the church and society.