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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**

Statistics for Social Research III with Professor Nti has been a challenging course focusing on statistics as a language and how to use statistics effectively for a dissertation or research project. Understanding and analyzing statistics to form an appropriately aligned research project is a main theme of the course. The course is strategically placed within the graduate program to help students develop their research skills and construct the research design for their dissertation. Working through the materials has been very helpful for me in building upon the first two Statistics courses. I have become more familiar and understanding of the language, concepts, and applicational function of statistics. This course along with Research Design and Methodology have been instrumental in preparing me to begin work on my dissertation.

**Personal Growth**

Statistics is a topic that if I were not working on earning my PhD, I would probably never be interested in. However, with the instruction I have received, I have found statistics a very interesting subject. Understanding further the language of statistics, the methods involved in statistical research and alignment, along with the correct application and analysis of statistics is very interesting. I have more to learn on the subject, however, from where I started, I have learned quite a bit. The various tutorials which OGS provides have helped frame out not only statistics itself, but also the expectations of OGS. Working through books by Creswell and Terrell, amongst others, has helped me to better understand the methodology of putting a statistical research design together.

Furthermore, the importance of inferential statistics to social research has been an important learning experience. In studying the materials and researching the overall concepts of statistics, the bringing together of my research interest and method of statistical evaluation has increased. Specifically, a correlation study is of great interest to me. Using correlation statistics, what specific language to use, and various other elements of the research is important. Beginning with the thesis statement and specific language to use indicating the type of research, along with presenting the significance of the research are all important aspects of the overall research design. I have learned a great deal through the various recommended videos, lessons, assignments, and books.

An example of my growth in aligning the research is learning the specific verbs to use for the thesis statement. In a correlation research design the research is focused on investigating the relationship between two variables. The variables themselves are variables of interest and compared to one another to understand the relationship the variables may or may not have. In my research, the two main variables are spiritual formation and leadership. How or even if, these variables relate is important for many different reasons.

Developing the correlation research to investigate the relationship using the statistical method such as Pearson’s “r,” has been a learning journey for me. I have grown in my understanding of issues such as the variables of interest, Pearson’s “r,” the language to use indicating a correlation study, as well as the thesis statement itself. How to develop the hypothesis and use the null hypothesis within a correlation research plan are all issues I have grown to understand better. I continue to research this topic to make sure I have a good grasp on how to correctly frame the research which needs to be done, to defend the research, and communicate the findings from the research. All these issues must align for a successful research project. I am continuing to work through the specific details to make sure my research can be validated, reduplicated, and ultimately be useful in making an impact within the church and society.

**Reflections**

Inferential statistics is an important tool for social research. The overall societal dependency upon numbers and or data is fascinating to observe. Effectively utilizing statistics can be a very helpful means of impacting society. Leadership is an essential issue and working through how leaders develop and or what constitutes a good leader is important for every arena within society. The tendency on how to develop good leaders is to present a leadership model outlining various needed behaviors for a leader to follow. Some of these observations and prescriptions are very insightful and useful. However, if leaders do not believe in and or have a belief system in place internally, the methodology a leader attempts to fulfill will ultimately be undermined by their lack of belief in the foundational framework for whatever methods attempting to be acted upon. Using statistical research to indicate the relationship between a leader’s beliefs or spiritual formation, and their actions or leadership styles can be of great use to illustrate the importance of personal spiritual formation for leadership development.

Through a correlation study, the analysis of these two main variables of interest will be important to observe. Is there a strong correlation between a leader’s spiritual formation and leadership style? My sense is there is. However, showing this with data to make the case that leaders must form in their internal character with integrity to lead practically and effectively will be of great interest. The challenge for me is to effectively develop a research model which indicate these ideas. How to establish the research, define what the research will be, collect the data, define the population and sample from the population, and then test the data, are all areas of growth essential toward an effective dissertation. I am looking forward to the challenges these ideas present as well as the results of the research itself.

The pastoral or church leadership arena is my context. I am deeply concerned about the formation of leaders within the church and unfortunately have far too many examples of weak, even bad leadership practices of church leaders. The church in America is certainly reflective of current culture. Varied opinions, divisions, factions, a lack of unity, and a lack of vision with mission can be seen in many churches. Without transformed leaders who understand how to walk with the Lord by faith, serve God’s people unselfishly, willing to be utilized by Him as transformational role-models for individuals and the overall corporate experience of the church, the church will continue to flounder. My prayer is the research I am learning to do will help solidify what I believe to be a biblical truth which is that what we believe will be seen in our behavior. Leaders need to be developed from the inside out rather than the outside up. What I mean is that a leader must be spiritual transformed to become and “do” leadership regardless of the model. The apparent leadership development procedure today is to give someone with supposed leadership characteristics a blueprint so they can “do” leadership and become more successful in climbing whatever defined societal ladder. Unfortunately, not only is the individual person impacted negatively through this method as they do not grow in maturity, but those who are being led tend to be stepped on as instruments for the leader to achieve upward mobility. Through my research I desire to provide analysis which will clarify and strengthen the need for leaders to develop internally first through spiritual transformation and effectively lead as a result.

**Future Expectations**

Continuing the OGS journey is an exciting prospect. As I enter Core 7, I am excited to integrate what I have learned, continue to become more knowledgeable, and bring everything together in the dissertation. I am very excited about my topic, the research design, the potential population, along with the research to be done. What a great experience this has been and continues to be. I have work to do regarding the statistical framework as this is not my area of strength. However, I am excited to continue to grow and learn in this area as I believe the research methodology is vital. I am also excited to see how the research will be impactful for the church and society. These are amazing days to be alive and the tools for research and communication are remarkable. My prayer is that through all these formative moments in my life, that the research will be done with excellence and useful to the Lord in impacting many lives.

In my office I have a chart of Core 7. When in my office I have literally looked at this chart every day for over two years. I am thrilled and a bit in awe that I am about to enter this path. I am deeply appreciative of the support I have received through professors and fellow students. I am a bit overwhelmed in looking at all that needs to be done over the next period of time, but also know through experiencing the first 6 Cores, the help and support which is available. I am very grateful. My expectations are simply that I will continue to, as one professor encouraged me, “continue to climb the mountain one step at a time.” I am thankful I am not alone in this climb.

**Conclusion**

Statistics is not my strong point. However, the classes, research, videos, and instruction I have received have helped me grow in my understanding of inferential statistics. How to utilize statistics within a research design and even narrowing the design to a correlation research project has been and continues to be a learning journey. I am excited to further refine the various elements of a correlation design, such as the variables of interest, population and sample, the procedure for evaluation of the variables, and of course report the findings. I believe the research will be valuable for the church and impactful upon the emphasis of how to develop spiritually mature, transformational, ethical leaders. My prayer is this will not only impact the church but society as well.