**Appendix 4A: Faith-Learning Integration Worksheet**

Date: June 29, 2023

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Social Profession: Instructional Lead Teacher of Mathematics for an Elementary School in Prince Georges County Public Schools

Other Pertinent Information: Wife and mother of two adult children who attended Public Montessori School, Certified Upper Elementary Montessori teacher for 15 years, taught general education for eight years.

**STEP 1: OBSERVATIONS RAISING THE NEED FOR INQUIRY**

What is the subject/problem that prompts the need to integrate faith and learning and do Christian interdisciplinary research?

The subject that prompts the need to integrate faith and learning and do Christian interdisciplinary research examines the best teaching approach for children of color, low-income, and socioeconomically disadvantaged in public schools. This is a vast topic as it encompasses many aspects. There are several schools of thought regarding educating children, why it should be done, how it should be done, and who should do it. Parents' ideas run the gambit from homeschooling to private schools, Christian or faith-based schools, and public schools. In the United States, educating children is primarily done through the public school system. However, the public school system has been in trouble for quite a while. “No issue in school reform has proven more contentious than the nationwide push to improve persistently struggling schools in low-income communities (Klein & White, 2016, p. 1).” Over the years, there have been discussions around school reform, which has left in its wake two laws, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was a federal law established in the early 2000s aimed at improving public primary and secondary schools, and thus student performance, via increased accountability for schools, school districts, and states. It was replaced by the more recent Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which instead of a universal accountability system for all states like NCLB; ESSA gave states the flexibility to develop accountability systems that best measure student success in their respective states. Teachers are trying to navigate. “Amidst the search for local solutions and less caustic debates, however, an important question persists: What should be done when schools try to improve year after year but do not (Klein & White, 2016, p. 1)?” At least admitting a problem is the beginning of finding a solution.

a. Why is the topic of interest to you, given your profession or personal history?

This topic interests me because I come from a low-income neighborhood. A single mom of five raised me, albeit divorced. My mom was a huge advocate for education, and she ensured that all of her children would have high school diplomas and satisfactory grades to go on to college if that was our desire. Three of us attempted college; my brother never finished, my sister finished later in her life, and I completed college and received two master's degrees. I had the support of my mom, my siblings, and I started working at age 14. In addition, I was fortunate to be accepted into Georgetown University’s Upward Bound program, which placed me on a college track in high school.

Later, I became a mother with the question, “How will I educate my children?” It also interests me because I have been an educator for over 20 years. Over these years, I have witnessed education’s many changes. Today, education faces many concerns, from bullying, cyberbullying, social media influence, literature and curriculum additions and removal, pandemics, and social justice concerns, to gender and sexual identity concerns. There are times when these current issues supersede the universal education of learning to read, write, and do mathematics. Parents, Guardians, and K-12 teachers are not the only ones concerned about the education of today’s youth.

Colleges, universities, and employers care about a person’s academic achievement. They are trying to determine whether the students are competent enough to continue being educated or immediately employed. Comprehensive tests, designed to determine if students can think critically about things and problem-solve, are examined. When considering all of the concerns mentioned above, it leaves little time for teachers like me to teach. However, the idea of learning and imparting knowledge has always intrigued me. As a child, I enjoyed learning and gaining knowledge. In addition, I also enjoyed sharing all that I knew with others—many years transpired in my life before I realized that I was destined to become a teacher.

b. Why is there a need to research this subject/problem?

Researching the education problem for people of color, low-income, and socioeconomically disadvantaged children is necessary because I still believe that having a good education increases the likelihood of removing generational poverty from your family. In addition, it needs to be researched because research continues to show that the concerned demographic of students above continues to perform at alarmingly low rates, especially when viewed alongside white students of the same grade. They need the knowledge of Jesus Christ most of all, but a formal education helps all of us to understand our world and create a better world. If children cannot read, write, or problem-solve, which builds comprehension and wisdom, how will they be able to read their Bibles and apply the word of God? Ignorance prevents people from making practical changes needed in society. Ignorance also prevents a society from growing and evolving for the better. God says He made us in His image, and we know He created the universe. However, in Hosea 4:6, He tells us, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (*New King James Version*, 1982b).” Our history shows us that humankind has evolved and made unimaginable changes to the world God created because of its acquired knowledge. Why public education? Because it is the best chance for economically disadvantaged children to become educated.

c. What various disciplines or perspectives need to be brought to bear to adequately address this subject/problem?

The various disciplines that adequately address the problem of education or educating children are philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and history because education is a field of study closely related to all those disciplines. However, theorists that have contributed significantly to this field of study are sociology, psychology, and philosophy.

d. How might faith-integration and interdisciplinary research yield better answers than either exclusively religious or exclusively academic research might provide?)

Faith-integration and interdisciplinary research yield better answers than exclusively religious or exclusively academic research because it will allow God’s moral authority to enter. It will provide an opportunity to change how public education exists where morality and equity are severely suppressed. Education and religion are worthy topics. They are far more impactful when used to transform the area of your world where you have influence. Solomon wrote, “Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh (*New King James Version*, 1982a).” The Bible proves that Jesus learned about the world around Him by gathering knowledge of man. Luke 2:52 states, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (*New King James Version*, 1982c).” Therefore, education is essential to understand the Word of God and the world in which we live. Knowledge, however, should never be acquired apart from the knowledge of God. To Solomon’s point, there are more important things than simply amassing knowledge, like fearing God and obeying Him (verses 13-14) (*New King James Version*, 1982a).

**STEP 2: LITERATURE REVIEW- HERMENEUTICAL INQUIRY OF NATURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES/HISTORICAL TRADITIONS**

What are the different perspectives on the subject/problem from the relevant contemporary natural or social science disciplines as well as cultural trends and ideas?

There are numerous perspectives or schools of thought regarding teaching children, encompassing several natural and social science disciplines, especially in the 21st century—many disciplines overlap, including philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and history. However, when it comes to educating children, the focus becomes a pedagogical approach or methodology. Currently, two approaches have dominated the 21st century: constructivism and behaviorism. When educators approach learning through constructivism, the focus becomes twofold; cognitive and social learning. Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980) and Jerome Bruner (1915 – 2016) are the psychologists of this method. The following approach for teaching children is the behaviorism approach. The psychologists associated with behaviorism are John B. Watson (1878 – 1958) and B.F. Skinner (1904 – 1990).

A relevant example of the behaviorist approach in my school district begins with creating a positive culture. There are workshops and surveys surrounding the “school climate.” The climate of the school building is experienced upon entry. Not long ago, the district I work in began pushing “exemplary customer service.” When answering the phones or entering the school building, it is customary to hear, “It is a great day at Joe Smith School, and how may I help you?” For our students, many schools in our district have established a PBIS system for Positive Behavior Interventions and Support. “It is an evidenced-based three-tiered framework for supporting students’ behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. When implemented with fidelity, PBIS improves social-emotional competence, academic success, and school climate. It also promotes the improvement of teacher health and well-being. It is a way to create positive, predictable, equitable, and safe learning environments where everyone thrives (*Center on Pbis | What Is Pbis?* n.d.).” At our school, this program is used with ClassDojo. “ClassDojo is our teacher and parent communication system, which allows us to communicate with our parents throughout the day regarding their student through photos, videos, messages, etc. (ClassDojo, n.d.).”

PBIS is a relevant behavioral system that supports the psychology of behaviorism. Although the psychology behind behaviorism did not begin with John B. Watson, Dr. Watson is accredited as the Father of Behaviorism. He took on this theory in the early 1900s. He argued that when children are born, they have only three emotional responses, fear, rage, and love, and all other emotions develop (Dennen, 2020a, p. 7). He conducted a famous experiment called “The Little Albert experiment” with his graduate student Rosalie Rayner in which he subsequently had an affair and left his family (Dennen, 2020b, p. 7). The two of them tried to transfer a fear response to the sight of a white rat by striking a metal bar near an infant whenever the rat appeared. The rat was to become a “substitute stimulus” for a fear response that was substituted for the disturbing sound of the metal bar (Dennen, 2020b, p. 7). Watson believed that as people gained more experience with the world, their emotions became finely differentiated among types of objects and situations (Dennen, 2020b, p. 8). He also believed that once people grew older and gained more experience with the world, their emotions became more finely differentiated. For example, their response to a particular object might call out love in one situation and rage or fear in another. He also performed reconditioning experiments where he conditioned a child to be afraid of rabbits and then removed that fear by gradually introducing rabbits back into their life in a non-threatening way. He was believed to be attempting to retrain the child’s viscera to function generally in the presence of a once-threatening object (Dennen, 2020b, p. 8). Conditioning is used with rewards and punishments given to children by parents and teachers based on different objects or situations. Dr. Watson believed that your outward behavior is shaped by society, but your inner behavior is not shaped by society similarly. B. F. Skinner, another psychologist, builds on his research and explores these problems in greater depth (Dennen, 2020b, p. 8).

Although PBIS functions off a similar form of behaviorism, it is not the only educational perspective in operation today. Problem-based learning (PBL) is another teaching method or model used in education to improve learning and student outcomes. However, it is usually associated with mathematics. In mathematics, when teachers implement a problem-based learning model, the students learn to solve problems scientifically, structurally, or systematically (Malmia et al., 2019, p. 1). When using PBL as an educational method, students “use actual and factual problems in daily life, students use cooperative learning groups to conduct group discussions, as well as learn to study issues, seek the relevant information, compile the information obtained, review the existing solutions alternatives, propose alternative solutions and compose the completed action (Malmia et al., 2019, p. 1).” This form of learning was initially associated with John Dewey. Mathematically inclined students do well with this educational method because the principles applied in mathematics are used for problem-solving (Malmia et al., 2019, p. 1).

What is education? This is not a question that is typically asked. It may be assumed rhetorical because people should know what education is. However, according to Jackson, P. (2011), this question was asked by John Dewey one day in 1938 ( p. 1). He addressed a room of professional educators and asked them to find out just what education is (Jackson, 2011, p. 1). Jackson (2011), over the next sixty years, set out to answer Dewey’s question and defined education as “transmitting truth and knowledge to successive generations to make us better people (Jackson, 2011, p. 1).”

Jeff Frank, a philosopher of education and follower of John Dewey, believes that Dewey’s work can improve how we educate and think about education in our time (Frank, 2019, p. back cover). He argues that we need to bring our attention back to the educational present, and taking control of our educational present is the only way to get our desired future into being (Frank, 2019, p. 12). He further argues that Dewey is controversial and challenging to understand at times. Still, his thinking “on the present to help teachers think about their classroom in new ways and creatively and critically engage on the educational present to reconstruct the ways they teach and think about teaching (Frank, 2019, p. 16).” Dewey, Jackson, and Frank are educators who reflect on their craft. They remind me of the importance of being reflective and being present. Frank (2019) states, “These stances are not mutually exclusive, but it is tough to have it both ways, despite Dewey’s assertion that “as the present merges insensibly into the future, the future is taken care of.” We create democracy by living democratically in the present; we create meaningful learning experiences by giving students meaningful work in the present; we prepare a student for the intellectual work demanded in college by having students do intellectually demanding work in the present (Frank, 2019, p. 20).” Frank wants to apply “Dewey’s” argument in our present state of education. Dewey thought progressively even then, he was “student-centered.” In addition, he was a proponent of collaborative or cooperative learning, incorporating the arts, politics, philosophy, and nature to teach children. The word “experience,” as John Dewey used it, refers to the interaction or transaction of an individual or group with their environment. “It means those interactions that involve us personally, socially, politically, morally, aesthetically, and educationally. Specifically, it refers to educational interactions (Gutek, 1995, p. 1).

1. How has the subject/problem developed relevant contemporary natural or social science disciplines?

Beginning with the educational perspective of the science or discipline of sociology, one has to address it from a macro and micro point of view. The macro sociology perspective incorporates functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. In examining the above definitions, one can observe the progression of society within these heavy constructs that have led us to use a worldly theoretical framework, which keeps us on a trajectory of moving away from God. At the macro level, we examine each perspective beginning with structural functionalism and the theory of Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917). A French sociologist from the 19th century was one of the founding fathers of sociology (Blackledge & Hunt, 2019, p. 7). His thinking about education was based on three aims: (1) to establish sociology as a discipline of academic standing; (2) to apply the methods of natural science, as he understood them, to the study of society; (3) to discover how an orderly society was maintained, particularly in the complex modern world (Blackledge & Hunt, 2019, p. 7). Durkheim separates man and society and argues that society’s needs supersede man, the individual. For example, if society is to maintain order, there must be a form of education. Education is needed to teach a man to be self-disciplined, and corporal punishment must be abolished. He also argued that there is a qualitative difference between man and an individual and that no study of an individual will give you an understanding of society. Finally, according to Durkheim, society is a reality in its right (or sui generis), an existence independent of and external to individuals; it has its laws of evolution; it changes people, but it is not changed by them (Blackledge & Hunt, 2019, p. 8). He compares it to nature, or we can substitute God. In fell sweep, his stance on education knocks out any version of society based on Christianity and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In looking at conflict theory, another macro-sociological structure of society differs from structural functionalism in every way. It lends its attention to the overarching workings of the social structure’s effect on societal members as they deal with tension and struggle characterized by the various classes of society (Chiareli, 2019, p. 34). This theory is centered in the Marxist tradition as it relates to “the haves and the have-nots.” Marxism identifies various class struggles brought on by the scarcity and unequal distribution of socially valued resources such as power, wealth, prestige, and influence. It identifies the oppression and exploitation of subordinate social groups (Marx, 1965; Marx & Engels, 1955; Tucker, 1978) (Chiareli, 2019, p. 39). When examining “conflict theory” from the educational perspective, we can discuss the differences in educational opportunities. We can examine the racial injustices before the landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, in the early 50s, that mandated the segregation of public schools as unconstitutional and in violation of the 14th Amendment. Read (1975) stated, “All public schools were segregated; public accommodations were segregated; only a minute percentage of registered voters were black; and black public office holders were virtually non-existent. Black families had less than one-half the median incomes of white families, and illiteracy rates were appallingly high (Read, 1975, p. 14).”

Finally, we examine society from a micro-sociological perspective of symbolic interactionism. It differs from both of the above perspectives in that it views society from an entirely different analytical angle: micro-sociologically (Henslin, 2014) (Chiareli, 2019, p. 38). We owe the origin of this theory developed in America to George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman, and others (Chiareli, 2019, p. 38). Symbolic interactionism is a societal perspective people give to a society based on how individuals respond to the world around them. As social beings, our interactions give meaning to the things we ascribe. For example, low standardized test scores or poor academic performance often seen in students of color, low-income, or socioeconomically challenged are labeled as low achievers. In other words, we behave, react, and respond to things based on the meanings we give them. Another way of expressing it is that the meanings arise from the social interaction or lack thereof with the individuals. “Herbert Blumer, following Goffman’s work, coined the term “symbolic interactionism,” basing his perspective on the following vital assertions:

1) As social beings, humans ascribe meaning to social things in their lives (i.e., material objects, actions, other people, relationships, symbols) and interact with such things in response to the symbolic meanings they give to them;

2) Social meaning ascribed to anything is a product of the social interaction that one has with others and with society as a whole;

3) Social meanings are consistently handled and modified through an interpretative process used by the person as he or she encounters them; and

4) People interact with each other by interpreting and defining their actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actual actions themselves (Blumer, 1969) (Chiareli, 2019, p. 38).”

**STEP 3: FAITH-LEARNING INTEGRATION INQUIRY WITH CHRISTIAN AND SCIENTIFIC SOURCES**

How does Scripture speak to this issue? Realize that the Bible will not directly address many issues that result from modernity or technological advances. However, Scripture may provide a parallel or precedent with a similar issue or subject, or the topic may be addressed through extrapolation.

Scripture does not directly speak to educating your children from an academic stance. However, parents are to teach their children moral and biblical principles in which to live with others and govern their lives. This command is supported by the scripture in Proverbs 22:6, which states, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (*New King James Version*, 1982d).” Before the fall of humanity, there would not have been a need for children to be formally educated. Bunnell et al. (2018) state that the Judeo-Christian religions are supportive of parental involvement in religious education (PIRE) as well as general education (Bunnell et al., 2018, p. 1). “Policymakers are convinced that PI is an important part of children’s education (Every Student Succeeds Act, section 1116 Parent and Family Engagement, 2015). Its importance has led researchers to develop theoretical constructs and typologies of PI (Epstein, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) (Bunnell et al., 2018, p. 1).”

1. Are there any developments in Christian thought and history about the issue since biblical times?

An argument is also given for adult Christians to teach children how to become disciples, but this is not connected to formal academic education. Christian discipleship is a major theme throughout the Bible in the Old and New Testaments (Cox & Peck, 2018, p. 1). Biblically speaking, we are to equip others and ourselves for citizenship both on earth and in heaven (Matt.13:11; Eph.2:19; 1 Pet. 2:9 (Cox & Peck, 2018, p. 2). Cox and Peck (2018) stated, “educational foundation is more about forming the person than about teaching for only temporal competence (Cox & Peck, 2018, p. 2).” Additionally, Cox and Peck (2018) give three important reasons (cf. Matt. 18:3, 19:14) why the teaching of discipleship is crucial for children, and they are:

(1) Bible text and the educational receptivity of humans reveal that learners are most impressionable and teachable in the early years of life (cf. Lk. 1:41-44; Moll, 2014; Tough, 2012; Verny, 1981; 2 Tim. 3:15). (2) From a biblical and Jewish historical perspective, children were prepared beforehand for the teen years’ onset of adulthood (cf. Barclay, 1959; Lk. 2:42-44; Isa. 7:15). (3) The likelihood of becoming a Christian is highest during the school-age years, diminishing significantly after that (Barna, 2017; Culbertson, 2015) (Cox & Peck, 2018, p. 3).

e. Which contemporary natural or social sciences address this subject/problem?

Theology is one of the social sciences that can support educating our children. However, the separation of church and state was formalized in the early 1900s. It is the social science that studies God and His nature. Theology recognizes that because of the fall of humanity, nothing is like what God intended it to be. It allows us to focus on religious beliefs in detail by using the scriptures, the history, and the thought patterns of other religious believers. It supports why we should do things not based on philosophical, psychological, anthropological, or sociological norms. Theology provides truth to all of the societal ills that plague us today. It even addresses the concerns for the need to allow an educational approach proven to support the disenfranchised in reaching their fullest potential. How does theology do it by bringing to the surface the need for a program that will more than adequately educate our children and make them good citizens? Theology develops our character with Godly truth. It acts as a moral compass but has been removed from public schools.

Dempster (2020) addresses character or moral education in his article, and he defines character education as “the practice of teaching sound moral principles, which culminate in socially acceptable behavior ( p. 1).” Although he is referencing Jamaica, it is clear that there is a need for character education in the curriculum of schools. Dempster argues that the school system may be the most effective way to halt moral decline (Dempster, 2020, p. 2). The Montessori Method uses practical life activities to support children in building confidence and developing respect for themselves and others around them (www.michaelolaf.net, 2015). Supporting this program for children early in life lays the groundwork for character development, and teachers will not view it as another area they are responsible for.

**Appendix 4B: Interdisciplinary Research Worksheet**

Date: June 29, 2023

Name of Scholar-Practitioner: Susan Holmes

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Other Pertinent Information: Wife and mother of two adult children who attended Public Montessori School, Certified Upper Elementary Montessori teacher for 15 years, taught general education for eight years.

**STEP 4: SYNTHESIZED INTERDISCIPLINARY FORMULATION (WITH SOCIAL RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS)**

How would you synthesize what you have learned into a statement describing the problem you want to address? One or two sentences should adequately describe the problem you would use interdisciplinary social science research to address (i.e. you would need to collect and analyze real-world data to test how you address the problem). What is the subject/problem that prompts the need to do Christian interdisciplinary research?

**CONVERTING TO A FORMAL SOCIAL RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS:**

How would you state and reframe your research problem as a testable social research hypothesis?

**My Research Problem**: It is not known whether a meta-learning theory, the “Montessori Method,” will improve the academic achievement levels of socioeconomically disenfranchised students who are typically children of color.

**My Research Hypothesis**: The academic outcomes of public elementary school programs implementing the Montessori Method will be higher than those implementing a more traditional approach to early childhood education.

**Significance**: What difference would the research make to change the world?

If education is a tangible option for socioeconomically challenged students to succeed, educators must advocate for these students. They must educate and inform their parents of this proven method to educate their children, especially educators of color. Academic success leads to monetary gain and an opportunity for a better life. Montessori provides access to a better, more holistic way of learning and gives all students positive attitudes towards school, independence, and self-esteem. It provides educators with a sense of accomplishment and the knowledge and joy that comes from affecting their students' lives beyond the classroom. This is why many teachers became educators, and it aligns with what Dr. Maria Montessori set out to do over 100 years ago; she stated, “It is not true,” says Dr. Montessori, “that I invented what is called the Montessori Method. I have studied the child, I have taken what the child has given me and expressed it, and that is what is called the Montessori Method (*Who Was Maria Montessori?* n.d.).”

**STEP 5: CRITICAL (APOLOGETIC) AND CONTEXTUAL COMMUNICATION**

What critical reasons (apologetic) can you give for why your interdisciplinary Christian perspective should be accepted?

We are God’s image bearers. The Latin term for in the Image of God is *Imago Dei*. This is what separates us from all of His other creations. After He made us, He told us to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it …(*Genesis 1:28 NKJV - Then God Blessed Them, and God Said to - Bible Gateway*, 1982)” This is what is called the cultural mandate. The cultural mandate embraces all progress in knowledge as expressions of cultivating the garden of this world and having dominion over it as God’s stewards (Ward, 2014, p. 35). If we examine the ontological concepts of education, we uncover the Montessori system. A system built upon Christian theological anthropology uncovers that the primary source of failure in our education is humanity’s original sin and sins, preventing us from fulfilling the Imago Dei or the reciprocating self (Jeong, 2020, p. 1).

1. How will you answer the contrary perspectives to your view?

The U.S. believes in education. As early as the 1800s, this country decided that educating our children was essential to our continued success on this continent. A country that was established on biblical principles. Our founding fathers, like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, dedicated much of their lives to educating children. Education is required to fulfill the cultural mandate, but we do it incorrectly. We have experienced the results of two inferior methods, “the school as factory” and “the Lockean child (Jeong, 2020, p. 2).” “The former depicts educational practices focusing on the efficiency of educational administration and prioritizing adult convenience either of teachers or administrators over the need of children while the latter exposes the biased but long-espoused understanding of children or students as being “empty vessel or blank slate” ((Jeong, 2020, p. 9)) in the outlook of behaviorism (Jeong, 2020, p. 2).” Why not try the anthropological method that focuses on the “who-to-learn” and the teleology or “why-to-learn?” “A closer look (at the Montessori system) reveals an approach to professional formation that forges a dynamic link between the hows and the whys as well as the means and end of education (Jeong, 2020, p. 11).” One of her key mantras she is known for with her method is “follow the child.” However, I discovered that she was just as emphatic about “follow the teacher.” “For Montessori, the prepared adult was a central means of revolutionizing education. The teacher is meant to embody a new vision of education as an aid to life. To achieve this goal, Montessori teacher preparation aims directly toward transforming the adult’s attitudes toward learning and human relationships (p. 525) (Jeong, 2020, p. 12).”

b. Are there any objections or criticisms from variant views that should be anticipated and preempted?

Many do not believe in the Montessori Method despite its overarching success for children all over the world for more than 100 years. The countless studies prove that her method for improving the academic success rate for students of color is high. The quality of Montessori is always in question in every study because all or very little of her system can be implemented. “Quality entails teachers adequately trained with the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) certifications, which Montessori founded to carry on her work, is the definition of taught with fidelity (Lillard, 2018, p. 4).”Jeong (2020) states, “Montessori’s genius is found when she substitutes a highly spiritual or esoteric concept with a concrete and widely acceptable one (p. 13).” She understood the importance of her spiritual connection as well. When we are tuned to the One that created us, He will guide us in helping children grow beyond their familial and societal hindrances or shortcomings (Smith, 2013, pp. 46–48) (Jeong, 2020, p. 13).

**STEP 6: ETHICAL & SOCIAL ORTHOPRAXIS (i.e. LEADERSHIP ACTIONS)**

What practical implications does your interdisciplinary Christian perspective have for your orthopraxis or leadership for world change?

It helps me as an educator to remember that I am a model for my students and other educators. I have to lead by example. Like Maria Montessori, who was not perfect, neither am I perfect, but I know I am an essential factor in that classroom. It is not just the teaching method but also the teaching attitude enabling meta-learning in the real-life classroom. In short, Montessori’s anthropology of the child or who-to-learn is seamlessly built up to foster Imago Dei or why-to-learn in the child through the teacher who can facilitate the Montessorian how-to-learn through the teacher’s being. Montessori believed that preparing the teacher is being or “the spirit of the teacher” is to inculcate the true love of Jesus revealed through sacrificial love as well as the keen scientific attitude toward fostering the child’s development (Montessori, 1912, p. 13) (Jeong, 2020, p. 11).

**STEP 7: REFLECTIVE EVALUATION**

a. How well did the research satisfy the original need for an inquiry? Were there aspects of the problem left unanswered in the research design?

The research did an invaluable job regarding the need for an inquiry. I studied Montessori and taught it for 15 years and never realized how formidable she was and had to be to embark upon this method during the early 1900s. I was also able to see once more God’s hands on someone who was “born for such a time as this.” This topic explored a new understanding of Creation. It also supported my learning of the importance of interdisciplinary faith-learning integration. It is not a concept that can be readily grasped. As a change agent, you have to wrestle with this concept and allow yourself to be stretched. It takes time. Ward (2014) revealed to us through Alvin Schmidt (2004) many of the areas of progress and reform in Western civilization that came about as a result of faith-inspired efforts ( p. 35). I just never realized until now that Maria Montessori was one such individual.

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