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Submission Date: July 27, 2023

**120 Day - Course Learning Journal**

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working on each course. It integrates 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, incorporating 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 from 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 and the campus residency component for that course. 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– and 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 in your professional field. What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional area because of your study?

4. **Future Expectations** - Continue the journal by addressing your questions and concerns about 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.

**Introduction** – Describe the expectations of the graduate program and the campus residency component for that course. 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.

This course was surprisingly very challenging for me. Initially, I looked forward to the assignments described during the class's residency portion. I enjoyed the residency very much. Tamar, Dr. Ward, and I had an excellent discourse on her subject, integrating faith and learning for professional Christian scholarship. Dr. Ward has a wealth of wisdom and is excellent at helping you see how God operates when He works with or through the people of God. During the residency portion, Dr. Ward explains the Essential Elements of the course and how it is tied to a person’s worldview. We discussed at length the importance of understanding the various worldviews because many of the resources we will come across related to our area of interest will be written from the perspective of the author's worldview. Our decision to incorporate their school of thought may result in different meanings if the research authors do not share your worldview. The biggest challenge for this course is to learn how best to integrate your faith into your area of interest in such a way that impacts the world we live in. Dr. Ward speaks to how the “seven-step Christian interdisciplinary learning process provides logic for the OGS program to integrate the contribution made by each course (Ward, 2014, p. 34).”

This course is taken during Core 3 after you take classes associated with Christianity's impact on the world we live. It is also given when taking the dissertation foundations course because you learn about the various designs you can use to construct your research. Dr. Ward uses the “Tree of Learning” metaphor for the OGS program. He explains how each tree element represents a different part of what gives life to the program. During this course, you are beginning to see how God plans to use what He has been equipping you for a while. You are learning how various social issues and trends connect to multiple disciplines and how you can integrate your faith to support your Christian worldview by studying those disciplines.

**Personal Growth** - Describe your growth–how the course stretched or challenged you– and your progress in mastery of course content and skills during the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills you gained.

I have grown tremendously during this course and this term. It has not always been pleasant, but I have seen how God has been elevating me in my profession, how it connects to my field of study, and how it can influence the world. I kept trying to wait for a topic outside of the education field. However, in Dr. Ward’s analogy of the “Tree of Learning,” he described the leaves as our method, our Eric Liddell moment, from the movie “*Chariots of Fire*.” We were made for a purpose, and we must pay attention to what God has placed in us and where He has placed us. In that example, I know that for me, it is education and supporting teachers who want to develop academically sound students that will be successful in life. I also understand that if I want to influence this area with my research, then I need to be able to point to the conflict between my worldview, which is Christianity, God’s intentions for educating our children, and the Western world we live in. Western culture wants to rid itself of the morality of Christ. However, our job as world changers is to present God’s truth right next to the culture so there is no argument regarding what should and should not be. I remain challenged by this course because I need help to connect my area of interest and Christian interdisciplinary research. I understand the seven steps, but the last four take time to produce. It needs to be broken apart and then put together. It is a time-consuming process. In the first half of the process, you indicate the need for the inquiry and then break your interest down to its origin. Next, you integrate your faith, using the Christian worldview framework (Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation) with your learning (Ward, 2014, p. 39). This contextualizes the steps. There is much to learn during this process, and you begin to see how the fall of humanity negatively influenced what God meant for good.

Because my area is education, it is complex as education is a field of study that crosses at least three disciplines: theology, philosophy, and history. “When these disciplines are studied as subjects, they reflect various traditions such as analytic philosophy, Marxist historiography, and postmodern theology (Ward, 2014, p. 39).” Dr. Ward refers to this as “transcendental modes of thinking.” Transcendental modes of thinking lead to people making their assumptions about disciplines. They are typically influenced by their own “worldview,” which becomes unacknowledged historical philosophical or theological assertions (Ward, 2014, p. 39).

**Reflective Entry** - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or adaptation and relevant application) of new learning in your professional field. What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional area because of your study?

My professional field is education. I researched this field of study beginning in the 19th century and was able to determine why there is such a disparity in education in our country today. I know about slavery, racism, and discrimination, but understanding more deeply the ideologies that were present during that time is what still prevails today. That century saw the emergence of various ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and Marxism, each with its own political and educational agendas. Our current system and approaches to education were influenced by the works of Froebel and Montessori, who were part of the nineteenth-century social environment (Gutek, 1995, p. 254). I learned of the origin of kindergarten, founded by German Educator Friedrich Froebel. His life was tragic early on because his mom died giving him birth, and his dad, a Lutheran preacher, ignored him and mistreated him for most of his life. He was shy and spent most of his time in the fields and the garden. He viewed children’s development in the same way that flowers grew and bloomed. He wants children to be nurtured, like flowers in a child’s garden or kindergarten (Gutek, 1995, p. 282). Then, later in his life, he went to school for architecture and became enamored with blocks, triangles, and other shapes. His idea of kindergarten is still in place today, over a hundred years ago. Then, there is Maria Montessori, who also learns and discovers around the same period as Frobel. Still, she had a polar opposite upbringing, which made her fight for women’s and children's rights. Suffice it to say; I found a great deal of this fascinating and very informative. I have wondered why the influence of Froebel is known throughout our educational system, and Maria Montessori is not. Is it because she was a woman? Had the Montessori Method been contributed by a man, then would our children today still be impacted by her method? I also thought she was not a broken individual; she was an only child with two doting parents and grew up middle class. Therefore, her desire to help children who were tossed away and deemed broken comes from a place of compassion. Her philosophy for educating children came from her observations.

**Future Expectations** - Continue the journal by addressing your questions and concerns about the graduate program expectations.

I am exhausted. I have stretched myself this term, and I have learned so much. I still feel like I need to process everything, but there is no time to do it. I am stuck in the middle of my 100-day assignment because I am tired and have so much left to complete. I realized that my attempt at a literature review for my Research Design and Methodology 1 course needs to integrate my faith. It is the hermeneutics portion of my research, but I am using it to flush out the faith portion in this course. I have gotten as far as acknowledging that Maria Montessori was Catholic, and I have found some research on Christian Montessori schools, but they are private. My plan for my research is to focus more on public Montessori. I am also still learning about the various instruments that will support me in measuring my hypothesis. As I get closer to my goal, I am not taking steps backward, but adding steps that still push me away from the goal. I also understand that OGS prefers dissertations that use a quantitative method, which I support because I am not interested in using qualitative. How can I be successful with my research thus far?

**Conclusion** – Synthesize the three body sections above, evaluating the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional, religious, and educational goals.

This course is fantastic and challenging, as I stated earlier. I am still working on my 100-day assignment, but I stopped to complete my journal. One of Dr. Ward’s appendices of the Knowledge Bridge Self-Assessment discusses where you are in your competency level, and I am feeling like a neophyte. The goal for OGS students is to be proficient in interdisciplinary studies. This means being able to integrate knowledge from two or more disciplines to a) produce explanations of a phenomenon, b) solve problems, c) create a product or d) raise a new question in ways unlikely through single disciplinary means (*Course Resources - Google Drive - Empirical Research in the Social Sciences: Methods for the Systematic Study of Human Behavior*, 2013, p. 4). I have to be honest; it is not looking too good for me right now. This course has more than met my professional, religious, and educational goals. It must be broken apart because absorbing and producing all seven steps is challenging and even more so when you have additional courses.

WORKS CITED

*Course Resources—Google Drive—Empirical research in the social sciences: Methods for the systematic study of human behavior*. (2013). https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QJ7bERp6bqcjY\_64YA8099Agqb8mQ04x

Gutek, G. L. (1995). *A history of the Western educational experience: Third edition*. Waveland Press.

Ward, D. C. (2014). Interdisciplinary Faith—Learning Integration for Social Change. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *26*(1/2), 29–56.