**Course Learning Journal**

Nicole Butler

Omega Graduate School

Dr. Curtis McClane

Submission Date: 09/28/2023

Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course. The Learning Journal 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, integrating new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to communicate with your professor insights gained as a result of the course. The course learning journal should be 3-5 pages in length and should include the following sections:

1. Introduction –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 field as a result of your study?

4. Conclusion – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional, religious, and educational goals.

**Course Learning Journal**

LDR-807: Leader Development: Transforming Self-Concept intends to introduce Omega Graduate School's (OGS) approach to interdisciplinary and integrated learning. As a multidisciplinary field, the study of leadership relies on the foundational ~~thinking of~~ disciplines such as psychology and sociology to understand human behavior, the humanities to understand the impact~~s~~ of cultural influences, and management to understand basic administration best practices and strategies. The seminal texts selected for this course reflected these standard associated disciplines and even went beyond them to include the all-important yet often overlooked disciplines of theology and spirituality. Combining all these disciplines brings an integrated, holistic, and contextualized meaning to one's leadership development journey and contributes to a sense of self-concept.

A leader's self-concept is directly correlated with the quality of their leadership. As evolving Christian leaders, this course was designed to emphasize the importance of understanding and critically evaluating how our self-concept has been constructed and inspire transformation. When critically evaluating our self-concept, we must begin by acknowledging and accepting the truth of Genesis 1:27 that we are created in God's image as the foundation of our identity (New International Version, n.d). This foundation is essential for devoted followers of Christ to understand our significance and that God has given our lives purpose, including and beyond anything that has shaped our self-concept before we accepted His gracious invitation. To fulfill our purpose as social change leaders, the course's essential elements for transformational leadership provide a clear framework for empowering people and achieving positive change. The practical implementation of this framework should result in building relationships that bolster other's self-concept and potentiality.

Within the Doctor of Social Leadership (DSL) program context, LDR-807: Leader Development: Transforming Self-Concept is well placed at the beginning of the program because leading positive, constructive change starts with the self. Students entering the DSL program come from all walks of life, including ethnic, cultural, professional, and educational backgrounds with varying levels of spiritual maturity, so beginning by encouraging us to "put off the old self with its practices, and … put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" is wise (English Standard Version, n.d., Colossians 3:9-10). Additionally, since OGS's educational philosophy drastically differs from the traditional education system, this course allows students to gracefully transition from standard educational norms to a new, adult-centered, self-integrated, faith-based, and intellectually challenging learning experience.

Throughout this semester, I have been experiencing this graceful shift. In retrospect, I was skeptical and bewildered by OGS's learning structure because it differs from my previous educational experiences. However, I am very grateful for the individualized support I received to clarify my understanding of the syllabus, assignments, and educational norms. The assignment that challenged me most was the Developmental Reading assignment. This assignment stretched my research skills because it required a different level of critical thinking and organization that had yet to be required in other educational settings. The support provided in the workshop and student support guides brought much-needed clarity to help complete the assignment. Additionally, I appreciated the opportunity to personalize the assignment and have the autonomy to select my scholarly content while simultaneously having a clear focus and structure centered around the course's essential elements. Finally, it is comforting to know that the structure for the assignments will be the same for each course in the program, so I am confident that I will progress to a higher level of research mastery.

In reflection on applying the course learnings to my professional field, I had yet to consider that I am in the position to be a transformative leader in my workplace. Although I am not a supervisor, my role as an Employee Relations Specialist at the University of Baltimore gives me influence in the campus community. The main functions of my role are to support the university by enforcing policies fairly and consistently to ensure that we remain in compliance and helping to prevent and resolve disputes between management and employees to promote positive relationships. To promote positive relationships in the campus community, building rapport through community building, serving jointly, and partnering have been vital components of being a trusted resource on campus. Additionally, I have the opportunity to develop employee development training with the new insights I have learned from attending non-violent communication training that can catalyze change in relationship building amongst the community. However, my learnings have brought up some concerns because it has made it easier to identify where executive campus leaders are lacking in developing the potential of others, which has led to some of the university's greatest challenges. It is very satisfying to know that I do not have to be in a formal leadership role or wait until graduation to implement the elements of a transformational leader.

Taking LDR-807: Leader Development: Transforming Self-Concept has been a very positive experience. My primary goal for this semester was to acclimate to OGS's course structure and learning experience, which I have achieved. The instructor and other OGS staff did a marvelous job at explaining assignments, providing helpful resources, and supporting my transition into the program. Now that I feel settled, I look forward to maximizing my self-directed learning experience in future semesters by being more prepared to take advantage of the provided resources, including the senior tutor, and better prepared for assignment check-in meetings with faculty. As I close out this semester, I am very excited that I decided to pursue the DSL program at OGS.

WORKS CITED

*English Standard Version Bible.* (n.d.) Bible Gateway. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?000000search=Colossians+3%3A9-10&version=ESV

*New International Version Bible*. (n.d.). Bible Gateway. https://www.biblegateway.com/ 000000passage/?search=Genesis%201:26-27&version=NIV