Hermeneutics and Communications

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Professor

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**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.*

1. **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?
2. **Conclusion** – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional, religious, and educational goals.

**Introduction**

 Hermeneutics and Communications course is a perfect study into the Doctor of Social Leadership program of Omega Graduate School. The learning I have obtained is timely into this program and appropriate for what I deal with in the workplace now, and for my future study and research as a scholar practioner. Dealing with families in middle school setting today is a challenge. There are many forces against young families today and I am thankful to be learning the communication tools necessary to come alongside them in partnership for their children’s success in education. Regardless of how things look to be, Jesus Christ has answers for this generation and I am joyful to be His ambassador for such a time as this.

**Personal Growth**

This course has stretched and challenged me as I prepare for the future action project of the DSL degree. I have immediately applied content and skills that I gained throughout this course. Of note, the essential elements in OGS courses are the main proponents of study and I review them often through my research and use them in my vocation daily working with parents, teachers, students, and staff.

 Interpretation, principles and approaches to others and their words is very important. Listening is key to understanding others. Responding is more important than just a reply to them. I enjoy getting to know others through their communication to me. Whether it is a joyful time of reflection or something in which they are hurt and struggling.

 I enjoy learning and being stretched to know more them through Christian worldview and critical thinking skills. As we experience life together at this present time, there are more social anxieties than ever before, and many people are disillusioned about spiritual things. It was interesting to study words, and how they have changed over the centuries, from the earliest interpretations of the Bible to now. How we discern scripture according to culture of the time in which it was written tells the truth. We are all influenced by our own understanding of the world. Through personal beliefs, actions are produced. But knowing our experiences change, we grow. Having ongoing dialogues and keeping communications open to learning from each other is possible. We all have beliefs, backgrounds and other experiences that may not be as others. Will we take the time necessary to understand each other?

 The fusion of horizons was an essential learning for me. Comprehending others’ worldview from their pasts, culturally and socially, makes for better understanding and the conversations continue. They will not care what I know, unless I show them how much I care. Time is necessary to give others. I imagine Jesus doing this while He walked on earth. He had a mission to live in the present. Will we slow down and live?

 Lastly, hermeneutics and communications should proceed hand in hand with each other in conversations. To fully understand, we must study culture, not only in this generation, but in others before us. What was going on historically, socially in their day? What experiences were they interpreting that caused them to make choices that were in front of them? I will ponder these questions as I continue my work.

**Reflective Entry**

 There have been and continue to be many opportunities in which to use what I have learned in Hermeneutics and Communications class. One event particularly stands out to me that took place just last week when I received an email from a parent who was extremely frustrated over all the changes our school has made since the end of last year.

 Let me explain to you. Our school of 600 Kindergarten through eighth grade students, was asked to vacate our rented property from a church where the school had been located for 40 years. There was much turmoil within the school and church and it was decided that this was going to happen. I am on the Executive/Administration team for only 6 years and could not imagine the trauma for families who have been in the school since its inception. No one knew the outcome, but we dug into what was in front of us. We began the move at the end of May to three different locations: Preschool (100 students), K-6th grade (350 students), and 7th-8th grade (100 students). This was the only way in which we could go, as we had 3 other churches volunteer their spaces to us, to continue the school after we decided that the school was not the building, but the people.

 Some families left, as expected, but most stayed. This parent came to talk with me about all the changes as she wanted to see how the new location where her daughter was currently, was going to work out. After meeting with the new math teacher and not getting good communication from her, she was at the breaking point with the campus location. She was not happy as she compared the other campuses to 7th-8th campus, where I am the principal. She did most of her talking through social media. After her unpleasant email to me, I decided to call her and ask if she would come in to talk with me. She said yes, and I was not looking forward to our meeting.

 As I was praying and considering our meeting, I heard the Lord Jesus, in my spirit, tell me to listen and let her do most of the talking. It was going to be a time of using principles of hermeneutics and communications for me. When she came in her body language was one of discomfort and nervousness as she carried a sheet of paper of her complaints with her. I thanked her for coming and said I just wanted to listen to her today and anything she wanted to say. She talked for well over 20 minutes straight about how the transition was hard for families (she said she was talking for other families, too) to be apart from the other grades where their kids had grown up. As I kept looking at her with understanding nods ever so often, she began to relax more. After she said that’s all I want to tell you, I thanked her. I meant it, too.

 What I thought would be a discouraging time, came to be a beginning friendship. She wanted someone to listen to her about her experiences thus far in a hard change. I let her know how much I appreciated her thoughts and asked her a few questions to clarify what I heard her say. Simple questions, that I interpreted from her experiences asked in an affirming way that her thoughts and feelings were important to me. I understood many of her feelings and I felt frustration about the change in that same way. And as an administrator of the system, I wanted to help her understand, but I believed the best way to do this was to get her thoughts. I asked her what suggestions she might have for us. I then wrote down her suggestions and she smiled back at me, and said she thanked me. This led to more openness on her part and more comfortableness through her smiles. Before she left that day, I asked her if we could keep the conversation on going and she said, yes. I look forward to more understanding of her worldview in the future, for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion**

The knowledge and practices that I have gained in this class are already useful in my communication with others, educationally, spiritually, and vocationally. The above speaks of how I can use this knowledge in my career at school. Listening to others is oftentimes time consuming and not pleasant, but I think of Jesus and His example to me.

 Listening while furthering my education process is good, as well. How much more will I critically think about the interpretation of words that I read and hear in the next courses toward my DSL, via analyzing literature, science, sociology, philosophy, through theology and much discussion with peers and instructors?

 Most importantly, spiritually, this course has challenged me to slow down and read the entire Bible through again, although this time using approaches of hermeneutics. And that will take much more time than ever before. This will be an important lifelong practice that I intend to pursue as a scholar practioner. “For me to live is Christ [He is my source of joy, my reason to live…]” (Philippians 1:21). “To know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely]…” (Philippians 3:10) through my knowledge of hermeneutics and communications.

WORKS CITED

*The Amplified Bible*. 1965. Zondervan Bible Publishers. MI