Faith-Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies

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| **Assignment #3 – Essay**  1. Write a 5-page paper based on the following:  a. From the Course Resources tab in DIAL for SR 805, download the (a)  Interdisciplinary Faith-Learning Research Worksheet, and (b) Tips for  answering the questions for each of the seven steps of the interdisciplinarity  learning process.  b. Review (a), and (b). Complete the worksheet including the top section,  providing submission date, your name, educational background, social  profession, and other pertinent information (e.g., I have worked/been involved  with/influenced by....)  c. Answer the questions for the seven steps of the OGS Interdisciplinary Faith-  Learning Research Worksheet.  d. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition for in-text citations and for Work  Cited. Include page numbers.  e. Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA  style, 7th edition.  2. Submit through DIAL to the professor.  **Faith-Learning Integration Worksheet**  **Date:** September 30, 2023  **Name of Scholar-Practitioner:** Sandra Anderson McGraw  **Educational Background:** Bachelor of Arts in History, Univ. of Southern Mississippi; Master’s in Education: Administration & Supervision, Bowie State University  **Social Profession:** Elementary School Administrator  **Other Pertinent Information:** Educators for Christ Ministry Life Group Leader at Bridgeway Community Church. Educators for Christ is a life group that I started at Bridgeway Community Church about over three years ago. I am seeking the Lord’s guidance as I continue to build this ministry.  **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?**  Most Christian educators working in public schools lack the skills necessary to teach in the light of the Kingdom and are unprepared for the challenges they face. Because most Christian educators are not trained on how to use their biblical influence, they are unaware of the impact that implementing biblical principles and reflecting God's character in their work may have on the Kingdom (Marker, B. K., 2020). The term Christian educators in the worksheet encompasses teachers, principals, professors, and administrators in all sectors of secular education, from birth through adulthood.  **a. Why is the topic of interest to you given your profession or personal history?**  I have been a Christian educator and administrator working in public schools for almost 30 years. With the current cancel Christianity culture, Christian educators are often working in environments hostile to their faith.  **b. Why is there a need to research this subject/problem?**  There is a need for research to retain Christian teachers and administrators by equipping them to be highly effective in using their biblical influence within the school system and in teaching and leading with biblical principles in and out of the classroom.  **c. What various disciplines or perspectives need to be brought to bear to adequately address this subject/problem?**  History, philosophy, social science, law, and ethics are disciplines or perspectives that can be brought to bear to adequately assist with teaching and leading with biblical influence and principles. Examining the absolutes and thinkers in these areas as well as gaining a deep knowledge of the Word can assist in equipping Christian educators to teach biblical principles in a secular environment and work to sponsor Bible studies and build communities among believers.  **d. How might faith-integration and interdisciplinary research yield better answers than either exclusively religious or exclusively academic research might provide?**  It yielded better answers because of faith integration and interdisciplinary intermingled in the life of the believer. Through our research, it is helping us to navigate our reality as leaders. I am a prime example. I worked in two very lovely Christian schools. I chose to enter public schools because I wanted public school students to see a Christian educator live life as a sold-out believer in front of them. One of the reasons I came to OGS was to find answers. When I first began in public education, there was not the hostility toward Christians that it is today. School districts across the country are aggressively taking on the role of the church in teaching morality. We need leaders who can effectively navigate both worlds to allow the Holy Spirit to do work that only God can do through us.  **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?  One perspective is that there are no answers because we are dealing with fundamental beliefs. President Bill Clinton invited James Davison Hunter, an American sociologist, to the White House to ask him how America could solve cultural wars. Hunter said it is impossible to solve because these cultural worlds are built on fundamental beliefs and assumptions that do not allow for compromise. “From prayer in the classroom to “multiculturalism” in the curriculum, Hunter warned, our “school wars” reflect incompatible belief systems” (Zimmerman, J., 2022, pp. xi).  Another prominent perspective is that Christians are immature in thinking that their religion is the only path to get to God and that other religions should try to befriend them to help them grow. Boys’ article stated that people should embrace religious pluralism, recognize the limitations of having only one religious theory, and go beyond the particular of their religious tradition. The author thinks that instead of clinging to absolute truths, individuals should embrace religious diversity. The author says that because God loves others and communicates with them through many religions, individuals have a competitive impulse that leads them to believe that this undermines their relationship with God. “Acknowledging the finitude of one’s own tradition requires a degree of maturity.” (Boys, MC., 2022, p. 187).  **a. How has the subject/problem developed relevant contemporary natural or social science disciplines?**  Another prominent perspective is that Christians are immature in thinking that their religion is the only path to get to God and that other religions should try to befriend them to help them grow. Boys’ article stated that people should embrace religious pluralism, recognize the limitations of having only one religious theory, and go beyond the particular of their religious tradition. The author thinks that instead of clinging to absolute truths, individuals should embrace religious diversity. The author says that because God loves others and communicates with them through many religions, individuals have a competitive impulse that leads them to believe that this undermines their relationship with God. “Acknowledging the finitude of one’s own tradition requires a degree of maturity.” (Boys, MC., 2022, p. 187).  **Are there different traditions?**  There are different traditions and religions that are moving into our school systems as commonplace. Christianity is losing its dominance in America and how more people are sympathizing with other religions. Until the late twentieth century, many Christians viewed yoga and meditation as Hindu and Buddhist practices that were ungodly. As these practices entered the United States, Asian and European promoters downplayed the religious background affiliated with Hinduism, Buddhism, and even the New Age movement. Instead, the promoters used science to gain public acceptance by highlighting the mental and physical benefits of reducing stress. The promoters strategically used tactics to move yoga and meditation more systematically into institutions and schools by secularizing them and downplaying them as Hindu and Buddhist practices (Brown, C. G., 2019). As believers, we need to be aware of the enemy’s devices to deceive us into putting our faith and trust in Jesus alone (Ephesians 5:6; Jeremiah 29:8; Colossians 2:8).  **b. How has the subject/problem developed in cultural trends/history?**  Christian educators will need to counteract cultural trends to keep finding joy in living their faith. Christian “Dustin Webster argues that it is not the teaching of academics, but instead contributing to the ethical development of students that allows teachers to flourish in their roles” (Webster, 2021). Dustin connotes that ethics education provides teachers with intrinsic motivation and value, which helps them to flourish and overcome certain crises in their practice (Webster, 2021).  **c. What disciplines have developed which have addressed the subject/problem?**  One discipline that has developed which have addressed this problem of moral turpitude and Christian educators caught up during it as they impart knowledge is ethics. C. S. Lewis said that objective value “ is humanity’s ethical inheritance, which we can extend and develop but may not properly escape. Insofar as we try to deny or subvert this way of being moral, we make ourselves (and those whom we raise or teach, or otherwise influence) essentially less than human. We produce “men without chests,” or in other words, people who have no stable heart, no reliable capacity to liaise between intellect and appetite, and no ability to distinguish between what is good and what is good for them. Right thus dissolves into might and sheer willpower takes the place of reason. The result is the erasure of our own identity, ‘the abolition of man” (Lewis, C. S., & Ward, M., 2017). As we are witnessing lawlessness throughout the nation, believers can apply and teach absolutes based on ethics.  **How have they addressed it (briefly)?**  Ethics needs to be reintroduced into American schools, business, politics, and every facet of society to bring back a culture of common decency. This is an area that I can spearhead with my ministry with educators.  **Are there different schools of thought?**  Different religions and humanism are prevalent in American schools and universities replacing dependence on God. As I reflect on my career, no one has ever given me any specific training or guidance on how to navigate through the public school system as a Christ-Follower. This is a great need because public schools are one of the greatest mission fields in America. Most Christians in public schools are uninformed of their constitutionally protected right to practice their religion. In addition, a lot of Christians feel alone in their schools and are unprepared for the hostile environment in public education. (Marker, B. K., 2020)  **STEP 3: FAITH-LEARNING INTEGRATION INQUIRY WITH CHRISTIAN AND SCIENTIFIC SOURCES**  How does Scripture deal with this issue? Realize that many issues that are a result of modernity or technological advances will not be directly addressed by the Bible, but Scripture may provide a parallel or precedent with a similar issue or subject, or the topic may be addressed through extrapolation.  **a. Are there any developments in biblical thought about the issue from the Old Testament?**  The Old Testament is clear that we are to teach our children the Word of God. We are to pass down knowledge about God from generation to generation (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Deuteronomy 4:9-10)  **b. Are there any changes in biblical thought about the issue from the Old to the New Testament? Are there any developments in biblical thought about the issue in the New Testament?**  The Bible is clear from the Old Testament to the New Testament that believers are to not only impart biblical knowledge to young people but are to protect them and do them no harm (Deuteronomy 11:19; Luke 17:2; Matthew 19:13-15; I Timothy 4:10-11).  **c. Are there any developments in Christian thought and history about the issue since biblical times?**  Many believers have given up on public schools and are homeschooling. Some scholars feel parents should not have the right to pull students out of public schools. Believing their children are being influenced and wanting to teach their own morals and values to their children, parents have been fighting against trends to let children make life-altering decisions without parental consent. Working against these parents is the Equality Act, which would extend Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as protected classes. The Equality Act would lead to changes to curricula in public schools, requiring texts to affirm and promote views on gender and sexuality (Jones, A., & Kao, E., 2019).  Even though it was written in 2000, Chris Lubienski’s work is currently being reassessed in today’s cancel Christian culture climate. Lubienski attacks homeschooling from the perspective of it being against the common good. Lubienski attempts to educate the reader on the private and public ends of education. “Traditionally, education has served both private and public ends. For example, schooling aids the individual in employment potential and provides private businesses with trained employees. But schools also embody democratic ideals of equality and are used to promote civic values, such as to sort people in the interest of "social efficiency" (Labaree, 1997b). As people increasingly configure publicly funded education to meet the needs of their own children, homeschoolers proceed from the insight that the institution of public education cannot adequately serve their children in the ways they want them served” (Lubienski, C., 2000).  **d. If the subject/problem is not directly addressed in the Bible, what principle can be extrapolated from a clear biblical teaching that helps to frame the subject/problem within a Christian worldview?**  This problem can be framed from a Christian worldview on two fronts. Throughout American society, people in all sectors are fighting for freedom, fairness, and equality. Parents today are fighting for the right to raise their children according to their family’s morals realizing that this is a direct assault on their freedom. As the influence of biblical principles is diminishing, so are the freedoms that people often take for granted. Jesus said that if the Son of God sets you free, you will be free indeed. Within the Christian worldview, the violation of parents' rights is a violation of the First Amendment. The other front is that Christian practitioners can teach biblical principles through ethics. The most important and functioning branch of philosophy is ethics. Ethics is moral philosophy and is derived from the Greek term Ethos which means custom, or character. Ethics is related to our values and virtues, and our actions and our experiences in everyday life are subject to it. Since we have the capacity to think about our choices, we are responsible for all our decisions and actions. Ethics is the study of what is wrong and what is right. Some of the concepts of ethics are good-evil, right-wrong, virtue-vice, justice, and injustice (Gülcan., 2015. p. 2622).  **e. Which contemporary natural or social sciences address this subject/ problem?**  **What additional perspectives does each science or discipline add?**  Gülcan emphasizes the importance of ethical education in enabling individuals to make free will decisions, stating that while university graduates may possess certain skills, they are not sufficient. Aristotle also says, “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” “In the USA, a high school director sends a letter to his teachers every year for the opening ceremony. In this letter, he says: I am one of the people who escaped a concentration camp. I have witnessed things that no human being should have ever seen gas chambers built by highly trained engineers, children poisoned by well-educated doctors, babies killed by experienced nurses, women and children shot and burned by people who were high school graduates and postgraduates. Therefore, I suspect education. My request from you is: Help your students to become more civilized human individuals. Your efforts should not generate educated monsters to become skilled psychopaths. Reading, writing, and mathematics are only important when they help your children to become more human (Aydın, I.)” (Gülcan, 2015, p. 2625).  **f. How do religious and scientific perspectives interact or integrate in providing a more comprehensive account of the subject/problem?**  Through the teaching of ethics, religious and social science perspectives interact. Every society in the world must have a moral code of common decency for civil behavior. As Christian educators and leaders, this would truly be an integration of our faith in interdisciplinary studies and in professional practice.  **STEP 4: CONVERTING SANDRA ANDERSON MCGRAW’S SYNTHESIZED TOPIC TO A FORMAL SOCIAL RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS.**  **Problem:**  Christian educators require specialized training in order to understand the cultural trends that contradict biblical teaching, to be ready for the difficulties they will encounter, and to develop the skills required to apply biblical principles in their educational positions (Marker, B. K, 2020).  **Hypothesis:**  Christian educators will feel more supported and prepared according to the Christian Educators Readiness Survey to work in public education after participating in a ministry specifically geared toward in equipping them.  **Hypothetical Research Results:**  Following specialized training, Christian educators performed better on the Christian Educators Readiness Survey in believing they are more equipped to serve God in their educational roles.  **Significance: What difference would the research make to change the world?**  Many around the world would argue the impact would be profound. If Christian educators were equipped to lead professional development on ethics to be taught and practiced, it would provide help people to make decisions centers around common decency and good will. In recent years, a variety of thinkers have argued for the importance of ethics in teacher education, including Gert Biesta (2015), Elizabeth Campbell (2003, 2013a), David Carr (2003, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2014), Joseph Dunne (2011), Chris Higgins (2011, 2015), Kristjansson (2011), and Hugh Sockett (2012). According to some international researchers, the literature on teacher education and the professional development of teachers has generally become even more focused on ethics in the last few decades (Harðarson, A., & Magos, K., 2022).  **Who is the target audience you want to influence with this research project? How can you package your results to be persuasive with them?**  My target audience that I want to influence with this research project are Christian educators require specialized training in order to understand the cultural trends that contradict biblical teaching, to be ready for the difficulties they will encounter, and to develop the skills required to apply biblical principles in their educational positions.  My target audience are Christian educators in all sectors of education. These Christian educators have the following characteristics: 1) They are teachers, principals, professors and administrators PreK-12 public schools, colleges, universities, educational programs, and offices; 2) They are coerced to adhere to policies and practices that are in direct conflict to biblical teachings; 3) They are in need specialized training to apply biblical principles in their educational position. Therefore, to adapt my findings to communicate persuasively with them, I can emphasize the benefit of ongoing Bible studies, specialized training and fellowship with other Christian educators and targets review of literature to educate and equip them at church and social venues.  **STEP 5: CRITICAL (APOLOGETIC) AND CONTEXTUAL COMMUNICATION**  **What critical reasons (apologetic) can you give for why your interdisciplinary Christian perspective should be accepted?**  The school systems are a mission field, and we need to equip and support the Christian educators that God has called to ministry to millions of students and families each year.  **a. How will you answer the contrary perspectives to your view?**  I will answer the contrary perspectives to my view by leading the charge to equip, encourage and empower Christian educators to service God with confidence.  **b. Are there any objections or criticisms from variant views that should be anticipated and preempted? How do you need to contextualize your perspective to influence your culture/context where it applies?**  Humanistic tenets like the Humanist Manifesto I, II, and III are now evident in many areas of public education, including instructional content, policies, and culture. More humanistic headway was gained when nonprofit organizations made it their mission to cleanse public schools of Christian influences as a means of upholding the First Amendment (e.g., American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], Americans United [AU] for Separation of Church and State, and Freedom From Religion Foundation [FFRF]). (Marker, B. K., 2020, p. 2-3) I need to develop biblical lessons and create opportunities to have ongoing training and support.  **c. What cultural conditions might cause resistance or misunderstanding of an approach to the subject/problem which sociologically integrates religion and society?**  Jesus warned the believer that the world would hate us because they hated and rejected him (John 15:18-25). Understanding these shapes, the work that needs to be done to integrate religion and the work that God has called us to do in education.  **d. What social conditions need to be changed to sociologically integrate religion and society with regard to the subject/problem?**  There are no social conditions that need to be changed. As Christian educators, we need to equip ourselves and increase our influence.  **e. What can you do to make your proposal more persuasive in order to “change your world”?**  What I can do to make my proposal more persuasive in order to change the world is develop a survey for Christian Educators and monitor the responses for growth after they receive ongoing training and support.  **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?**  The implications my interdisciplinary Christian perspective will have on my leadership for world change is that Christian educators will receive encouragement, support, bible studies, and training to teach and give professional development on ethics in an effort to bring biblical principles to the forefront.  **a. What applications for your orthopraxis/leadership need to be made to your personal or family life?**  The applications for my leadership that need to be made in my personal life are as follows: complete my Doctorate in Social Leadership to be equipped as a leader, maintain constant reliance on the Lord to guide and direct my path, and stay grounded in the Word of God.  **b. What applications for your orthopraxis/leadership need to be made to your church life?**  The applications for my leadership that need to be made as a part of my church life involve staying connected with believers and staying connected to leadership and partnership fellowships. I am also in the Ministry Training Track program to become a minister at Bridgeway Community Church.  **c. What applications for your orthopraxis/leadership need to be made to your work or community life?**  The application for my leadership that needs to be made to my work and community life is to live my truth boldly and unapologetically. As a child of God, we need to remember that we have the right to live our truth as believers and that we have the right to believe in the Word of God. The Bible says, Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4).  **STEP 7: REFLECTIVE EVALUATION**  **a. How well did the research satisfy the original need for inquiry? Were there aspects of the problem left unanswered in the research design?**  The research has deeply satisfied the original need for inquiry. I have gained so much knowledge about the history of how public school education has evolved into what it is today; current trends (Spring, J., 2019; Zimmerman, J., 2022), policies, laws (Ross, W. G., 2001; Woodhouse, B. B., 1991), and about worldwide scholarly literature (Gülcan, N. Y. (2015; Harðarson, A. et al, 2022) about education. The aspects of the problem of equipping and supporting Christian educators needs more attention in the Christian scholarly world and I plan to bridge that gap.  **b. Did the findings spawn new ideas that need to be taken through the interdisciplinary process?**  My findings continue to spawn new ideas through the interdisciplinary process. As I move forward with my ministry with educators, I hope to bridge the gap between supporting Christian educators and connecting them with resources and guidance on how to incorporate biblical principles through ethics into their classrooms, schools and offices as interdisciplinary faith-learning practice and integration (Webster, D., 2021, Arthur, J. et al, 2021; Gülcan, N. Y., 2015).  **c. Did the attempts at orthopraxis surface any gaps between your position in Step 4 and the adequacy of its ethical and/or social orthopraxis/leadership? Why?**  **Recap of Problem:**  Christian educators require specialized training in order to understand the cultural trends that contradict biblical teaching, to be ready for the difficulties they will encounter, and to develop the skills required to apply biblical principles in their educational positions (Marker, B. K, 2020).  **Answer:**  No, the attempts at orthopraxis have not surfaced any gaps between my position in step four. As a matter of fact, it will address a major national concern regarding a teacher shortage (Ravitch, D., 2020). As a leader in working to support, encourage and equip Christian educators, I am seeking my DSL at OGS to equip myself for the work that God has called me to do. As I have pioneered this EFC ministry, I realized it was out of my own need internally for more support as a Christian administrator in the public school system. As the testament of the love of Jesus, what I hear the educators in my life group testified about because of being a part of the life group is what I have also experienced in my own heart. As a leader, this ministry has had a boomerang effect and has strengthened and encouraged me. Glory be to God in the highest of praise! | | |

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