Faith-Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies / Professor: Dr. David Ward

Hermeneutics and Communications  / Professor: Dr. Ken Schmidt

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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.

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.

**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.**

The intent of the Hermeneutics and Communication course was for us to develop critical thinking skills as we look at social trends, issues and problems as we review and interpret literature in our respective fields. In its design, this course also challenged us to acknowledge our prejudgments in reviewing literature. This was a critical piece because many times we may overlook our own biases and unable to develop a worldview understanding and respecting any other viewpoint

    In the Faith-Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies Course, the intent came across loud and clear in the Faith Learning Integration Worksheet. Dr. Ward’s worksheet helped me to think through the integration of faith and learning for professional Christian scholarship and practice. Dr. Ward’s work in faith-learning integration is God-sent as I struggle as a leader to integrate my faith into my secular life.. In setting up my research project, looking at Dr. Ward’s work and lectures on the Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration provided a biblical Christian worldview structure.

**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.**

  In the Hermeneutics and Communications course with Dr. Schmidt, being asked to look at my prejudgments was unexpected. In the school system, we have done some training to challenge us to look at our unconscious biases, but I was still surprised. However, it was necessary because to adopt a Christian biblical worldview and love people as God loves people, we need to understand what it means to look into the literature from the author’s and readers' purpose, biases and point of view. As I  recognized my own biases, I realized that it does not diminish the fundamental beliefs that I have grounded in biblical principles, but that I can take my biblical principles to help all people experience God’s love regardless of their beliefs. As a writer, I want to grow to become more equipped as a scholarly writer with counter viewpoints and authors on  various topics. The feedback from Dr. Schmidt was very helpful as I aspired to analyze and manipulate the scholarly literature more effectively in supporting my thesis. I will take the spirit of the Hermeneutics and Communication course with me to be a more effective communicator.

In my Faith Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies class, deepening my understanding and looking through my academic studies through this lens brings hope and understanding about God to a deeper level. God loves His creation, and we are His vessels to radiate that love (John 3:16). This course also validated how I looked at and felt about my research internally across my courses by giving us students the green light. In a very real sense, this is why we are here at OGS. The Faith Learning Integration Worksheet was instrumental in thinking through my action research project. While I have enjoyed learning so much on so many issues and topics related to my field,  I now have clarity on what the remaining focus will be while at OGS. The timing of working through this worksheet at this juncture in my academic program was perfect. I had the opportunity to research and answer so many questions that I needed to answer, and I gained so much knowledge that I needed to gain to get to this point. Now, I want to continue to gain knowledge, but also more effectively integrate my research on the various social trends, topics and solutions to better equip and prepare Christian educators to do Kingdom work in secular settings.

**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?**

As I reflect on my career as a Christian educator and administrator, no one has ever given me any specific training or guidance on how to navigate through the public school system as a Christ-Follower in my roles. This is a great need because public schools are one of the greatest mission fields in America and throughout the world. God is using my research to give me direction as a ministry leader and as a leader within the public school system. These two classes have helped me to be more strategic and focused on my action-research project and gain invaluable knowledge about topics of interest that I want to address. My questions are, how do I structure a program to equip Christian educators? How do I reverse current trends destroying the lives of young people? How do I evangelize more effectively in winning souls for Christ within a school system that is trying to cancel out Christianity? How do I gain a voice in academic literature to challenge people to understand the implications of destroying people’s faith and moral codes? How do I get ethics on the table as a topic in professional development?

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

These courses were highly effective for all aspects of my professional, religious and educational goals. Professionally, I have gained a better understanding from my professors and from multiple points of view from scholars around the world. For instance, when I read the journal articles from scholars in Europe writing about the importance of ethics in education, it validated the worldwide recognition of a moral code of common decency and concern for the good of all humanity (Webster, 2021; Gülcan, 2015; Harðarson & Magos, 2022). Religiously, the articles about parental rights dating back a few decades were eye opening. What many thought was a given, especially religious people of all faiths trying to raise their children in their own beliefs, was being debated by scholars (Woodhouse, 1991; Ross, 2001). My educational goals were that the Lord would help me to learn and gain a deep understanding of how education in America has evolved to what we see happening today so I can have clear direction as a leader and have the skills to do what God is calling me to do. My two classes this first term complement one another in helping me to gain clarity of the direction for my action research.  I appreciate the OGS model of allowing us to learn through our research and be directed by God as adult learners. Thank you!

**Works Cited**

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Harðarson, A., & Magos, K. (2022). Learning through life and the ethics of teaching: a story told in fifteen voices. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *48*(5), 609-621.

New American Standard Bible (NASB), 2020. *Lockman Foundation.* (Original work published in 1960).

Ross, W. G. (2001). The contemporary significance of meyer and pierce for parental rights Issues Involving Education. *Akron Law Review*, *34*(1), 6.

Webster, D. (2021). Beyond academics: how teachers flourish through students' ethical education. *Educational Theory*, *71*(3), 409-429.

Woodhouse, B. B. (1991). Who owns the child: meyer and pierce and the child as property. *WM. & MAry l. reV.*, *33*, 995.