PHI 805-12

Faith-Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies

Susan Flores-Edwards

Omega Graduate School

Date (March 16, 2024)

Professor

Dr. David Ward, Ph.D., Th.M.

**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.

Faith- Learning Integration and interdisciplinary studies empower researchers to apply diverse worldviews and disciplines for thoughtful examination and societal impact. Beer & Beers (2008) asserts that, institutions appear to be more worldview-diverse and less faith-oriented, providing an opportunity to connect with a broader audience. Interdisciplinary studies, according to Repko (2023) represent powerful methods of learning that impact our worldview, ability to tackle complexities, understanding of others and ourselves, and the structure of higher education institutions.

The course permit scholars to tackle social issues using critical thinking, analyzing challenges in their lives and the wider cultural context (Dockery &Wax 2019). Christian scholars utilize the church community, to drive positive change (Lehmann et al., 2022). By embracing biblical wisdom, researchers explore ways to enhance society using Christian principles and scripture, focusing on the needs of the all humanity (Ward, 2014). According to Davis et al. (2023) integrating positive psychology aligns with religious and spiritual practices, offering leaders valuable insights. While science influences strategies, prayer and meditation hold deep spiritual meaning.

As a Scholar I evaluate various worldviews, that allow me to strive toward personal growth, and leverage disciplines to make a lasting difference as lifelong learners and committed Christians. I fully comprehend the importance of my faith in relation to my entire life's purpose and occupation. This course enabled me to comprehend my vocation and the various steps involved in fulfilling the lifelong goal and the predestined route set by God. Other literary works allowed me to explore texts in greater depth, demonstrating the reliance of faith on the word of God. I am better able to think critically about my topic to change the world. According to Nosich (2005). Critical thinking is the discerning ability to decide what to embrace and what to dismiss, based on logic and reflection.

Utilizing materials authored by faith-based resources, such as Ward (2014) 5 Test of Truth, enables me to use these principles in every study piece I encounter. Ward's stages of faith integration and learning involve scholars in the first stages of questioning the research and exploring various approaches to methodically bring the research to practical application. Furthermore, this allows society to benefit from the outcomes of the change, while enabling the researcher to pursue a lifelong journey towards acquiring knowledge and evaluating relevant resources that contribute to helping global or societal problems.

Learning resources that pertain to the scholar as a cultivator of the land help them recognize their responsibility as Christians and their obligation to God in fulfilling his plan by encouraging others to embrace the message of the gospel. Scholars also analyze literature that suppresses them from embracing biblical text which highlights the creation fall redemption and restorative consummation (Ward, 2014; Plantinga, 2002).

I have concerns regarding my profession a mental health coach, specifically in relation to working with young individuals who are experiencing depression and employing negative coping mechanisms. These concerns have led me to contemplate the controversial practice of conversion therapy, and the criticism received by secular psychologists and the LGBTQ+ community, who attribute the therapy to the etiology of depression (Golightley, 2023).This is a novel perspective that critiques Christian therapy and the manner in which Christianity promotes gender roles based on biblical teachings.

The criminalization of conversion therapy (CT) is an additional measure taken by postmodern culture to exclude theism. (Miller, 2019). However, adhering to the teachings of scriptures, this therapy aims to align with the realities of gender roles and human sexuality. Scripture acts as a comforting balm for healing and understanding amidst adversity (Cook & Hamley, 2020). Postmodern philosophy frequently excuses individuals from accountability for their decisions, attributing their hardships to factors such as discrimination, sexual orientation, race, gender, economic status, or mental health (Noebel, 2006).

 However, LGBQT advocates criticize (CT) for potentially producing depression. The uncertainty arises in how counselors and Christian minded implement therapy without being perceived as harmful conversion therapy. Yet, religious or spiritual intervention improved depressive symptoms in at least 61% of patients, surpassing the reduction of depressive symptoms offered by standard care (Bramm & Koenig, 2019).

 Another source of ambiguity is in the marijuana industry and its commercialization following legalization, as it relates to the information around marijuana and my advocacy for the mental health of young individuals (Sabet, 2021;Plunk, et al., 2019). The prevalence of marijuana appears to be widespread (Anderson & Rees, 2023). Different worldviews from biology, philosophy, sociology, ethics, law, and postmodernism influence views on youth mental health and cannabis treatment (Noebel, 2006). Social justice advocates highlight the penal system and marginalization which led to inadequate mental health care and drug problems among certain groups ((Mohr-Avitia,2024). The challenge persists in finding effective methods to persuade young individuals of the detrimental effects on their cognitive health and overall mental well-being (Leone, 2022) or exposure to Cannabis Use Disorder. (Mennis, et al., 2023).

The significance of conducting faith-based research helps me stay aligned with carrying out the work of God on his behalf and according to his will. Furthermore, from our trials in life, God births a message, and we, in turn, become his messengers (Hillman, 2017).

My education has been greatly enhanced by incorporating faith-based principles. My future entails more than just obtaining a degree. It involves embarking on a path to bring about lasting change in society, while also developing a faith-based leadership approach that prioritizes helping people. To excel as scholars, Beers (2008) highlights the need to delve into secular disciplines and theology. Neglecting involvement in these domains could lead to a fragmented sense of self, he cautioned. In addition, Holmes (1989) warned Christians not to stray from their morals and to make accepting their differences a top priority.

Within my religious beliefs, the training I have received has ingrained the teachings of Christ as a paradigm for all my actions (Phil 4: 8). By integrating my faith into my work, I strive to bring glory to God. As a devout follower of God, I am diligently adhering to the masterful teachings of Christ. As a child of God, religious integration reminds me of my obligation to humanity and my responsibility in stewardship. Active Christian involvement in the world includes fulfilling God's redeeming intentions across all aspects of life, whether personal or communal, public or private (Hunter,2010).

In my professional journey, the merger of faith and learning motivates me to utilize the CHRIST program as a means of expanding my skills in order to establish a non-profit ministry coaching young adults suffering from depression. Stokes et al. (2021) posits that coaching is about guiding individuals to reach their full potential, aiming for both personal success and success for the team. As spiritual mental health coaches, we create safe spaces for individuals to share their pain without judgment, guided by God's compassion (Clinton, 2019)

The incorporation of faith also cultivates a profession in writing. Sadowski et al, (2022) explore how naturopathy uses mind-body techniques to tackle chronic conditions like depression. Through meditation, individuals focus on calming words to relax and increase awareness. Integrating my faith led me to blend biblical ideas into meditation, encouraging youth to reflect on the Bible during breathing exercises. Faith integration reminds me of my responsibility as a member of the body of Christ to have an impact on the lives of young individuals who require assistance in their mental well-being.

WORKS CITED

Anderson, D. M., & Rees, D. I. (2023). The public health effects of legalizing marijuana. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *61*(1), 86-143. <https://doi:10.1257/jel.20211635>

Braam, A. W., & Koenig, H. G. (2019). Religion, spirituality and depression in prospective studies: A systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *257*, 428-438

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2019.06.063

Clinton, T. (2019)*The struggle is real: How to care for mental and relational health needs in the Church.*WestBow Press. <https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Clinton%2C+Dr.+Tim.+The+Struggle+Is+Real%3A+How+to+Care+for+Mental+and+Relational+Health+Needs>

Cook, C.C.H.; Hamley. I (2020). *The Bible and mental health: Towards a Biblical theology of mental health.* SCM Press.

https://www.amazon.com/Bible-Mental-Health-Biblical-Theology-ebook/dp/B08HSCYW4C/ref=tmm\_kin\_swatch\_0?\_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Davis, E. B., Day, J. M., Lindia, P. A., & Lemke, A. W. (2023). Religious/spiritual development and positive psychology: Toward an integrative theory. *EB, Davis, EL, Worthington, JrS. A. Schnitker,(Eds.), Handbook of positive psychology, religion, and spirituality*, 279-295. [https://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Positive-Psychology-Religion-Spirituality-ebook/dp/B0BMTQXV86/ref=tmm\_kin\_swatch\_0?\_encodin](https://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Positive-Psychology-Religion-Spirituality-ebook/dp/B0BMTQXV86/ref%3Dtmm_kin_swatch_0?_encodin)

Dockery, D S; Wax, T. (2019). *Christian Worldview Handbook*. B&H Publishing Group. <https://www.amazon.com/Christian-Worldview-Handbook-David-Dockery/dp/153596895>

*The English Standard Version Bible.* (2001). Crossway. <https://www.christianbook.com/?utm_source=google&kw=crossway&mt=p&dv=c&event=PPCSRC&p=1018818&cb_src=google&cb_typ=search&cb_cmp=5391882&cb_ad>

Golightley, S. (2023). ‘I’m gay! i’m Gay! i’m gay! I’ma homosexual!’: Overt and covert Conversion Therapy Practices in Therapeutic Boarding Schools. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *53*(3), 1426-1444. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad049>

`Holmes. F. A. (1987).*The idea of a Christian College*. Eerdmans.

**[Seminal]**[https://www.amazon.com/Idea-Christian-College-Arthur-Holmes-ebook/dp/B0BB5V5DLM/ref=sr\_1\_1?crid=3CQGD8EK0TLGC&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9](https://www.amazon.com/Idea-Christian-College-Arthur-Holmes-ebook/dp/B0BB5V5DLM/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=3CQGD8EK0TLGC&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9)

Hillman, O.S. (2017). *The Joseph calling: 6 stages to discover, navigate, & fulfill your purpose*.

BroadStreetPublishing.com. <https://www.amazon.com/Joseph-Calling-Discover-Navigate-Fulfill-ebook/dp/B071VM34>

Hunter, J D. (2010). To change the world. Oxford University Press.

[https://www.amazon.com/Change-World-Tragedy-Possibility-Christianity-ebook/dp/B003TWNDVY/ref=sr\_1\_1?crid=2VTKPMTTLPV5X&keywords=to+change+the+world&qid=1706316417&s=digital-text&sprefix=To+change%2Cdigital-text%2C96&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Change-World-Tragedy-Possibility-Christianity-ebook/dp/B003TWNDVY/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=2VTKPMTTLPV5X&keywords=to+change+the+world&qid=1706316417&s=digital-text&sprefix=To+change%2Cdigital-text%2C96&sr=1-1)

Lehmann, C. S., Whitney, W. B., Un, J., Payne, J. S., Simanjuntak, M., Hamilton, S., ... & Fernandez, N. A. (2022). Hospitality towards people with mental illness in the church: a Cross-cultural Qualitative Study. *Pastoral psychology*, *71*(1), 1-27.

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11089-021-00982-1

Mohr-Avitia, G. (2024). *What's race got to do with it? A Cannabis Industry policy analysis using critical race theory* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Houston. <https://hdl.handle.net/10657/16161>

Mennis, J., Stahler, G. J., & Mason, M. J. (2023). Cannabis legalization and the decline of cannabis use disorder (CUD) treatment utilization in the US. *Current Addiction Reports*, *10*(1), 38-51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40429-022-00461-4>

Miller, A. W. (2019). Pray the hate away: Remembering conversion therapy through boy erased.

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/f3780c3c9d603520c74d8520ef7c6616/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

Noebel, D. (2006). *Understanding the times: The collision of today’s competing worldviews*, 2 nd Ed. Summit Press**. [Seminal]**

<https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Noebel%2C+D.+%282006%29.+Understanding+the+times%3A+The+collision+of>

Nosich, G. M. (2005). *What is critical thinking within a discipline? In Learning to think things through A guide to critical thinking across the curriculum*, 4th Ed.

Pearson/Prentice Hall Publishers. **[Seminal]** <https://www.amazon.com/Learning-Think-Things-Through-Curriculum/dp/0137085141>

Plantinga, C. (2002) *Engaging God's world: A Christian vision of faith, learning, and living* . Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. **[Seminal]**

[https://www.amazon.com/Engaging-Gods-World-Christian-Learning-ebook/dp/B097CJYFRY/ref=sr\_1\_1?crid](https://www.amazon.com/Engaging-Gods-World-Christian-Learning-ebook/dp/B097CJYFRY/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid)

Plunk, A. D., Peglow, S. L., Harrell, P. T., & Grucza, R. A. (2019). Youth and adult arrests for cannabis possession after decriminalization and legalization of cannabis. *JAMA pediatrics*, *173*(8), 763-769. [Https://doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1539](https://doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1539)

Sabet, K. (2021). Lessons learned in several states eight years after states legalized marijuana. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *38*, 25-30.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.07.018>

Sadowski, A., Garofalo, L., Welsh, A., & Bradley, R. (2022). Naturopathic doctors: An underutilized resource of whole health delivery in primary care. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, *11*, 2164957X221079787.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2164957X221079787

Stokes, P., Fatien Diochon, P., & Otter, K. (2021). “Two sides of the same coin?” Coaching and mentoring and the agentic role of context. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1483(1), 142-152.

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/25754/4/Stokes_Two_Sides_of_%28AM%29.pdf>

Ward, D. C. (2014). Interdisciplinary faith – learning integration for social change.*Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 26*(1), 29-56. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/interdisciplinary-faith-learning-integration/docview/1637740157/se-2