Assignment #4 Course Learning Journal

LDR 813-42, Organizational Dynamics, Prof.: Dr. James Strecker

PHI 801-52, Ethics in a Global Society, Prof.: Dr. Jared Sorber

LDR 810-42, Cross-Cultural Dynamics, Prof.:Dr. Jared Sorber

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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 three courses I took this semester were the last three in my DSL program. All three fit perfectly in my graduate program and with my profession. In the Organizational Dynamics course, I was able to dive deep into the research behind the type of positive leadership I am trying to exemplify in my professional life and ministry. I focussed on building people up, creating an inclusive culture, and preparing people for uncertainty. This preparing people for uncertainty resonated deeply with me. I learned about VUCA. In an attempt to characterize the environment their students would need to operate in the future, the U.S. Army War College, coined a term. VUCA stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. The term has become generalized across geopolitical and business contexts to describe turbulence (Baran, 2020). As a leader, we need to model how Jesus built his disciples. The research is behind this type of leadership (Boyatzis, et. Al., 2019; Pfejfer-Buczek, et. Al., 2024). Research shows that people want to know that their leaders care about supporting them, showing empathy, and ethics, fostering personal and professional growth, goals, hopes, and dreams, and ultimately, creating a positive organizational structure (2019; 2024). Jesus also prepared his disciples for a future of uncertainty through his teaching.

My Cross-Cultural Dynamics course was extremely relevant to my profession because the families at my school are from all over the world. The same is true of staff, which includes quite a few Muslims. My research in this course focused on cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural interventions, and cross-cultural psychology, which seeks to discover meaningful links

between a culture and the psychology of individuals living in this culture (Shiraev & Levy, 2020). Research on cross-cultural communications and interventions helped me as a leader to be more mindful of my communications in making sure I don't assume that people know or understand. We have so many staff members from different backgrounds so I intentionally try to make assumptions but give clear communications with multiple opportunities to learn and understand.

In Ethics In a Global Society, I researched three areas in education; ethics in AI education, which is a major concern. AI presents concerns about pedagogical choices and deciding how to account for the ever-present possibility of unintended consequences (2022; Young, 2024). Another area I researched with the Ethics course pertains to social media. It is troubling how people's privacy is being violated to do research without their knowledge or consent. Researchers using more traditional approaches, such as surveys or lab experiments, typically ask subjects to consent before collecting and using their data. This is not the case with digital trace data because data can be collected about many individuals as they go about their day-to-day use unaware of being studied, monitored, or observed (Brown, 2020). The third area of my research is ethics in Christianity. Above all, ethics in Christianity needs to show that religion needs to be integrated with life, "transfiguring and spiritualizing all its activities and relationships" (Alexander, 2019). There is a need for more specific teaching on ethics across all disciplines in our country.

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.

All of my courses helped me to grow personally and gave me more understanding as a leader. The Organizational Dynamics course, personally affirmed what I am trying to do as a school and ministry leader in trying to model Jesus. I strive to be positive and instill hope and joy. My research about positive leadership, building people up, and essentially, just loving those that God has given you charge over was reassuring. The same is true with the Cross-Cultural Dynamics course. I gain new insights from scholarly research on cross-cultural communications, interventions, and psychology.

I appreciated how the Ethics In A Global Society course raised awareness of this topic. In the educational sector, school districts should include an ethics course as one of the yearly training courses for staff to remember ethics is important. Such is the case in every profession, stockholders, employees, politicians, doctors, scientists, and leaders in all fields should be held accountable for their ethical responsibilities in care and conduct, and towards society at large. How much would people find the church relevant for their lives if the church collectively advocated for them concerning any violations regarding human rights and care today? Nicolaides points out that the "church is a key element of civil society, and should serve as a watchdog, more than it currently does (Nicolaides, 2020, p. 8). Also from my ethics course and seeing unethical behavior among Christians and clergy, there needs to be specific instruction within Christian circles on Christian ethics. While the church is a beacon and a light to the world, to counteract the wickedness in society, we may need to rethink how we prepare to teach ethics.

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?

All of my courses this semester applied to all areas of my life. In the Organizational

Dynamics course, I received new insights into the term VUCA (Baran & Woznyj, 2020). Many

of us know in education that the students in our elementary schools are preparing for jobs that

may not exist yet because of the rapid rate of technology. VUCA speaks to preparing for the

uncertainty (2020). With the Cross-Cultural Dynamics course, my knowledge of cross-cultural

sensitivity grew deeper. School districts employ reading, math, therapists, psychologists,

counselors, social workers, special education teachers, and staff for different interventions and

assistance to students and families. With the number of immigrants increasing, more cross-

cultural training is needed.

The Ethics course confirmed that even though school districts may have an ethics policy,

ethics is subjective. Is it ethical to allow children to lie to their parents about their gender identity

and sexual practices? Is it ethical to tell school leaders and teachers that they have to participate

in that lie? Is it ethical to lie to parents?

4. Conclusion – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional,

religious, and educational goals.

When I came to OGS, one of the first things I heard was that OGS was a safe place to

think. We often talk about safe spaces in education, but the reality is that those spaces are not

always safe for everyone. However, as I have researched and contextualized the research, it was

an intellectually and spiritually safe place to think and research. These last three courses

Organizational Dynamics, Cross-Cultural Dynamics, and Ethics in Global Society were

awesome for me because they were so relevant to every area of my life. Professionally, I can

immediately apply the learning and bring consciousness to others. Religiously, I can use it to be

more deliberate in my communication and my teaching. Educationally, I have learned so much

and will continue to read, research, write, teach, and practice in these areas. With these and other

courses, it wasn't just the academic work, but the fact that we had opportunities to meet and

speak with our professors. Not only that, but you could tell that OGS makes it a point to let

students know that they care about them and their God-given assignments. This Christian

graduate school is second to none, and it has been my honor to attend.

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