DSL Action Research Project Prospectus

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**Assignment 3: Ethical Considerations and Intervention Design**

• Develop a detailed plan for the intervention.

• Link the intervention to sociological and faith-based analyses.

• Discuss and address potential ethical issues related to the intervention.

**Thesis statement:** While the college years are designed for personal growth and career preparation, there is a negative trend among Christian students where they are walking away from their faith by the time they graduate college. Reasons include, but are not limited to stress, lack of guidance, and being unequipped for adulthood.

* **Develop a detailed plan for the intervention.**

In response to the significant increase in lost faith, I am developing a training program (proposed DSL Project) to address the existing need within the Christian community to prepare students before they leave for college.

 The United States, once the world leader, has fallen behind significantly, especially in education. Where **“**students schooled in the Singapore education system are expected to have 21st-century competencies, and student outcomes include the need for civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills” (Chong, M., et al. (2022). p165), the United States, today is focused heavily on socio-emotional learning. While I am less familiar as to whether Christian education across the nation in comparison to Singapore education, I have found few Christian schools, colleges, and churches that offer a career ministry. As such, this researcher surmises there is a need for career ministry offerings nationally and looks forward to gathering this information in tandem with marketing the proposed DSL Project.

 Otilia, S. B., et al’s research (2024) found that “emergent themes developed from the participants’ responses align with concepts of servant leadership theory, (and that) one thought from the study is the importance of developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of attendees to complete unique events or special operations” (p291). I believe this evidence will correlate with the concept that a biblical vocational training program provides the necessary foundation to graduate college (i.e., unique event) without losing one’s faith.

 The Career Ministry, STRIVE to Thrive, is a three-step program that helps students discover their biblical vocational calling (Step 1), guides students to create a strategic plan for their career journey (Step 2), and facilitates the STRIVE Workshop that equips students with tools to navigate their career journey.

 The non-profit I work for intends to speak with Pastors, Church leaders, School Principals, students and parents to share the career ministry opportunity, which is a biblical vocational training program. The goal is to “plant” the STRIVE to Thrive in churches and schools.

* **Link the intervention to sociological and faith-based analyses.**

 Since 2015, my team has introduced STRIVE to many Southern California churches. While pastors, as well as all of our clients and their parents like the opportunity, they are not willing to adopt it. This road block made no sense to me until studying at OGS where several issues were revealed to me. Issues included church staff and pastors already at their capacity for more programs and responsibilities, churches and schools seeing financial constraints as a roadblock, churches not teaching concepts (i.e., the biblical foundation of work, vocational calling, and spiritual gifts).

 It occurred to me that coming to a church from a Christian social research perspective may improve the potential partnership opportunity. The Training Program is the intervention that follows Phase I - Research.

 Phase I is where we will collect data to learn which churches/schools do and do not currently have a Career Ministry. At that time an inquiry will be conducted to share the Barna Group’s results showing significant lost faith among college students. Additionally, identifying who has and doesn’t have a Career Ministry. Then introducing the “STRIVE to Thrive” Training Program. The hope is to survey and hopefully find participants to partner with.

 Phase II is hosting a “STRIVE to Thrive” Training for students. Prayer includes allowing God to work within the congregation/school for financial direction and funds to pilot one successful cohort.

 With positive results, the next step would be to implement Phase III to plant a “STRIVE to Thrive” Career Ministry within the church/school. This includes praying for God to move the right congregants to serve. It is imperative that we wait on God to bring the right people forward and put them through the program because “the work focuses on the positive probability of influencing young people to achieve education in the real chance of getting meaningful, long and dignified work and thus prevent poverty due to unemployment” (Arpova, A. (2023). p74).

 This is where second halfers who are retired can serve. The double blessing is that they can also mentor students sharing their experience and offer guidance that can make a significant difference in a young person’s life. This opportunity is not limited to retirees, but should also encourage adults with several years of experience. Mitchell’s (2021) “qualitative research project allowed the researcher to reflect on various aspects of the Christian worldview in the workplace. During these reflections, personal and professional growth opportunities were identified” (p180). Two disciplines that need to reach today’s 20 somethings are Faith At Work and Business As Mission (BAM). Faith At Work began in the late 1980’s and BAM in 2004, having recently gained momentum with my generation, who identified the need to reach today’s youth.

The prayer is that God will open doors and hearts so that the “STRIVE To Thrive” Training Program/Career Ministry will gain momentum and be impactful in reversing the trend of lost faith at the college level. Students should have the mindset that the college campus is their mission field while they are there. This includes being salt and light to the lost; and being grounded in the Word.

 “The Business As Ministry model may aid Christian entrepreneurs in comprehending and managing a business as a Christian ministry” (Ma, E. Z. (2024). p. 26). Teaching this is to Christian business owners along with providing resources to create opportunities within their company to be salt and light to others will be impactful.

There is hope in the disciplines of BAM and Faith at Work. I see a direct connection between STRIVE To Thrive at the high school level with the business world because students need internships and mentors, as well as job opportunities.

Lastly, as part of the Action Research project. is assessment and evaluation before replicating the program again. Program exit and follow up surveys will be used and our team will be available to support those trained, as well as students that have gone through the program.

* **Discuss and address potential ethical issues related to the intervention.**

 Barna (2020) found that “three in 10 practicing Christians (31%) and one-third of evangelicals (33%) express interest in ‘continued professional development that focuses on integrating faith and applying it to (their) career’ fascinating” ( p1) because Christians are often silent about their faith in the workplace. Sharing at work can pose ethical issues with fear of “harassment” accusations. As we share Faith at Work and BAM strategies, and encourage Christian companies to offer opportunities (e.g., bible study and prayer) for their staff, we will also emphasize the need for prayer and faith in God’s plan, as well as trust in God’s Word.

 Assisting students on this journey through high school and preparation for college can be stressful. **“**The fact that educational decision-making can be challenging, especially at a relatively young age, also is reflected in an increasing number of adolescents who are postponing this choice by taking one or multiple gap years before starting a major in higher education” (Van der Aar, L., et al., (2022). p 341). The gap year is a newer concept, but gaining momentum with students opting for the easy way out!

 This is where I believe a network of Christian organizations and businesses will provide an added value to the Career Ministry. The mental health issue is a hot topic in schools and American culture right now. We need to be aware of these issues and make the best effort to support each individual. Students that want a gap year can be encouraged to go on a mission trip and be prayed over. This can be a growing experience where students gain “the ability to interact positively with people of different national, social, ethnic and religious backgrounds” (Chong, M., et al. (2022). p179). This is just one aspect of growth that can help prepare them for what they choose following the gap year.

 “Indoctrination to the importance of a leadership perspective is essential during the formative years of education so that students enter practice knowing that leadership is not just related to their specific position” (Recigno, T. E., & Kramer, P. (2022). p1). While indoctrination is seen as a negative word in today’s society, it is a word that conveys a level of importance that all Christians should understand. We have a duty to be salt and light. We also are to live by the biblical principles written for us. It is imperative that parents, pastors, elders, and teachers convey that to others. To use NT Wright’s 7 signposts as a guide to address what is broken in us and the world in order that we understand how we are to live as Christians.

 “The individual’s ability to self direct is of great importance to the society, working life, and social development” (Loeng, S. (2020). p10). However, there is an ethical line in the sand that society has drawn. Christians need to understand God also drew a line and that it is up to us to avoid society’s darkness and pitfalls; and instead be light and salt; and be bold for God. If we can convey this to students they may grasp the concept of college as their mission field; and carry that to their job.

Students who arebold for Christ will **“**also experience and perceive that wisdom, values, culture, and ministry are all components of spiritual capital that represent the spiritual aspects of the common good in their business as ministry. They also experienced and perceived that relationships, trust, goodwill, and cooperation all contribute to social capital, which can be categorized as the social aspects of the common good in their business as ministry” (Ma, E. Z. (2024). p. 165).

**Conclusion.**

The proposed project is a paradigm shift that I believe God has assigned me to. The initial research and synergy I have encountered working on this seems like confirmation that this journey will be blessed by God.

 Van der Aar, L., et al., (2022) found “self-concept clarity and social self-evaluations positively predicted social adjustment to college and academic performance 6 months after training” (p 341). STRIVE To Thrive helps students discover their vocational calling in order that they may have the clarity to positively adjust to college.

 **“**Knowles maintains that there is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning learn more and learn better than people who are passively being taught” (Loeng, S. (2020). p5). One premise of my research is that students who know their vocational calling will be motivated to “take the initiative in learning” because they will have confidence and a strategic plan to help them navigate, as well as lots of prayer along the journey.

 Lastly, “equipping students with the materials they need to make informed decisions about what decent employment entails, encouraging professional curiosity to explore and discover viable options, and shaping adequate representations of the occupational environment are all critical prerequisites for career development” (Otilia, S. B., et al. (2024). p291). STRIVE To Thrive seeks to provide all of this as well as additional resources that are figuratively like the armor of God that will protect and encourage them on their journey. Their success will be revealed in their spiritual maturity thus reversing the negative trend of lost faith with the bonus of each student being light and salt ultimately bringing others to Christ. How wouldn’t that be something!

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