

Intersection Content Example

Areas: Education, Education Policy, Philosophy of Education

Content: Contemporary Thought in Education – School Choice

General: Intersection content examples provide samples of course content from a program or discipline with suggestions about how one or more insights from the Lutheran (and, more broadly, the entire Christian faith) perspective can inform that content.

Good instructional methods are always a part of effective teaching. But the examples do not provide a formula or recipe, and their use is not about some particular teaching method, a set of criteria, or a list of rubrics for “the right Lutheran or Christian” instructional solution. (Such an approach would put us, as Lutherans say, “under the Law rather than grace.”) The examples do indicate opportunities where the instructor and student can explore and apply specific themes related to the Gospel and a biblical world view as these may relate to course content.

To use the example, simply scan or read it for content and the featured intersections. Doing so will help acquaint you with direct and indirect ways by which the instructor can carry over some of these ideas into her or his own course work. For further background on the Lutheran tradition, see the materials at <http://twokingdoms.cune.edu/> under the menu tabs for the Grad Programs, the Lutheran Tradition, and the About page. For additional content ideas see the tabs for Content Areas and for Resources.

Across the first decade of the 21st century, pluralism in education has increased. Statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Education indicate that conventional public education (“assigned” schools) accounts for about 73% of students in classrooms, down about 7% in the last ten years. (<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=6>)

The United States has a long history of multiple approaches to education. (See, for example, *The History and Foundations of American Education*, Pullman and Van Patten; Pearson, 2012.) The first and oldest education journal in the country is *The Lutheran Education Journal* founded in 1865 by Concordia University Chicago (then in Addison, IL), ten years before Boston University’s *Journal of Education*. The Lutheran tradition employs its insights about religion and culture to understand different views about education—such insights and themes as the two kingdoms doctrine (spiritual matters are not merely personal and private), an incarnational theology (the spiritual and the material are not isolated from each other), and Christian liberty (the Christian is free to live out her or his vocation in any number of God-pleasing, faithful ways such as public school teacher, Lutheran teaching minister, grocery store manager, police officer, hair stylist, investment banker, etc.).

Assignment:

Your readings and discussions for this unit are taking you through a variety of views and issues on school choice, vouchers, and other matters of debate in the public square. To assist your reflection and perhaps move you to a professional position on options in education in our culture, read this essay from the journal, *First Things*:

“The Case for Educational Pluralism: Alternatives to the State-Funded Monopoly” by Ashley Rogers Berner.

<http://www.firstthings.com/article/2012/11/the-case-for-educational-pluralism>

Use the convenient MSWord form linked below and respond to Berner’s case for educational pluralism. Indicate the concepts and principles you are using to assess Berner’s position—pro, con, or otherwise—and the nature and context of your concepts and principles. In other words, why are you using those ideas and where, approximately, do these ideas come from? (You do not have to precisely locate and footnote sources but, generally, explain the philosophy or perspective on which you’re relying.)

[Note to instructor: for purposes of this Intersection Content Example that MSWord form has not been created but would be easy to do; or assign some other type of response for students such as a reflection paper or, if appropriate, an application of one or more of the ten Lutheran principles or principles from some other well-worked-out perspective.]