

Intersection Content Example

Areas: Education, Education Policy, Philosophy of Education

Content: Contemporary Thought in Education – The Role of Government

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.

Essentialism has been a highly influential philosophy of American education—perhaps the dominant perspective for several decades—so much so that many take it for granted as the obviously correct view on education. The philosophy of essentialism takes its name from the word essential. The essentialist believes students should master certain basic or “essential” kinds of knowledge, skills, and understandings students. Essentialists assert that, over time, society has found that certain skills, such as reading, writing, and computing, are needed for people to function effectively. Notice these skills and areas of knowledge are usually related to the economy, occupations, careers, and whatever the individual needs to get along in this present life. Notice also their overlap into such concepts as progressivism and pragmatism.

Government policies and programs in education (like all policies and programs) inescapably operate with some perspective and that perspective’s underlying assumptions. For this unit on The Role of Government review the list of our philosophies of education (essentialism, perennialism, existentialism, etc.). As you read about and discuss No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RTTT), and other government programs, consider carefully which perspectives inform these policies and why that might be.

Assignment:

History and present society offer many alternatives to education and its purpose. Concordia’s Lutheran education, for example, is a 500 year-old Reformation movement that goes back even further to sources in St. Augustine, the New Testament, and the Hebrew Scriptures. The Lutheran tradition has worked out a distinct way of understanding its teaching and education in relation to whatever particular form of government and government policy is currently in place.

For this assignment, read one or more of the feature articles in Issues in Christian Education, Winter 2005, Religious Expression in the Public Square.

<http://www.cune.edu/about/publications/issues-in-christian-education/issues-winter-2005/>

These readings address the Lutheran two-kingdoms perspective on participation in the public square. (The now-common expression, “public square,” as related to civil discourse, was introduced by a former student at Concordia, Richard John Neuhaus, in his book, *The Naked Public Square*.)

Use the convenient MSWord form linked below and apply some of the two-kingdoms perspectives from the Issues in Christian Education article(s) to NCLB, RTTT, and/or other roles of government in education. Your applications can be comment, critique, affirmation, or other responses to this Lutheran approach, usually referred to as the two kingdoms doctrine. Your assignment is not necessarily to agree but to become acquainted with and assess this approach or strategy.

[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 selection of experiences from their own life and teaching]