Assessing "Ways of Knowing and Thinking from Different Disciplines" in CPS 400

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What is CPS 400?

• CPS 400 (What Really Matters: Discernment, Consciousness, Compassion) is “THE” Magis Core Intersections course for students enrolled through the College of Professional Studies

• Using the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, students reflect on multiple Jesuit charisms and what they “mean” for their own lives, with a special focus on discerning “what they love” as related to vocation, service, justice and cura personalis

CPS 400 and Magis Core

• For this assessment project, we assessed the Magis’s objective “Apply critically the fundamental paradigms, and different ways of knowing and thinking from different disciplines” using the artifacts of students’ Week 4 reflection papers

• “After reading psychological, theological, and philosophical approaches to vocation, please explain the differences you see between these disciplinary approaches. How does each help us ‘know and think’ differently about vocation? Once you have laid out these differences, articulate which you relate the most to and why. In other words, you have learned very ‘Ignatian’ ways of thinking about discerning for vocation and very practical ways rooted in the psychological perspective of person-environment fit. Which approach do you favor?”

Overall Results

• Seven student papers from Week 4 were assessed

• While one student was unclear on the difference between theological and philosophical approaches to vocation, all students could clearly articulate the difference between these and psychological approaches

• When asked which approach they “favored”...
  3 = psychology, 2 = theology, and 2 = philosophy

As one student summarized, “After reading about the psychological, theological, and philosophical disciplines in regards to vocation, I feel that they resemble ‘what you think you should do’, ‘what you feel you are called to do’, and ‘what you understand you should do’...this is probably a gross understatement of these disciplines, but it helps me.”

Psychology & Vocation

“...applies a type of analysis that takes into consideration the talents you have and how they match up with different areas of focus. The hope is that the talents you possess lead you to determine a path that will be the most appealing and allow you to be both successful and happy. In addition, because of the strong desire to match your skills and abilities with a job, it is likely that if you find a job that matches these criteria, you will continue to be drawn to it even after you stop the work.”

Theology & Vocation

“Within this view, there are two schools of thought. The first proposes that if you are drawn to something because of God’s calling, you should follow that path regardless of your own desires. This approach is really looking at what is for the greater good and making your decision about your vocation based on God’s will. The second considers both your calling from God and your desires. It works to align what brings you joy and what God’s path is for you. Using either approach, there is a flavor of predeterminism, which provides that the talents and skills you possess were given to you by God and should be followed even if they are not congruent with your desire for something different.”

Philosophy & Vocation

“...includes argument that vocation through the lens of understanding and belief in God’s providential care for the world makes the vocational task to discover our role in the Divine plan, versus arbitrarily finding a job which provides the financial ability to create a good life. The philosophical approach views vocation as more than a career…it is what we choose to do while living out our roles in life. Examples include being a good citizen, a loving parent, or an obedient child.”

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