LDR 810 – Cross Cultural Dynamics

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Professor

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**Assignment**

***Assignment #2 – Developmental Readings***

* 1. Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles. Review instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements, and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries. Refer to the "**Student Guide to Developmental Readings**" in the **General Helps** folder for updated information on *sample comments*, *the grading rubric*, and *key definitions* related to developmental readings.

**Course Essential Elements**

1. Interdisciplinary Cross-cultural Understanding
2. Interdisciplinary Cross-cultural Communication
3. Interdisciplinary Cross-cultural Missions in a Global Society
4. Principles of Community Development

**Source :**

**Comment :**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Source One:** Bass, D. B. (2013). *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (Reprint edition). HarperOne.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**“Christianity did not begin with a confession. It began with an invitation into friendship, into creating a new community, into forming relationships based on love and service.”

**Essential Element:** This quote demonstrates an appeal towards community development within inter and intra faith dynamics.

**Additive/Variant:** The author really drives at the relational realities within the formation stages of early Christianity that can be reclaimed to help orient the present functions of Christianity.  By locating the initial impulse of Christian expression in relational terms, the author distances from the more cold, creedal assumptions of a religion whose adherents simply recited common beliefs.

**Contextual**:  Bass has written an intriguing work that I am extremely interested in.  She has written based on the theological questioning of Bonhoeffer back in the 1930s and 1940s.  The notion of religionless Chrstianity has captivated many, and Bass takes a stab at trying to articulate what that might look like in our present day.  This has a direct correlation to cross cultural dyamnics which considering the interfaith and intrafaith dialogue neede to produce fresh understanding of the nature of Christianity which can equip both leaders and followers into a new value set that allows for fresh articulation of Christ within culture.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “There is, however, something odd about this pattern. Other than joining a political party, it is hard to think of any other sort of community that people join by agreeing to a set of principles. Imagine joining a knitting group. Does anyone go to a knitting group and ask if the knitters believe in knitting or what they hold to be true about knitting? Do people ask for a knitting doctrinal statement? Indeed, if you start knitting by reading a book about knitting or a history of knitting or a theory of knitting, you will very likely never knit.”

**Essential Element:** This quote sets up some of the dynmic understanding necessary for cross-cultural communication within various church communities.

**Additive/Variant:** Bass argues that from its formulation, Christianity had to be more than a "club" replete with membership dues and monotonous mantras.  The larger point she drives toward is in direct conflict with the sola scriptura that arrives from the Reformation.  Her point is well stated, a person or group can never consider themselves a practicioner if the only experience they have is having read a manual.

**Contextual:**  I like this.  I am not sure I am quite comfortable with its ultimate end.  However, because the church of Jesus in the west has for so many years adopted a subtle stance of Father, Son, Holy Bible, I think Bass' critique is warranted.  To only focus on the Bible and assume that knowing what it says is the same as being a follower of its words is senseless and ineffective.

**Comment 3**:

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**If we think of belonging only as membership in a club, organization, or church, we miss the point. Belonging is the risk to move beyond the world we know, to venture out on pilgrimage, to accept exile. And it is the risk of being with companions on that journey, God, a spouse, friends, children, mentors, teachers, people who came from the same place we did, people who came from entirely different places, saints and sinners of all sorts, those known to us and those unknown, our secret longings, questions, and fears.”

**Essential Element:** This quote addresses the concerns replete in Christian cross-cultural dynamics.

**Additive/Variant**: Bass expands the understanding of belonging beyond the traditional confines of safety, predictability, and security.  Instead, she flips it on its head (a very Christian thing to do, it seems), to illustrate that belonging in the Christian sense is the full embrace of risk, insecurity, with open arms to all manner of different  people and unknowns.

**Contextual**:  There is value in this approach.  The biblical story is a story of gathering and scattering.  There are times of gathering together in like-minded, ethnic groups, and then there are seasons of "going out into all the world".  God is the chief gatherer and scatterer and seems to biblically initiate both realities at different times in history.  Perhaps that is why the biblical push ultimately ends with membership within the Kingdom of God which encompasses both realities of the gathered-scattered.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Spiritual awakening is not ultimately the work of invisible cultural forces. Instead, it is the work of learning to see differently, of prayer, and of conversion. It is something people do.”

**Essential Element:** This quote invites the skillset necessary within the various strands of Christian expression for cross-cultural understanding.

**Additive/Variant:** I don't wholeheartedly agree with Bass' assessment here.  She categorically links spiritual awakening with the work a person can perform from within himself/herself.  I would contend that since God is Spirit, as biblically articulated, that God must be involved in the work of spiritual awakening.  A person can posture himself/herself for spiritual awakening, but that awakening will be a work of the Spirit of God, not of the efforts of the individual.  However, I do agree with Bass that spiritual awakening is not cultural phenomenon.

**Contextual:**  I suspect that spiritual awakening is eventually seen as social justice and enhancement.  In short, there is physical and cultural fruit to be had following spiritual awakening.  As such, a transformational leader can begin to better understand the role that spiritual activism can have in developing leadership strategies meant to impact culture.

**Source Two:** Wolf, A. (2021). Inter-religious Dialogue. In S. Pihlaja (Ed.), *Analysing Religious Discourse* (pp. 197–216). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108863957.012>

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Discourse across religions and religious traditions can be viewed and practiced as a kind of translation exercise utilizing the various religious documents to assist in developing context for discourse.

**Essential Element:** This reference enhances techniques essential for cross cultural understanding.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**Inter-religious and Intra-religious dialogue continues to be recognized as the essential ingredient for developing growing understanding of not only differences between systems, but more specifically, can be utilized to develop bridges of connections between various faiths and various expressions within particular faiths. Informed dialogue, utilizing actual religious documents, promotes understanding even if differences of opinions remain. Once understanding is achieved, the stage is more aptly set for ongoing communication and relationships to be fostered which inherently breeds stability amongst social contexts.

**Contextualization:** As I continue to host interfaith dialogue sessions; conversations on pertinent cultural issues amongst men from various Christian affiliations and backgrounds, I experience the need for “translation” tools to assist participants to more fully hear what each other communicates and why each may be influenced through their particular tradition to approach cultural issues the way they do.

**Source Three:** Pratt, D. (2020). Interreligious Dialogue: A Case Study Approach in Respect to the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. In *World Christianity* (pp. 179–203). Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004444867_010>

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** This article analyses five theological dynamics—contextual, communal, theocentric, responsive, and salvific—which reflect a wider ecumenical theology for dialogue that, arguably, undergirds the very possibility of the relationship of World Christianity to other faiths. These dynamics and models demonstrate ecumenical complementarity and so provide a base-line for ongoing global Christian engagement in interfaith relations and interreligious dialogue.

**Essential Element:** This case study presents a full spectrum inter religious cross-cultural dynamics with an aim toward community development within and between the various faith expressions.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The author dissects the necessary theological categories the he asserts are best suited to assist ongoing dialogue which produces a broader ecumenicism. Each category, once discussed and properly understood, serves to assist people and communities of faith for better understanding of their own placement within broader Christendom, but also in understanding how others, who differ in doctrine or expression, equally fit in the ecumenical community.

**Contextualization:** Categories for understanding are quite helpful in framing discussions amidst dialogue. In intra faith dialogue, where theology is already acknowledged as a principal precept, these five categories prove beneficial to known where, as a facilitator, we are in working through the necessary points of understanding. The value of discerning context within one’s own faith beliefs and expression is invaluable in learning to consider the variances that occur withing the Christian faith from group to group, denomination to denomination, hierarchy to hierarchy, and continent to continent.

**Source four:** Longworth, N. (2003). *Lifelong Learning in Action: Transforming Education in the 21st Century*. Routledge.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "The watchword for today is 'community' in every meaning of that word, whether it is a geographical entity as in a learning city or a learning region, or a community of people with common sense of purpose or interest, as in a religious or a tribal community" [6]

**Essential Element:** This comment reflects interdisciplinary perspectives for community development.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This learning theory incorporating community at the heart of learning and accomplishment dovetails nicely with some of the buzz-theories in the business trends (i.e. Tribes) as well as in the communication and media theories being espoused and reformatted today by Hunt.  A Community or tribe has a synergy and power in context, whether it be geographic, ideological, situational, etc. that only a tribe expression can contain. For the learning theorists, the intent is the harness the community needs of individuals and yoke them together in the educational environment to produce results that simple one-on-one educational approaches cannot accommodate.

**Contextualization:** I see this educational understanding at the heart of the OGS experience.  There appears to be a very intentional endeavor to create a community space where learning is at once self-directed, but community informed amongst student to professor, but equally amongst student peer relationships.  The underpinning concept appears to be that learning in a community is superior to isolated attempts at self-education, although both can feed into the effectiveness of the other.

**Source five:** Balswick, J. O., & Morland, J. K. (1994). *Social problems: A christian understanding and response*. Baker Books.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "Without the sound foundation that sociology can give, Christian interpretations of social conditions may well be erroneous. Conversely, without Christian interpretations, sound sociological understanding will be quite sterile.  That is, it will be sterile unless it is infused with a sense of values which can give guidance in determining, (1) which situation warrant being defined as a social problem; (2) what the desired end is to be; and (3) which of the various means to reach that end are morally justifiable." [15]

**Essential Element:** This comment reflects applying sociology for its interdisciplinary benefits for cross cultural understanding.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This again points to the symbiotic relationship that can exist between theology and sociology.  The author is making the point that one without the other can leave large gaps of error as meaning is either over-layed without warrant, or ignored in favor of sterile environments.  Neither is all that useful as a standalone.

**Contextualization:** These readings are opening my eyes to the structures that sociological research can take even within a theological aim.  My training and interests to date have been around biblical studies and theology.  It is the grid through which I have learned to process data, both old and new.  However, the OGS approach of interdisciplinary study is what attracted me to the school.  As such, I desire complimentary fields in which to practice what I have already learned in hopes of yielding further insight, correction, and ultimately enhanced understanding.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "Formally defined, a social problem is any situation which the members of a group consider to be undesirable and which they think should be remedied by cooperative action." [16]

**Essential Element:** This quote addresses cross cultural communication.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** I can see the division of society and culture amidst this definition of social problem solving.  The culture, which is made up of the cummulative, individual actions and consequences of individuals amidst the group, interact and interpret, as a group, the outlying societal factors influencing them as actors.  The cultured group may then, as free agents, decide to impact society in a variety of ways through problem/solution methodology and social action.

**Contextualization:** I feel I am beginning to see some helpful divisions in the sociological endeavor. Just the simple dissection of culture and society is helpful as I navigate my own thought patterns and seek to both identify problems that need solving, and solutions that need problems clearly defined.  This distinction of culture and society allows a first level grid for me to beginning processing observed information and thoughts.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "The relativity of what are considered to be problems in any given society should sensitize Christian community to its important task of critically examining existing conditions in light of the enduring truth of Scripture." [22]

**Essential Element:** This quote encourages both cross cultural understanding and communication.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Truth is applied contextually, and in that sense, there is a very relative application of truth within society.  That said, it should not be mistaken that truth as a whole is relative; as in, it changes or morphs from what it is in given situations.  On the contrary, the relativity of truth is in the application of the actor only.  Truth might be best understood like a diamond.  Although the diamond is a static whole unto itself, the perception of the diamond has everything to do with the orientation of the eye and the angle of the light glinting off of the diamonds facets.  Sociology attempts to find the orientation of the actors.  Theology seems to attempt to find the angle of the light. Together they can illuminate a reality that is directly illustrative of truth, both universal and culturally relative.

**Contextualization:** Christians are not at liberty, in the present culture in particular, to ignore the apparent conditions of our day.  Abstractly applying "truths" from its own context or inherited understanding does not guarrantee that those "truths" apply to the identified problems within a given culture.  I find this revealing.  Like many others, I have moved through my own battles with dogmatism and "truth for truth sake" thinking, and have found myself settling in favor of being in the culture but aware of the opportunity to not always be of it.  It is being able to not be of it that draws its orientation from theology with the hope of solution-based understanding and input into every epoch and season.

**Source Six:** Trimikliniotis, N. (2020). Public sociology, social justice and struggles in the era of austerity-and-crises. *International Social Work*, *63*(1), 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872818782324>

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**The relationship between academic discipline of sociology and political/social struggles for equality and social justice has been an issue since the establishment of sociology. Sociology for social justice and equality was born in opposition to official academic studies which were subservient to the established conservative order: it sought to engage with, connect to and articulate struggles of marginalised, oppressed or exploited communities… Almost all claims are described as ‘just’ to give them legitimacy. In that sense, there is plurality and an inherent ambiguity within the concept that makes it contested ab initio.”

**Essential Element:** This article represents communication and conflict resolution frameworks that are essential for the cross cultural mission and long term development.

**Additive/Variant:** I see an immediate “spin” occurring with the language of “sociology for social justice”. The inherent danger is akin to the very issue being disparaged in the article; namely, that sociology in the 20th century was done under the thumb of prevailing authorities and mindsets, resulting in the skewing of “proper” social solutions due to inherent biases. However, Sociology focused in order to “right the wrongs” as currently defined, as the author suggests, is inevitably chained to the same restraints of worldview if “new” values are inserted as “better-than-the-old” ways. This is the Achilles heel of sociology when it tries to define itself as a science of vision-casting for a brave new world. The subjective bias as to what constitutes marginalized and oppressed and exploited are essentially non-scientific terms.

**Contextualization:** My ongoing concern with sociology as pre-cursor to policy-making and law-setting is the inherent subjectivism in the assumption of “what is right.” The world is attempting to remake itself, all the while queering the very words that could otherwise be useful tools in bringing crisp definitions to social ills. Worldview seems invariably foundational to sociology even more so than other more material sciences. Although, I would maintain that a practitioner’s worldview will unintentionally color, illuminate, or eliminate what the scientific “observer” is actually capable of seeing in the application of subjective science approaches.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**This article focuses on the type of sociology that promises transformation in the direction of social justice and equality. This is often organically connected to radical and critical perspectives connected to social struggles. There are a number of powerful critiques about how mainstream sociology had exercised censorship, silencing or ignoring radical strands of scholars, such as Marxist scholars, critical race, feminist and gender scholars, anti-colonial and other radical strands.”

**Essential Element:** This quote addresses the need for further cross cultural communication approaches.

**Additive/Variant:** By comparing/contrasting mainstream (professional) sociology with public sociology, the author is hunting for a fresh infusion that will allow sociology in practice, as well as in the boots-on-ground practitioners (social workers), to establish solutions more effectively and equitably to social problems. The author argues that the disconnect is real and illuminates the fracture of what is theorized and what is actual. Hence, the author’s affinity to allow the radical fringe of sociology into the conversation in hopes that, perhaps, the Marxists, Feminists, Gender-ists, might shed some sociological insights that are otherwise missed within the “censored” arena of professional sociology.

**Contextualization:** As I consider bringing together a varied group of adults in hopes of marrying individual perspectives, bias, and influences, I am sympathetic to the author’s desire to let academia and public perception find common ground for discourse…and ultimately, solutions. In my area of study, “solutions” might be defined more aptly as “resolutions”; that is a recommitment to truth markers (worldview) that infuse the present social struggles with meaning and solutions which are theologically grounded but sociologically discernable.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**The content of the mobile commons is actually ‘defined’, changed and re-made by the praxis of the struggles and claims of rights, the modes of sharing, passing on, extended to others. Therefore it is ‘owned’ by all those who struggle, need it and rely on it. It is a ‘social template’ to be taken up in context: the real ‘authors’ of the mobile commons are those subjects involved in the praxis of the struggles – at best, *public sociologists* or sociologists for social justice are co-authors.”

**Essential Element:** This quote concerns communication within society.

**Additive/Variant:** The author suggests the term “mobile commons” to articulate the in-the-trenches concerns, struggles, and activities of particular groups in a particular setting and era. The author argues that sociological “study from above” that does not take necessary stock in the public social dynamics, views, and concerns of those *actually* experiencing them is to miss the context. In short, I see the author flirting with the notion that objective sociological attempts need the subjectivity of the “mobile commons” to avoid the recurring misfires of sociology done which misses social justice outcomes.

**Contextualization**: Theologically, these same struggles are harmonized within Wesleyan Quadrilateral which gives equal footing to experience as a mode and means of proper orientation of God’s revelation. The “mobile commons” of humans before God can offer key insights into broader theological concerns and ultimately faithful praxis.

**Comment 13:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Sociologists and social workers are products of their times. They cannot but make choices about what they ought to do about a world riddled with contradictions… Moreover, specialisation and division of labour in academia, which was meant to allow for scientific advancement, is producing fragmented knowledge and inadequate solutions. We are called upon to halt the damage inflicted by ‘crippling the ability of the students to think as social scientists’ ([Wallerstein, 2000](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0020872818782324#bibr63-0020872818782324): 34). Social sciences must be reunited by providing students the analytical and empirical tools to make disciplinary connections to read the bigger picture and global processes.”

**Essential Element:** This quote suggests better interdisciplinary practices necessary for cross cultural engagements.

**Additive/Variant:** The author again appeals to the needs of a sociology that allows for the “measuring” of the subjective context of those experiencing the marginalization. Academia has tried to divide and conquer in hopes of offering divergent and deepened understanding of the component parts that make up any given social struggle. What too often results, however, is academic ghettos that don’t coordinate or communicate between themselves. Instead, the author desires a solution that allows the totality of the sociological order, including the “commons”, in a mutual conversation that better represents the whole picture in hopes of producing more just social solutions.

**Contextualization:** I am attracted to how and where the sociological apparatus assists in diagnosing and understanding the more pertinent “global” cultural issues. I look to invite adult learners into a specific forum that will, by design, ask the multifarious disciplines to interact in search of a theologically sound, God-centric, solutions-based, context sensitive, solutions which enhance, not further bifurcate, a community. Learning how to ask the various disciplines to inform and influence observed and experienced problems is a very real function of the ”thought architecture” I hope to enhance.

**Source Seven:** Dumitraşcu, N. (2022). Interpreting the Inter-Christian Relationship and Dialogue with Monotheistic Religions in the Document For the Life of the World. *Theology Today*, *78*(4), 408–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00405736211048791>

**Comment 16:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** In the context of the extremely complicated political and religious situation in which the contemporary world finds itself, it is a sign of unity, normality and, hope that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has taken the initiative to draw up a document of symbolic value for the collaboration, on the one hand of Orthodox Christians with those of other denominations, and on the other hand with the representatives of the other two monotheistic religions, for the good, prosperity, and peace of the whole world. It is an invitation to sincere dialogue, which is not about establishing a hierarchy of religions, but about fulfilling the supreme commandment to love God, no matter what we call him, and also to love one another, even if we are different. Dialogue involves overcoming our religious mono-systems and entering an area of spiritual “comfort” because religion means a self-understanding of the holiness of the human person and a duty to testify about this without resorting to deceit, in an atmosphere of full tolerance.

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Source Eight:** Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

**Comment 17:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** In this book, Daniel Kahneman challenges the notion that people make decisions based on the logical processing of facts and information. Instead, he suggests two systems of thinking present in people. The first he calls Fast thinking which is linked to emotion. The second he calls Slow thinking which is linked to rational reasoning. These two systems do not always work together, thus creating divergent outcomes in decision making even within the same person depending on the thinking system in operation at the time of the decision.

**Essential Element:** This paraphrase relates to common human behavior traits, which inherently impact cross cultural understanding and communication, thus impacting mission and the resultant community development potential.

**Additive/Variant:** Kahneman’s work and analysis might be considered the underpinnings of algorhythmic social media development due to his work on the actual decision-making processes at work in people. Up until his work, the dominant sociological understanding was that people decide on rational facts and information. Kahneman produced a series of experiments that disproved this notion. Instead, depending on how the scenario was presented, determined whether a person would access their fast or slow thinking process, thus drastically altering their decisions. People decide differently when they are emotionally charged than when they are logically rational.

**Contextualization:** As I work with groups of people fostering discussions around the hot topics of our culture, the observations of Kahneman are in full view. When a room of people is charged with emotion and people are “thinking fast”, very different outcomes result then if the room is systematic, rational, and logical. As I study how people arrive at the architecture of their thoughts about any given subject, I am cognizant that judgements arising for emotions offer a different array of “facts” supporting those judgements than judgements/thoughts arrived at through a logical gathering of information before conclusions are reached.

**Source Eight:** Grutterink, H., & Meister, A. (2022). Thinking of you thinking of me: An integrative review of meta-perception in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *43*(2), 327–341. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2516>

**Comment 18:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Extensive research shows that individuals' meta-perceptions can have implications for their affect, cognition, behavior, and relationships.”

**Essential Element:** This quote asserts an interdisciplinary approach to human behavior dynamics, thus impacting cross cultural communication.

**Additive/Variant:** Fundamental to humans as a “thinking machine” are the meta-perceptions that everyone is exposed to, which undeniably influence the formulations of thoughts, decisions, and actions.

**Contextualization:** My hope is to influence the thought life of people within my community. In order to do so, it is imperative to understand the already existing structures that form thoughts, opinions, and ultimately, social behavior. Theologically, the “fear of man” is decried as an impediment to walking righteously with the Lord. Meta-perceptions can most certainly contribute to a fear of man mentality, impairing Biblical worldview thinking and acting.

**Comment 19:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**In summary, a meta-perception is a given person's (perceiver's) belief regarding the view that another person or group of people (target) holds of him or her, regarding a specific type of content. Implicit in this definition is the relationship between the target and the perceiver.”

**Essential Element:** This quote appears to be derived from observations of communication, albeit “internalized” communication which undoubtably drive in settings of cross-cutlural interaction.

**Additive/Variant:** The various “cultural conversations” being had in our society are undoubtably subject to the meta-perceptions contained in the individuals or the groups they represent. Thus, the human tendency to base thought and action upon some level of meta-perception demands a seat at the table as a contributing unit for the thought architecture of an individual or group. Furthermore, knowing and/or acknowledging one’s meta-perceptions would go a long way in assisting the individual/group to more open dialog as it pertains to ideologies or social ideas that might otherwise threaten the sensibilities of the thinker.

**Contextualization:** Theologically, the category of humility comes to mind in addressing meta-perceptions. One would have to decide to tread humbly in order to access one’s potential meta-perceptions in hopes of utilizing those perceptions toward constructive ends. Otherwise, it seems the danger of unacknowledged perceptions that are clearly influencing the thought-world of an individual would create mental static, not allowing a clear-headed addressing of information that is useful for structuring complex social/communal solutions.

**Comment 20:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Meta-perceptions are primarily studied in three categories: identity perceptions, competence perceptions, and relation perceptions. Although these categories are existent within all meta-perception formulation, one may present more dominantly dependent on the arena of a participant’s context.

**Essential Element:** This paraphrase asserts social/cross-cultural communication apparatuses.

**Additive/Variant:** People formulate thoughts, opinions, and behaviors, in part, on the contributing meta-perceptions of the individual/group in relation to their perception of their own context. Feeling liked or unliked, victimized or appreciated, loved or hated, colors, at best, or impairs the limits one has when first thinking through social, business, community, or personal issues.

**Contextualization:** In preparing topical discussions for a small group to discuss, it is important to address the meta-perceptions resident in the participants. Failing to do so might seriously impair the groups ability to properly think through all pertinent aspects of a given social issue or concern, thus hindering any serious solutions for consideration.

**Source Nine:** Carter, P. L., & Nicolaides, A. (2023). Transformative learning: An emotional (r)evolution. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2023*(177), 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20476>

**Comment 21:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Transformative Learning theory is a process of moving a participant through certain phases reflection to arrive at critical reflection, the most non-biased of each phase. The authors specifically enhance the knowledge of “edge-emotions” toward a “comfort zone”, whereby new stages of reflection come more easily. The authors state, “Ultimately, this (r)evolution places a spotlight on the criticism leveled against Mezirow’s theory, opening new lines of inquiry that enhance the emotional dimension of the theory and that acknowledge a “shift from a cognitive-individual to a whole-person social way to interpret transformative learning” (Neal, 2018, p. 202).

**Essential Element:** This paraphrase concerns the motivation of change of participants and directly impacts cross-cultural attempts at community development.

**Additive/Variant:** Taking the emotions into account in learning theory is essential. Emotions are likely the longest antennae which help construct the meta-perceptions in a person. Thus, dealing appropriately with emotions and how those emotions impact the ability to engage social ideas, policies, and practices becomes an essential component in transforming the thought life and world view of an individual. The authors narrow their focus to suggest the need for a complete grief processing of emotions assisting the transport of a person to a non-conflict safe, or comfort, zone. Once emotions are acknowledged and given proper place, as with meta-perceptions, the work of transformative learning can be advanced.

**Contextualization:** I have had the privilege of working with individuals and groups, both pastorally as well as more standardized education settings. It is undeniable that emotions, and in particular unhealed emotions, create a tremendous undercurrent within a person as they attempt to think critically about certain issues or social needs. I have found that it is necessary to work through the emotions, allowing for their full contribution as appropriate, as well as “settling” some of the emotion’s peaks and valleys that hinder critical analysis. Once settled, I agree with the author’s assertions that critical thinking and reflection can progress to the next stages of transformative learning.

**Source 10:** Bou Zeineddine, F., & Leach, C. W. (2021). Feeling and thought in collective action on social issues: Toward a systems perspective. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *15*(7), e12622. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12622>

**Comment 22:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**We argue that such problems could be partly alleviated with increased engagement with a meta‐theoretical perspective that has long been advocated for in psychology—the systems approach. In this view, thought, feeling, motivation, action, and context can be viewed as co‐evolving, inextricably linked, systems of systems. We illustrate the need for and benefit of this approach in the domain of collective action on social issues… In other words, systems meta‐theory allows us to view our key concepts not as static, discrete, unitary variables, but as situated and synchronized assemblies of a host of lower‐order components (Nowak etal.,2017).”

**Essential Element:** The article argues for interdisciplinary perspectives necessary for social, and hence cross-cultural resolutions.

**Additive/Variant:** The authors assert that the systems of systems that ultimately contribute to thought and action are multifarious, not static categories, neatly arranged and accounted for. There is much to consider in the individual context, experience, reasonings, education, etc. of every participant who might seek to critically reflect on key issues or solutions needed with in a given community. Meta-theory makes room for the more malleable components of thoughts and resultant behaviors.

**Contextualization:** As I gather groups of adults to intentionally process key issues of our society, it most certainly seems to be a complex soup of personality, emotion, rationality, fears, and unknown drivers. Attempting to unpack a social issue, for example, takes patience and time, allowing each participant to locate themselves “within” the issue based on a think, feel, know scale of “knowledge”. Determining each individual’s starting point allows for a more constructive group conversation in hopes at arriving at group-level critical reflection with the goal of ultimate social engagement.

**Source 11:** Doorley, J., Goodman, F., Kelso, K., & Kashdan, T. (2020). Psychological flexibility: What we know, what we do not know, and what we think we know. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *14*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12566>

**Comment 23:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Effective responses to life's challenges vary depending on fluctuating situational contingencies, including our goals, and can be easily thwarted by distress. Recently, theorists have attempted to synthesize existing literature on optimal stress responses to build contextual models of emotion regulation. Instead of identifying a single optimal regulatory strategy across space and time, these new frameworks—primarily rooted in social psychological research on emotion regulation and clinical psychological research on acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)—outline optimal responses to distress in the context of meaningful goal pursuit.”

**Essential Element:** This quote emphasizes the growing awareness and understanding of all factors contributing to an individual, or cultural groups, dynamics.

**Additive/Variant:** This is another research endeavor attempting to isolate the emotions as contributors to the formulated responses of individuals and groups. This approach utilizes the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ) in attempts to discover the psychological flexibility of participants relative to the amount of distress the participant reports. This is, likewise, a sociological endeavor upon data collection. What does emerge, however, is a correlation of psychological flexibility related to meaningful goal pursuit. In short, establishing a proper goal may be crucial for properly focusing the emotions naturally present in distressing situations and contexts.

**Contextualization:** Facilitating group conversations about hot topics in culture can be a land mine of emotions. Most everyone comes to the table with some level of knowledge, some existing feelings, and some perception of what is “known.” Very quickly, the emotions about the issues, many of those based on meta-perceptions run the risk of destroying the ability for constructive conversation and solution-making. Psychological flexibility is necessary for participants to remain open to variant facts, feelings, and knowns that can, if allowed, point toward group solutions. A common goal-set, pre-established prior to discussion can be a very useful tool in coordinating the think, feel, know of a group.

**Source Twelve:**

**Comment 24:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Comment 25:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Source Thirteen:** Christopher, G. C. (2024). The “Heart of America” Annual Survey Results: A Counterpoint to the Narrative of Polarization. *National Civic Review*, *112*(4), 23–31.

**Comment 26:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Social science research tells us that there are

effective ways to change attitudes, reduce bias and prejudice, and this

is fundamentally relational work. Interventions include strategies that

promote:

* Individuation – which seeks specific information to avoid group-based assumptions
* Perspective taking - imagining oneself as a member of a

stereotyped group to limit group-based evaluations

* Increasing contact - having positive intergroup interactions

which alter cognitive representations  
**Essential Element:** This quote addresses communication and understanding necessary for the work of cross-cultural community development.

**Additive/Variant:** For all the many books and articles written about specific societal ills and the tools used to measure and assess, along with the hints are suggested remedies, the solution continues to comes back to interpersonal relationships. Social scientists continue to unearth the same “findings”: it is imperative for individuals to properly self-assess, then understand their particular setting within their own structured environment and groupings, then move to understand others with differing cultures, points of view, and/or experiences. This is the way forward from division to unity.

**Contextualization:** I find this 2024 Survey of over 1000 Americans to be particularly instructive as it shows a well-roundedness that despite the interference of partisan and extreme media interference, humans will never graduate, nor outsource through technology our dynamic need for interpersonal contact one with another for the purpose of sharing our individual realities in a collective search for harmonized paths forward together.

**Comment 27:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** As we move ahead with the work of systemic change, we must also lay the groundwork for community healing, acknowledging the harm done to communities of color and providing the space for healing.

**Essential Element:** This appears to be desiring to deal with community development.

**Additive/Variant:** This synopsis quote rests upon the ill-defined “systemic” system which appears in the crosshairs of many organizations seeking to repair the ills within society. What stands out to is the misapplication of the “problem” as that of an overarching system. From there, the suggested remedy is to be found within a “space” for healing. If the “problem” is a system, the resolution to that problem cannot logically be a “space.” They are not of the same substance, thus, there is likely to be nothing but confusion and misunderstanding in the attempt to join problem-solution through two distinct spheres of relation. Basically, this is a square peg, round hole conundrum. It also deviates from the previously stated social science observation that the remedy to social ills is to be found in the individual correction of relationship. As the article has previously observed, only through individual correction can “systems” support the “spaces” that many would-be justice seekers continue to decry.

**Contextualization:** I find the great weakness of seeking reparation for lingering societal ailments is in the hope that solutions will be found in the “generalized.” To blame an amorphous “system” of oppression does not bring a crisp enough definition to the problems at hand. What the social science do seems to be finding again and again is the unavoidable conclusion that “systemic” ills can only be approached individual-to-individual. It is the difference in attempting to resolve and relate with “Homosexuality” as a system, and having a conversation with my gay friend, Scott. One can only be theorized and slapped at. The other can be seen, embraced, and connected with. Thus, systemic injustice is but the shadow of the individual. The individual cannot be adjusted by swatting at the shadow.

**Source Fourteen:**

**Comment 28:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Comment 29:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Source Fifteen:** Bryant, R., Keisling, B. A., Starks, B. C., Nunn, B., White, L. D., Lewis, J. C., & Cooper, S. (2023). Intergenerational Interventions to Cultivate Dei-Champions: Increased Resilience and Accountability Through “Shipboard” Experiences. *Oceanography*, *36*(4), 108–113.

**Comment 30:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** We found that immersive experiences and intergenerational teams led to the cultivation of a strong identity as a DEI-champion, enhanced group cohesion, and promoted feelings of resilience among participants.

**Essential Element:** This source is chosen because it evaluates factors motivating change which can lead to community development.

**Additive/Variant:** Although I am not a strong proponent of DEI agendas, I appreciate these author’s connection with intergenerational studies and outcomes with promote a much stronger community bond and cohesion. Regardless of the topic or intent, the observance of intergenerational benefits is refreshing.

**Contextualization:** Perhaps a key component lost in our culture is the separation of our society into age groups that have lost the ability to collaborate, sharing the wisdom and experiences across generational lines. This article, although specifically focused on DEI conversations intergenerationally, does highlight a much-needed return to the societal and cultural cohesion that only a multigenerational intention can supply.

**Source Sixteen:**

**Comment 31:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

**Comment 32:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

**Essential Element:**

**Additive/Variant:**

**Contextualization:**

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