Contextualization for Social Change

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Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. David Ward

**Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements**

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week

of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during

the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.

b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

The history of Contextualization is pivotal to understanding past events, times, and methods. This is crucial for two (primary) reasons: first, it helps us know what happened during specific historical periods and provides us with the potential to learn from it. For instance, by pinpointing the factors contributing to World War II, we can potentially prevent a catastrophic event like World War III. Secondly, contextualization is crucial as it ensures that accurate information about the past is shared in a language that is understandable and relatable in real time. For example, the teachings of Jesus must be contextualized so people can understand, accept, and relate to them.

While contextualization methods have probably existed for several decades, Guiruis states, “The term contextualization was coined in 1972” (Guiruis, 2020, p.165). In the same publication, Guirguis mentions that contextualization has been heatedly debated and has no standard definition.

Although there may not be a standard definition for contextualization, the Cambridge dictionary defines it as “the fact or process of considering something in its context, which can help you understand it.” The Oxford Learning Dictionary defines contextualization as “the process of considering something concerning the situation in which it happens or exists.” During my research, I have discovered numerous terms and definitions of contextualization; for this discussion, I will utilize Kilag’s as the anchor. Kilag states that “contextualization refers to adapting the teaching of values education to the local context, considering the diversity of values and cultural backgrounds within a given society” (Kilag et al., 2023, p.4).

Although elaborating on the importance of contextualization can be immense, I will drill down on two major subjects that demand contextualization as a firm foundation upon which to build.

Those two subjects are religion and education. Regarding contextualization and religion, the preacher must take a 2000-year-old written (albeit living) Word and frame it modernly to make sense to his audience. In terms of enacting/inserting contextualization into education, it’s imperative to draw a vivid picture of how and why certain things took place in history to understand them better today. As an example, without contextualizing how and why slavery came to be in America, one would think that all people who owned slaves were immoral and indecent people when, in fact, it was a standard way of conducting business during that time. I’m not condoning or justifying slavery; my point is that we need to put that time in history in its proper context, being careful not to take a presentism (the act of seeing the past through the lens of today) approach to the situation. The term “contextualization,” first coined in the early 1970s, has many definitions, several of which mention tying occurrences to past events with current ones in a logical format, which, in turn, plays a vital role in connecting the dots of history (Flugge, 2017, p.50).

**References**

Fluegge, K. (2017). The Dubious History of “Contextualization” and the Cautious Case for its Continued Use. *Lutheran Mission Matters*, *25*(1), 49-69.

Guirguis, Y. (2020). History of Contextualization. *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, 15(2), 165-184.

Kilag, et al. (2023). Optimizing the Teaching of Values Education Strategies for Integration and Contextualization. Excellencia*: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education* (2994-9521), 1(1), 65-76.