Contextualization for Social Change

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1**. Introduction** – Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate

program as a whole, and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.

2. **Personal Growth** - Describe your personal growth–how the course stretched or

challenged you– and your progress in mastery of course content and skills during

the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills you gained.

3. **Reflective Entry** - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or

adaptation and relevant application) of new learning in your professional field.

What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result

of your study?

4. **Conclusion** – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional,

religious, and educational goals.

**Introduction:**

 In summarizing the course's intent and how it fits into the graduate program as a whole, I found that the topic of contextualization for social change was well-positioned in the overall makeup of the program. This particular subject matter sent me on a soul-searching research mission. This specific course was so meaningful that it could be offered twice in the program.

As described by Kilag, contextualization refers to integrating values education while adopting an interdisciplinary approach to enhance authentic learning experiences, foster holistic development, and empower students to be ethical and responsible (Kilag et al., 2023, p.2).

Leaning into my statement regarding having this course offered twice, coupled with Kilag’s comments, I believe students can genuinely benefit from a sequel to the course because there is so much to be gained from taking a deeper dive and/or approaching the subject matter from a different perspective, based on a different set/list of the course's essential elements. This was one of the most fascinating, challenging, and rewarding courses.

**Personal Growth**

As Dr. Christina Hibbert describes, “Personal Growth is a process of identifying the physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual changes we desire and working in each area to improve and reach our fullest potential.” I concur with her statement, and my stance is that everyone should embrace a constant improvement process (C.I.P.) mindset. I often tell my team to remember to take a daily C.I.P., which is to relentlessly adopt a continuous improvement process/mentality.

My response to the question regarding how the course challenged me would be as follows: Although Contextualization is an everyday word in my vocabulary, contextualizing, as I would personally define it (in layperson's terms), is comprehensively applying your understanding of the subject matter to a workable/real-world situation. In other words, contextualization aims to connect academic understanding and content with students' life experiences. In my estimation, learning does not occur without connecting the subject matter to a student's life experience. Learning (acquiring new information) is the seed, whereas life experience is the soil; the seed has to be planted in the soil to initiate/stimulate growth! Moreover, the courses come with a built-in mechanism that stimulates learning, called developmental readings, which are directed by course essential elements. The course essential elements for this particular course are:

* History of contextualization
* Approaches to contextualization
* Culture & contextualization
* Contextualization for constructive change

In an effort to maximize my studies/understanding of the subject matter, I make it a point to embrace and explore all of the course's essential elements; in doing so, I found that the history of contextualization from a religious point of view was intriguing and that contextualization for constructive change resonated with me. The other two, *approaches for contextualization and culture for contextualization*, expanded my horizons but did not have the same impact.

Finally, my stance is that *contextualization for constructive change* is a concept/theory that, if embraced by a true Christian, can change the world from what it is to what it should be. Most of my research was geared toward learning more about developing strategies likely to lead to constructive social change.

**Reflective Entry:**

I will state the following regarding how learning about this subject matter has impacted my professional life. Although there has been no immediate applicable learning at this time, what is learned today often comes into play tomorrow. The knowledge gained during this course will be put on the shelf to be accessed when (not if) it is needed.

**Conclusion:**

As described by Kilag, contextualization refers to integrating values education while adopting an interdisciplinary approach to enhance authentic learning experiences, foster holistic development, and empower students to be ethical and responsible (Kilag et al., 2023, p.2).

Integrating values and being ethically responsible are things that should be standardized for the betterment of humankind. During my studies of Contextualization for social change, I discovered that although most people embrace being ethically responsible, especially regarding religion and spiritual beliefs, some purposely and others inadvertently take things such as the word of God out of context to meet their specific needs and desires. Looking at the statement mentioned above (regarding people taking God’s word out of context) through a ministerial lens, I find that troubling while understanding that it’s not foreign to human nature. We are imperfect, but we should strive to understand and respect each other regardless of our differences. Understanding God’s word is a pivotal step toward accomplishing that.