



# CONTEXTUAL LENS PROTOCOL

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THE CONTEXTUAL LENS PROTOCOL WAS CREATED TO SUPPORT FACILITATORS WITH THE GOAL OF TEACHING & LEARNING FOR UNDERSTANDING AND TRANSFER<sup>1</sup>. THIS PROTOCOL HELPS US TO GAIN DEEPER INSIGHT AND ENGAGE IN REFLECTIVE, EVIDENCE-BASED DISCOURSE ABOUT ANY GIVEN TOPIC BECAUSE *CONTEXT MATTERS*. AS WE READ, OBSERVE, REFLECT AND DIALOGUE WITH EACH OTHER, WE MUST BE AWARE OF THE VARIETY OF CONTEXTS UNDER WHICH WE THINK AND SPEAK. WHEN WE ARE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT ABOUT OUR “LENS”, WE HELP OUR COLLEAGUES GAIN GREATER UNDERSTANDING.

## CONTEXTUAL LENSES

HISTORICAL	CULTURAL	INQUIRY
POLITICAL	LINGUISTIC	REFLECTIVE/REFLEXIVE
ECONOMIC	GENDER	RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY
SOCIAL/SOCIETAL	POSITIONAL	SUPPOSITION
“OPEN” LENS (CREATED BY THE INDIVIDUAL)		

### STEP 1. INPUT: *READING, THINKING, LISTENING*

AS YOU ARE TAKING “IN” INFORMATION, ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY HOW YOU ARE PROCESSING IT.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- *WHAT THEMES ARISE? WHY?*
- *HOW AM I PROCESSING THIS INFORMATION? WHY?*

### STEP 2. PROCESS: *INTERNAL & RESPECTIVE*

IDENTIFY THE *CONTEXTUAL LENS[ES]* THAT NATURALLY HELP YOU TO GAIN GREATER UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE TOPIC/CONTENT. CHOOSE FROM THE LIST OF 12 LENSES. \* TIP: LESS IS MORE.

### STEP 3. OUTPUT: *DEBATE, DIALOGUE, DISCOURSE... WRITE!*

PRACTICE ENGAGING THROUGH YOUR *CONTEXTUAL LENS* BY BEING EXPLICIT, USING EVIDENCE, AND INCLUDING YOUR PERSONAL NARRATIVE. ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOUR OWN *POSITIONAL* LENS IS UNIQUE WHICH HELPS OTHERS (INCLUDING YOURSELF) FURTHER UNDERSTAND THE CONTENT/THEME.

### STEP 4. REFLECT & REFLEX

CONSIDER HOW YOUR THINKING HAS EVOLVED BASED ON A CONVERSATION YOU HAVE HAD WITH YOUR COLLEAGUE/S OR *AFTER* JOURNALING. FIND A *REFLEX BUDDY* TO HELP YOU PROCESS.

ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- *WHAT ARE MY BIASES?*
- *WHICH CONTEXTUAL LENS DO I OFTEN USE?*
- *WHICH CONTEXTUAL LENS WILL PUSH ME TO THINK “DEEPER”?*
- *WHICH CONTEXTUAL LENS CHALLENGES ME?*
- *HOW & WHY MIGHT MY AWARENESS HELP COLLEAGUES/STUDENTS ENGAGE DIFFERENTLY?...AUTHENTICALLY?*

#### **Reflex Buddy**

*How will I become accountable for my actions? Who will support my growth?*

**A reflex buddy is your accountability partner. They must be someone that you trust and respect enough to be neutral, supportive, and accountable for challenging you, stretching your thinking, acknowledging [inherent] biases and/or affirming your commitments.**

<sup>1</sup> Transfer is a concept based on Understanding by Design where curriculum and assessment goals help students gain *skills* and *understanding* that *transfer* beyond the learning environment and into real-world contexts.



## CONTEXTUAL LENS' DEFINED

CONTEXTUAL LENS	CONSIDERATIONS
<b>HISTORICAL</b>	<i>GLOBAL, LOCAL TIMELINES, AND EVENTS. THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPED THE STORIES THAT MAY INFLUENCE OTHER CONTEXTUAL LENSES. HOW ARE THESE STORIES DOCUMENTED? HOW DOES YOUR LIFE HISTORY SHAPE YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>POLITICAL</b>	<i>GLOBAL LOCAL LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES THAT AFFECT PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT. HOW MIGHT INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE CIVICALLY? THINK ABOUT THE INDIVIDUALS, STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS AND PRINCIPLES THAT IMPACT THE OTHER CONTEXTUAL LENSES. HOW HAS YOUR IDEAS/EXPERIENCES WITH POLITICS SHAPED YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<i>GLOBAL, LOCAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES THAT IMPACT THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH. THINK ABOUT THE INDIVIDUALS WHO USE THEIR CAPITAL TO CREATE SYSTEMS OF POWER TO GENERATE A DESIRED OUTCOME IN A PARTICULAR PLACE, REGION, OR TERRITORY. HOW MIGHT THIS CONTEXTUAL LENS INFLUENCE THE OTHERS? HOW DOES YOUR PERSONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEMS &amp; EXPERIENCES SHAPE YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>SOCIAL/SOCIETAL</b>	<i>SOCIETY IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE AND PLACES AND A HOST OF ENDLESS CONTRIBUTIONS AND FACTORS THAT MAKE SOCIETIES UNIQUE. THIS CONTEXTUAL LENS IS GROUNDED IN THE GLOBAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE STRUCTURES, INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS THAT HELP THRIVE AND SURVIVE. HOW DOES A COMMUNITY EXPRESS ITSELF? HOW MIGHT PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER COLLECTIVELY? HOW DOES YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH [COMMUNITY] SHAPE YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>CULTURAL</b>	<i>ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, BEHAVIORS, CUSTOMS, ETC. THAT ARE SHAPED FROM AND FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS. CULTURE-BUILDING IS A COLLECTIVE PROCESS AND RELIES ON A TECHNOLOGY TO AID IN ITS GROWTH OVER TIME. WHICH OF THE OTHER CONTEXTUAL LENSES IMPACT A CULTURE? HOW MIGHT CULTURE INFLUENCE THE OTHER CONTEXTUAL LENSES? HOW DOES YOUR CULTURE[S] SHAPE YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>LINGUISTIC</b>	<i>LANGUAGE, BOTH VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL, HAS THE ABILITY TO BOTH EMPOWER AND DISEMPOWER INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES. GLOBAL AND LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS MUST BE EXPLORED AND ARE DEPENDENT ON MANY OF THE OTHER CONTEXTUAL LENSES. HOW MIGHT LANGUAGE INFLUENCE THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE? HOW DOES YOUR LINGUISTIC STORY SHAPE YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY</b>	<i>CORE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES THAT ARE SOMETIMES DEFINED BY THE “INDEFINABLE” AND/OR BY SACRED TEXTS AND STORIES FROM THE PAST. HOW DO INDIVIDUALS SHAPE THE COLLECTIVE? HOW MIGHT THE COLLECTIVE SHAPE INDIVIDUALS? HOW DOES THIS LENS HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND YOURSELVES AND OTHERS, INCLUDING SOCIETY?</i>
<b>GENDER</b>	<i>CONSIDER THE BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL AND PRESUMED ROLES WITHIN A VARIETY OF CONTEXTS, INCLUDING CULTURAL, SOCIETAL, AND POLITICAL LENSES. HOW ARE STORIES ABOUT GENDER [ROLES] ORIGINATED, INTERPRETED AND PERPETUATED OVER TIME? HOW DOES YOUR [GENDERED] STORIES SHAPE YOUR LENS?</i>
<b>POSITIONAL</b>	<i>OUR INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES AND STORIES CREATE OUR VALUES BELIEFS AND INFLUENCE OUR ACTIONS. THIS IS THE CORE OF YOUR REFLECTIVE STANCE AS YOU CONSIDER THE VARIOUS CONTEXTUAL LENSES. HOW DOES WHO YOU ARE INFLUENCE WHERE YOU ARE? HOW DOES WHERE YOU ARE CHALLENGE YOUR “POSITION”?</i>
<b>INQUIRY</b>	<i>CONSIDER THE QUESTIONS THAT REPRESENT INTROSPECTIVE AND COMPELLING IDEAS. THESE QUESTIONS ARE ROOTED IN YOUR POSITION, AS WELL AS INFLUENCED BY OTHER CONTEXTS. HOW CAN OUR QUESTIONS HELP OTHERS TO VIEW A “STORY” FROM MULTIPLE AND DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES?</i>
<b>REFLECTIVE/REFLEXIVE</b>	<i>WHEN WE REFLECT, WE SELF “CHECK” AND ASK OURSELVES THE QUESTIONS THAT PUSH OUR THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS TO OTHER[DEEPER] LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING. THERE IS ALSO AN ELEMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY THAT IS ASSOCIATED WITH REFLECTION, IF DONE WITH AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY. REFLEXIVITY PUSHES US TO USE OUR SELF-AWARENESS TO PROPEL US INTO ACTION. HOW DOES MY AWARENESS OF _____ HELP ME TO _____?</i>
<b>SUPPOSITION</b>	<i><b>SUPPOSE</b> YOU HAVE [NEW] INSIGHTS ABOUT A PARTICULAR STORY, EVENT, COMMUNITY, POLICY OR EXPERIENCE BASED ON AN “INPUT” OR DISCOURSE WITH OTHERS. ONE MIGHT ASK, <b>WHAT IF</b> _____ OCCURRED DIFFERENTLY? HOW MIGHT I DEVELOP THE SKILLS, IDEAS, AND UNDERSTANDINGS NECESSARY FOR THE CREATION OF A NEW STORY?</i>
<b>“OPEN” LENS</b> (CREATED BY THE INDIVIDUAL)	<i>CONSIDER OTHER LENSES THAT ARE EMPLOYED AS YOU ENGAGE WITH VARIOUS TEXTS, STORIES, FACTORS, ETC.... <b>WHAT LENS</b> HELPS YOU THINK DEEPER ABOUT THE STORY OF OTHERS? <b>WHAT LENS</b> WILL HELP YOUR STUDENTS/COLLEAGUES GROW AS LEARNERS?...CONTRIBUTORS?...CHANGE-MAKERS?</i>

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