

Formal Grade Appeal

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Over the course of the term I have found several things out about myself that I did not previously know. There were some things that I may have been aware of but not really known or comprehended and there were some things that I just flat out was not aware of and this course has shown them to me. I have taken several upper level classes and this one may be the one that was the hardest...no perhaps intense and reflective is a better way to put it, that I have taken so far. This class has pushed me to think about the way that I communicate with others and then wanted me to apply it then reflect on it again. When looking at our grades right now I have a "B" and I am comfortable with arguing for a "B." I decided to argue for a "B" because I missed all of the discussion boards but I got everything else turned in with a 90% or better. In this paper I try to prove my grade claim.

Part of the class that really stuck out to me was the teaching reflections. I really enjoyed doing those because it showed me that I did not really know the material until I was made to teach it to someone else. Take for example Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM), CMM looks at the stories that we tell and how we define our social worlds. I love CMM I think that it is a very powerful theory because it is the base of our communication, the way that we define things is the way we see and interact in our social worlds. If someone defines communication only as the act of sharing information then that will be reflected in the way that they communicate with others. However I believe that we all have different definitions of communication so we all see it slightly differently, I define it as the inevitable and constant interaction, both verbal and nonverbal, between two or more parties including self-talk. The way I define communication is the way that I communicate with others, I look and listen for nonverbal as much as I listen to the words being said or read, everyone is always communicating something even if he or she does not speak. These definitions can also impact the stories that we

tell and live. This weekend I attended a golf tournament and I stayed in a house with six or seven other people, Friday night we were playing Cards Against Humanity and it was my turn I drew an inappropriate card and of course got some inappropriate answers. This was my first time to ever play this game but we were all having a blast when I read the cards the person to my left got extremely offended and left the room while the rest of us were all crying from laughing so hard. Because part of my definition is to look at nonverbal I was able to tell that it was just a joke and was part of the game so I was not bothered by it; however the person next to me who I know well has a different definition of communication limits the weight she puts on nonverbals so her story was that it was an attack while mine was that it was a joke. Additionally, stories can impact the way that we look at things if we only have one story then we only know part of the whole. The media would lead me to assume that Mexico is a dirty and poor country and that is just one story, however there are different sides to this. People in Latin cultures are more open in expressing their feelings and opening their homes, and it has been my experience that they are more welcoming and friendly in comparison to other Americans. Now I understand that this is not the whole of the story either, however it does involve the way that we and other communicate.

Martin Buber, wrote a book titled *I and Thou* and I have a copy of it at my house and it is a really good read. In parts there are times where it can be confusing but in others it is clearly explained which helps the reader understand what is being said. I especially like when in the book it references Immanuel Kant and it says “Kant told men always to treat humanity, in our person as well as that of others, as an end also and never only as a means” (Buber, 1970, p. 16). I firmly believe in this statement, treat others as the end or as the goal and never as simply a stepping stone to a different goal. When interacting with others we there are many different

ways that we can communicate two of which are “I-it” and “I-you.” When interacting with someone as “I-it” you are treating that person as an “it” or as a means so this might happen when we are at the grocery store trying to checkout. Most of the time we may talk to the cashier but today we are in a hurry because we left the beans on the fire on the stove and they may be burning. When we get up to checkout we do not really talk to the cashier we just kind of mumble something then hope they hurry up that is seeing and treating someone as an “it.” Then there is interacting with someone as “I-you” and that is interacting with others in the same way that you would want to be talked to, in a polite and friendly manner, these interactions for my typically go on whenever I talk with a family member, I communicate respectfully with them and they return the gesture. By returning the gesture they are giving me some face.

Face is a major part of politeness theory. Face is pretty much your reputation and how others see you. Different culture see and handle face differently, in the East people will go out of their way to make sure you maintain face even to the point of hurting their own, however in the West people will throw you under the bus to maintain their face. We can give face to others by not pointing out mistakes that he or she made, if Tommy, Bailey, Eugene, Martha, and you are walking and talking together and Tommy makes a mistake if you do not call him out then you are giving him face. However, if you were to call him out right there then that would harm his face and that is called a Face Threatening Act (FTA). FTA can happen knowingly or unknowingly, I have some friends from China and we met through a mutual work associate and we exchanged business cards. Now, I was not aware that people that live in the East place a large amount of importance on the sharing of business cards so when I was handed the business card I did not look at it I just put it in my pocket for later. When I looked back I saw that the people from China were looking at me as if I had slapped them and I later found out that it was

because I did not give them any face when I just put the card in my pocket. I now know that when receiving a business card you take it with both hands with a slight bow, look at it, place it in your wallet, then you take out your own business card and present it to them with both hands this is showing and giving face to the person. Business cards are your identity and by just grabbing it and sticking it in your pocket you are giving them a slap to the face even if you do not know the proper procedure, we are fine now but it was a bit of a rough start.

These were the three things that have stuck the most with me, I have enjoyed the entire class and I have learned a lot about different things as well just by reflecting on what I have learned. CMM, Martin Buber and Politeness Theory showed me many different things. CMM showed me that the way that we define things and the stories that we live and tell impact each other and ourselves. Martin Buber revealed that there are difference in the way that we interact with others and that the way that we communicate with them impact the way we look at them. Politeness Theory showcased the importance of face and how different cultures and societies view face. In the end it boils down to treating others the way that we way we want to be treated, if we want to be given face then give face and if we want to have an “I-you” communication style then do not just treat people as a means but as an end.

At the start of this class I thought that I would be able to breeze through it because I have never had an issue with communicating with people that were/are different from me. I have since learned that I virtually knew nothing. I now know that part of communication should involve reflection, I believe that Palou Freire said it best “within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action” (Freire, 1972, p. 87). In the future I plan to implement a style of communication that involves praxis. When I am interacting with others I will reflect on what I have said and what was said to me so that the words have meaning and substance to me. I will

reflect on ways that my communication can be changed for the better to help to foster the co-creation of better social worlds through positive communication. By me taking the time to reflect on my communication I will be able to see how what I say impacts those that hear what was said. Even if someone that I am not talking to hears what I say it still has a chance of impacting them. I will strive to find out more stories on different things such as religion so that I am not limited to just one side of the story. By doing this I will be more knowledgeable about different customs of different religions which will help in creating better relationships and social worlds. I will also try to give face more often, when I am in a group of people I will not just call someone out right there and then, if I decide to mention it I will do so in private so that I do not hurt their face. Over this course I have done a lot of reflection and I have come to the conclusion that we may think that we are good at communicating with different people but until you begin to reflect on face, stories and definitions, and the way that we interact with others then you are still just at the starting line. There will always be a little voice in the back of our heads that comes up with comments about people that are different than us, however, since taking this class it has become easier to tune out that voice and look and communicate with people that are different from me. At times it has been hard to be honest in these reflections but it has done good to really think about the different experiences that I have had and ways that I could have looked at things differently and how I now see those experiences.

Works Cited

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Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.