

South American Business Forum

I'd like to think that most, if not all, things are connected. In one episode of *Connected*, a series about the hidden science of everything, they talked about dust. Can you imagine a speck of dust seems insignificant but a swarm of it can generate oxygen, temper hurricanes, and even fertilize rainforests? It's one of the many things that inspired me to pursue my dissertation topic. I'm going into this with that in mind, that the connections between you, me, and our world, can make us see our world in a new light.

Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (2018) said that "Inquiry should begin with the too strange and the too much." The pandemic hit and we were forced to adapt and transition to online learning, unknown territory for some of us. It was a struggle to revert to online courses in such a short time. Different factors affect students' learning like their learning environment which includes whether or not they have families or went back to them during the lockdown, their mental well-being also plays a large role.

It was one Saturday morning when I talked to my dear friend. I told him about the thoughts I had in mind and he mentioned Deleuze, and Kathleen Stewart's *Ordinary Affects*. We were talking about something else and had I not changed my status, I do not think I would come across these concepts. As Massumi (2015, pp. 60-61) calls this affect "microshock." This microshock that happened on that day resulted in a micro perception that eventually led to a change in the focus of my thoughts. However, we can trace a connection way back during another class. We were talking about different communication theories. Our professor asked us what the world does and how we see the ideal world. It was where I got labeled as a poststructuralist. Perhaps another connection was when another professor asked us a question about spaces. Different elements connected which had led me to this part of the node where I try to write everything I have learned.

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, once said that "one cannot step into the same river twice" (Griffin, 2006). The world is in constant flux. There are no two situations that are the same down to their core. What Heraclites said echoes the widespread acceptance among communication scholars that communication is a process (Griffin, 2006). It is never the same, and can only be described in reference to history and what is yet to come. Communication is a relational process. Celeste Condit (2006), a University of Georgia rhetorical theorist, said in her essay "Communication as Relationality" that—

Communication is the weaving and reweaving of visible and invisible four-dimensional webs, which constitute and reconstitute matter and ideation as humans, discourse, and other beings within a dynamic field of many forces.

Communication as a process of relating does not privilege words over the construction and deconstruction processes that make for the constant change in human beings. Western philosophy has focused studies of communication on words, signs, or symbols (Condit, 2006). People asked what and how signs mean. This type of research rejects representation and interpretation. In representation, there is the notion of an original and an imitation (Masny, 2016).

Em Griffin was working on the relationship development section of his book, *A First*

Look at Communication Theory, in 1992 when he talked to his friends about the said section. That was when they asked if he can do a section on intimacy through email and they laughed about the idea of it all. However, given that it was in the early 1990s, many shared the same attitude toward building close relationships through computer-mediated communication (CMC) as them (Griffin, 2006, p.138). CMC was mainly used for accomplishing task-related purposes but never as a place to bond with other people (Griffin, 2006, p.138). Looking at the present, blogs, social networking sites, and even virtual worlds afford communication visibility. Individuals now have a variety of choices to access communication, and that communication is made visible for third parties and unintended audiences to see which results in changes to the way meaning is conveyed and created through communication (Treem et.al., 2020).

Today, when individuals are using CMC, the nature and meaning of that use are dependent upon the communication visibility in that context (i.e. we judge the value of communication based on whether we feel we were meant to see a message) (Walther et al., 2009). We also look at an individuals' visible online contributions to learning more about them prior to offline interactions (Gibbs et.al., 2011). In both cases, CMC's usefulness and values come from an individual's ability to use its communication visibility to present, access, or provide communication in clear ways (Treem et al., 2020).

Given our current situation, students are learning through mediated communication. Everything is done online. All sorts of relationships are built in the online space through mediated communication. The relationship between the student and teacher, the student and the modules, the student and fellow students, everything, is being done through mediated communication. Understanding the online space, the relational system in which communication happens will help us better understand communication, and all the forces (i.e. humans, families, spaces, modules, etc.) that constitute and reconstitute our perpetual becoming— a wired society.

In a nutshell, I want to map out the connections between us and the education system within which students inhabit. There may be connections between a student, their physical environment, the online space, their families, their friends, their mental wellbeing, the desk or the chair, etc. Online learning is not new to me. However, I continue to learn more about it each day. One of my goals is to contribute to achieving inclusive and quality education for Filipino students without sacrificing their health and wellbeing in the process. Nora Quebral (2012, p. 3) redefined the definition of development communication as "the science of human communication linked to the transitioning of communities from poverty in all its forms to a dynamic state of overall growth that fosters equity and the advancement of the human potential." I am hoping to unfold an individual's potential by joining SABF.

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