

Hindsight Is Always 20/20

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COM125: Interpersonal Communication

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Abstract

Overview

The end of any course ought to bring with it a sense of having had a cumulative experience, the idea that your work in the course has produced something you can take with you, that you have engaged in a process of thought and activities that adds up to something, and that you have learned something about interpersonal communication and yourself as a communicator. In this course, experiencing the sense of having learned something about yourself as a communicator is especially important because you have been evaluating and practicing new skills. For your final essay, write a retrospective analysis about what you have learned and how you have learned it.

You have several resources for this endeavor, including, but not limited to, the course syllabus, the course readings, your discussion board posts, your assignments, even the grading feedback you received from the instructor.

Your essay will be first person in voice and self-reflective in tone. It will use your own previous assignments as evidence in support of your final analysis of the semester's work. You should spend approximately 6.5 hours on this assignment.

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Instructions

1. Consider the following questions. Then, compose a reflective paper of 800–1,000 words based on the following:
 - Reread the course syllabus. The syllabus makes specific references to course objectives. Ask yourself if you met those objectives, or if you wish you had focused more on any one of them.
 - Reread your discussion board posts and comments. Are any patterns revealed in terms of your responses, handling of the readings or videos, and/or connections to the assignments? Can you describe those patterns?
 - Reread your assignments and your grading feedback. Were some assignments more difficult, more rewarding, or more reflective of your interpersonal communication style?
 - Consider the interpersonal communication skills we studied in this course. Choose at least one communication skill or topic from each module to answer this question: do you see patterns in terms of your responses to those skills or your ability to use them effectively?
 - As related to interpersonal communication, has this course enabled you to better become the “real you”, as Flint encourages Sam in the movie clip? Outside of our class, who has most helped you become a better interpersonal communicator?
2. Refrain from responding to the aforementioned questions in chronological order, which may result in a final essay that is merely a rote reply to each question. Instead, enable the aforementioned questions to provide a framework as you begin working on the essay.
3. Reference your own previous work in the class (Main Discussion posts and/or Essays) to support some or all of your responses to the aforementioned questions. Use either APA or MLA Style to format your references (minimum of three references).

Introduction

This has been by far the fastest time frame I have ever experienced for a college course, and it actually worked out really well for me! Unfortunately, due to relationship troubles in addition to travel and other personal reasons, I *did* end up being late on an assignment or two. This is leaps and bounds better than how well I usually stay attentive to my assignments in fifteen week classes, where I will usually do incredibly well for the first half of the semester then fall off half way through. The time frame of this course is what contributed most to my lack of procrastination during the period of this incredibly short semester.

I believe that I had clearly met the course requirements and objectives in terms of defining interpersonal communication, its various skills and terms, as well as general communication related vocabulary. In terms of bettering myself as an interpersonal communicator, the difference in my thought process now when in conversation is enough to prove that, and we will go into more detail on this aspect of my experience with the course later in this essay.

The idea that one can “master” *any of the hundreds* of interpersonal communication skills is insane, as there are always ways to improve. There is always a type of person that you and I may have not practiced any sort of conversation with, and until you literally converse with **every single human being on the world**, there still exist ways to improve our communication!

Patterns Noticed Within My Own Discussion Posts and Responses

I regards to my discussion posts, I notice that I almost always tend to open each *response* the same way — with a phrase generally denoting “good work” and utilizing the name of the author of the original initial post (Hellwig, [2020a](#), [2020c](#), [2020d](#)). I believe I could be using this as a crutch, as it is difficult for me to come up with an “opening line”, so to speak, when it comes to responding to these discussion posts authored by my classmates.

I have also noticed that I tend to simply ask the question “why” a lot. I find that it is the easiest way to (hopefully) continue a conversation. We can even see this in my recent discussion response post to Diata Hart in the final practice discussion of the course. In that

response, perhaps my words could have been declared *critical* of Diata's viewpoint when it comes to the development of interpersonal communication skills (Hellwig, [2020b](#)).

An Overview of My Performance With Assigned Essays

Essays are the portion of the class in which I felt at my strongest point. In *every single essay* up to the point of Module 5, which is being written right now, every essay had earned a score above 100%. I find that it is easier to organize my thoughts when I am writing them out over the course of a few weeks while using the methods and practices I have developed for writing rather than when I am attempting to respond directly to other people about their thoughts, rather than just to a prompt.

My Thoughts On Selected Topics Discussed Over The Study Of This Course

Self-Concept and Perception

I feel that it is important to note the ideas of self-concept and perception. Self-concept is how one believes that they display themselves to the world, and perception is how the outside world views the individual. In personal experience, I have found that these two things *never match* one another in practice. Especially the generation I am a part of where generally the two are complete contrasts to each other. Some have a higher opinion of themselves than others really have of them, and more often than not people tend to value themselves far lower and seek more attention and validation (Stewart & Bernhardt, [2010](#), pp. 586).

Gender and Cultural Differences

Cultural differences between the interpersonal communication and social hierarchy are notable, with entire philosophical schools of thought dedicated to the differences of how humans live and communicate in different cultures (Moral Relativism).

In terms of the differences between how genders communicate, this is a slightly more difficult idea. While there are studies showing the slight differences in the expression of empathy and methods utilized during conflict resolution in younger sample populations, there is less data available as people mature both in their communication skills and socially (Wied

et al., [2007](#), pp. 51). Gender can be considered more of a spectrum than a binary assignment, which means the way people communicate and live about their lives is as unique as fingerprint.

Good Listening Habits

Next to the ability to experience and express empathy, good listening skills are one of the most important aspects of constructive interpersonal communication. Without the ability to retain and act on information being provided to you in a welcoming and comforting way, less and less people will trust entering a conversation. No one wants to feel interrogated or as though they are boring the listener or “wasting their time” throughout a conversation, and it is a major problem generally preceded by arrogant.

The Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is even more imperative to pay attention to than only listening to the words out of a speaker’s mouth. It is not as easy for people to hide nonverbal communication cues when talking to others, because many of them are involuntary. With the requirement of wearing masks preventing the ability to see people’s mouths when they are speaking, we have all grown better at reading each other’s *eyes* in order to ascertain a person’s true feelings.

How This Course Affected My Interpersonal Communication Skills

As discussed in my post for Discussion 1 within Module 5 of the course, I believe that this course has in fact made me far more self-aware of how I interact with those around me (Hellwig, [2020e](#)).

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