

Dustin Cunningham, COMM 110 G, Reflection Paper

This year in Comm 110, we all learned many things like what true communication really is, how to address people in a public setting, interpersonal communications, and now even small group communications. With every new chapter comes new information. For me, I knew the gist of what most things meant, I just didn't know there were actually terms for all the little details of communication. Such as: the rhetoric canons, logical fallacies, communication climates, empathy versus sympathy, and how to properly interact within a group setting. In my high school, we were a project-based learning atmosphere where we did a lot of projects and presented a lot of information. Having said that, we were never really taught the basics in connecting with our audience; and that is what truly makes Comm 110 amazing. I feel as though now I am more prepared to take on the challenges of collaboration, conflict management and presenting.

The first thing we learned in class was what communication really is, communication is “Human Meaning Making” (Lahman, Calka, & Case, 2014). Being taught this really made me start to think about the basis of human communication and how we interact. More than half of human communication is non-verbal. It is absolutely crazy to think that we are being taught from such a young age to “read” people and make what we can about them from the nonverbal cues they give us. From this we can always tell if someone is shy, outgoing, happy, sad, or anywhere in between.

Not only have I learned better to “read” the people I interact with every day, I have also strengthened my skills of interacting and relating to audiences in a public sense when I am presenting. Before Comm 110, I had no idea that there were things called rhetoric canons; which are: ethos, pathos and logos. Just in learning these rhetoric canons I can tell that all of us, as a class, became better persuasive communicators because we realized we could play on our

audience's sense of emotion, logic and ethics. With these tools in my pocket I felt like I could take on the world, and it showed because I was very prepared for my persuasive speech and I received a grade that was better than what I expected.

Many people find it a lot easier to address just one person instead of a crowd, but just a mere month ago I had little ideas on how to correctly maintain a friendly supportive atmosphere while also confronting a problem. Our interpersonal communication section really helped me see the ease in friendly confronting and talking to someone in a way that everyone can enjoy. I have kind of always been that person that asks the question "why?" Just recently I have learned that that word almost always creates an immediate defensive climate that really puts the issue on hold. In this instance no one is willing to open up and truly talk about what is going on. Never before have I realized that paraphrasing and restating information was a key part to interpersonal relationships, before I just thought of it as a childish way to mock someone instead of a way to truly understand the situation.

Another key way to build trust between two or more people is the correct use of empathy. Empathy is basically the willingness to listen and share feelings of understand on the level that the other is on. I have practiced this just recently in building a trusting and positive environment in my small group. The conflict management project that we are currently working on has brought us together as friends and strengthened our relationships. As I said earlier, at my old high school I used to work in groups a lot, but in those groups I always took charge and did everything on my own, there was no trust. Now, I feel like I can trust my group members to help out and contribute because that's exactly what we are doing. I actually feel like I have an identity in this group, that I really belong to it. We all have a common goal and we like working together on it. It's really nice to share and distribute the work for once.

Besides my small group, I feel included in the class. The class has met probably around twenty times and when we see each other at the various times throughout the day we always nod and offer a friendly smile. Being a part of an atmosphere like this makes me joyous because as you know well, most classes are not like this! You have created a fun and enjoyable environment that we all enjoy.