

Lesson Plan for Using Side x Side in a Communication Classroom

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Context: At DigiPen Institute of Technology, I primarily teach two communication courses: COM150 (Introduction to Communication) and COM250 (Professional Communication). Both classes are required by various degree programs and most every DigiPen student is required to take a COM class to graduate. COM150 is mainly taken by freshman and sophomore students and COM250 is taken by juniors and seniors. The courses are discussion based with few lectures, and do not have any required textbooks. As a whole, they focus on learning about communication on an interpersonal and professional level, with students garnering the tools to engage in respectful, transparent, and open communication in all areas of their lives. Some subjects that are covered in these courses include: perception, self-concept, intercultural communication, listening, and conflict. Ultimately, I want students to leave this course with a better sense of self and an understanding that empathy, compassion, and acknowledgement are central to successful communication and relationships.

Rationale: Much of the discussion we have in class revolves around understanding of the self and others to create a communication environment that is healthy and safe. The idea that self-concept and perception are key indicators and influences of how one communicates is central and emphasized throughout the course. Being able to look outside oneself and be compassionate to the experiences and perspectives of others is essential in creating and sustaining connections with people at all levels. Another integral part of this is recognizing how everyone involved in communication comes with their own identities and how that ultimately affects our interactions and relationships. Students often come in to this course with a vague sense of understanding in this area, but it has been very beneficial to them to show even more perspectives to help them engage in different ways of thinking critically. Even though they may not relate personally to the idea of transracial adoption, the themes that emerge are often something they connect with on a meaningful level. Further, they are often interested in my personal research, so this is a good way to introduce it to them.

Plan: I begin with a lecture on self-concept (development, characteristics), public and private selves (perceived self, presenting self, face/facework), impression management (management of outer selves), and perception (first and second order realities, influences on perception, common tendencies in perception, synchronizing our perceptions).

Students then watch the NYT Op Video

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/23/opinion/korean-adoptees.html>

Students are then placed into groups to answer the following:

- Post Video Questions:
 - What are some things that stood out to you in this video?
 - How do some of the themes in this video relate to self-concept and impression management?
 - How do some of the themes in this video relate to perception as discussed earlier?
 - How might the messages/takeaways in this video affect the way you approach communication (internal and external) in the future?
- Bring class together and have larger discussion about:
 - How our communication is affected by our experiences
 - How our perception and self-concept might be affected without us knowing about it
 - A larger conversation about intrapersonal communication, communication, and empathy

This experience really ebbs and flows depending on the class and their understanding of empathy and communication. I use this as an introduction to understanding one's self and also an understanding of how deeply hearing other's experiences may affect communication and relationships. I think showing this film can provide a different perspective that is not mainstream related to these concepts, while also highlighting how important it is for all stories and experiences to be taken into consideration when you are building relationships through communication.