

Interpersonal Development Project (IDP)
100 Points Total

Part 1: 35 points

- o Due to Canvas on **Friday 2/16**, by 11:59pm
- o **500-750 words**

Parts 1 and 2 combined: 65 points

- o Due to Canvas on **Wednesday 5/9**, by 11:59pm
- o **750-1000 words**

“Interpersonal Communication Effectiveness Can Be Learned” (IPC Principle #8, Julia Wood, pg. 33)

General Assignment Description:

- This assignment asks you to identify a personal relationship that you are involved in, and focus on how to improve it by changing *your own* thoughts, behaviors, and expressions.
- The purpose of this assignment is to make practical and productive connections between the theories/concepts/tools that you are learning about in this IPC class and your day-to-day relationships.
- I will never discuss the content of your papers or share details of your relationship with your classmates.

Rationale for the Assignment:

When experiencing relational problems it is common for us to blame *others* (external attribution, see Chapter 3) or expect others to change their behaviors, while *often overlooking/ignoring how our own communication behaviors play a significant role in that relational problem.*

****** It is important to remember that we cannot control or coerce other people to behave how we want them to. Attempting to do so is, at best, immature and unproductive. At worst, it is unethical. What we *can* do is work consistently to: 1) monitor our perceptions, 2) interrupt or re-pattern our own unproductive thoughts, and 3) control our own behaviors. When we carry out these efforts on a consistent basis, we can make practical decisions about which of our relationships are beneficial to our happiness, which of our relationships are detrimental to our happiness, and whether or not to continue on with a given relationship. ******

With the above in mind, *changing our own thoughts and behaviors is the focus of this project.* More specifically, we will be working to change our particular thoughts and behaviors as they relate to a specific person with whom we have an interpersonal relationship. To be clear, the point of this assignment is not to assume full responsibility of any relationship or relationship problem that you are currently dealing with; rather, the point of this assignment is to focus on how we can empower ourselves by adjusting our communication practices in ways that encourage the kinds of healthy relationships that we would like to have.

Assignment Instructions:

This assignment will be written and submitted in two different parts, at two different times. The second submission should include both Part 1 and Part 2

Part 1 (500-750 words, 2-3 pages double spaced)

Here are the steps for Part 1 of this assignment:

- Select an interpersonal relationship that you are currently involved in (e.g. boss, friend, sibling, co-worker, parent, romantic partner, etc), and identify its communication problems.
 - o Criteria for selection: Personal importance and practicality.
 - The relationship selected must be one that is important/meaningful to you—otherwise you will have little motivation to change.

- The relationship selected must be one where appropriate and consistent interactions are possible during the semester.

• **When writing Part 1:**

- o **First**, provide the basics:
 - who the relationship is with, what type of relationship it is, how long have you known the person, history, etc
- o **Second**, describe the relationship in more interpersonal detail. Consider—and when appropriate—respond to the following:
 - Where along Buber's *I-It/I-You/I-Though* continuum does the relationship exist?
 - To what degree have you *self-disclosed* with this person? To what degree have they self-disclosed with you?
 - Are there any relatively stable *relationship-level meanings* that influence the dynamics of this relationship? (Power dynamics? Responsiveness issues? Etc.)
 - Which similar or dissimilar *speech communities, cultures, or co-cultures* do the two of you belong?
- Include any other interpersonal concepts/categories that we have so far learned, if you think they are appropriate to your relationship dynamic, or useful to include.

Use at least 3 course concepts/terms that you've read about from our textbook so far in order to describe this relationship.

- o **Third**, identify the conflicts or communication issues occurring within the relationship, and—if appropriate—any attempts you have made to resolve or reduce the conflict so far.
 - Include any other interpersonal concepts/categories that we have so far learned, if you think they are appropriate to your relationship problems, or useful to include.
- o **Fourth**, after examining and reflecting on the relationship, what changes do you feel are needed in order to improve it?
 - Be as specific as you can as to what types of changes you will make in the next two months. Remember that these strategies are somewhat flexible, as you will encounter more potential strategies as your course knowledge progresses this semester. Nonetheless, sketching some preliminary ideas in Part 1 is useful.

Part 2 (750-1000 words, 3-4 pages double spaced)

Throughout the semester as you encounter new interpersonal strategies and concepts, ask yourself if and how they could be applied to this paper/project/relationship. Apply them when appropriate and report the results to me here in Part 2.

In Part 2, explain to me the following:

- What kinds of communication strategies you have used in this relationship? Remember that these may be similar to or different from the ones you proposed using in Part 1
 - o Identify where these strategies/concepts are located in the textbook.
- Whether these strategies or concepts have been effective or ineffective in improving the communication climate in your relationship?
 - o Be specific, not vague, and provide detailed examples of scenarios when you have used these strategies and concepts.

- Conclude this section by explaining to me how you now view this relationship.
 - o In other words, what new perspective(s) have you gained about this specific relationship and/or interpersonal communication in general?
- **Integrate at least 5 course concepts/terms that you've learned about from our textbook in Part 2 of this paper**

Grading Criteria: ***There is a detailed grading rubric for this assignment on Canvas***

- **Terms and Concepts**—Across Parts 1 and 2 combined, you should identify and integrate *at least 8 terms/concepts/theories* from our textbook.
 - o *Italicize* and clearly define these concepts, providing the textbook pages from which they appear.
- **Examples and Descriptions**—When describing your relationship, its communication struggles, and/or your attempts to address those communication struggles, provide descriptive and relevant examples from that relationship and your interactions.

These examples should be:

 - 1) Specific, not vague, and
 - 2) Should illustrate the interpersonal concepts or strategies that are being discussed.
- **Organization & Format**—Double spaced, 12 point standard font, 1 inch margins. No extensive headers are necessary, just your name and the assignment title.
- **Spelling and Grammar**—All entries should adhere to college-level writing standards (logically structured and proofread for clarity, grammar, and spelling).
- **Outside Sources and Ethical Citation**—*Outside sources are not required.* Should you cite any outside source, attach a works cited page that is formatted using MLA citation style. If you are taking language directly from the book, then set the text off with quotations and include the page number of the quoted text. If you are paraphrasing the textbook, then *use your own language*, not Julia Wood's.