

*Using Films
To Teach
Interpersonal Communication*

*A sabbatical report
Sabbatical Taken August 2000 - May 2001*

*Carolyn Inmon
Communication Department
Mt. San Antonio College*

MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE
Salary and Leaves Committee

APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

Name of Applicant Carolyn Inmon

Address 45 Lakeshore Irvine

Employed at Mt. San Antonio College beginning Fall 1992

Dates of last sabbatical leave: none

From _____ To _____

Department Communication Division Humanities

Length of sabbatical leave requested:

Purpose of sabbatical leave:

One semester _____
Fall _____ Spring _____

Study _____ Project

Two Semesters

Travel _____ Combination
(specify) _____

NOTE: Sabbatical periods are limited to contractual dates of the academic year.

Effective dates for proposed sabbatical leave:

From August 2000 To May 2001

and (if taken over a two school year period)

From _____ To _____

Attach a comprehensive, written statement of the proposed sabbatical activity(ies) including a description of the nature of the activity(ies), a timeline of the activity(ies), an itinerary, if applicable, the proposed research design and method(s) of investigation, if applicable.

Attach a statement of the anticipated value and benefit of the proposed sabbatical activity(ies) to the applicant, his/her department or service area, and the College.

Any change or modification of the proposed sabbatical activity(ies) as evaluated and approved by the Salary and Leaves Committee must be submitted to the Committee for reconsideration.

Carolyn Inmon
Signature of Applicant

November 29, 1999
Date

APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

Page 2

Applicant's Name Carolyn Inman

THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT SIGNATURES REFLECT AWARENESS OF THE SABBATICAL PLAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONNEL REPLACEMENT. COMMENTS REQUESTED ALLOW FOR RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO THE VALUE OF THE SABBATICAL LEAVE PLAN TO THE COLLEGE.

APPLICANTS MUST OBTAIN THE SIGNATURES OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT PRIOR TO SUBMITTING APPLICATION TO THE SALARY AND LEAVES COMMITTEE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT/DIVISION

Signature of Department Chairperson [Signature] Date 11-30-99
Comments:

Signature of Dean [Signature] Date 11-30-99
Comments:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING

Signature of Vice President,
Student Learning _____ Date _____
Comments:

NOTE: DEANS ARE REQUESTED TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT OF RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE VALUE OF THE SABBATICAL PLAN TO THE COLLEGE, DIVISION/DEPARTMENT, AND INDIVIDUAL, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON.

FINAL ACTION BY THE SALARY AND LEAVES COMMITTEE:

_____ Recommend approval to the Board of Trustees

_____ Not recommend approval to the Board of Trustees

Signature - Chairperson, Salary and Leaves Comm. Date

Signature - Authorized Agent of the Board Date

my copy

**Sabbatical Project Proposal for Fall 2000 – Spring 2001
Submitted by Carolyn Inmon, Communication Department**

Project Overview

The goal of my project is to investigate possible improvements to the speech department's current approach to teaching the Interpersonal Communication class. I would like to modernize the class and enhance its effectiveness. My main focus is to develop a plan for using films as the primary mode for teaching Interpersonal Communication.

There has been a tremendous growth in the need for Interpersonal Communication skills. As individuals, young adults are more self-centered, less apt to listen, more apt to argue and quicker to give up. As a result we have a society with more divorce, more disgruntled employees in the work place, more rage, and more violence. The need for a strong Interpersonal Communication class that reaches more students is imperative.

The modern day student is increasingly a creature of the media and needs a greater amount of stimulation beyond that offered by the traditional lecture/discussion classroom mode. The modern day student is more visual and less likely to read than ever before. Average time spending watching television is higher than ever. The average time spending reading is lower. This is a generation raised on pictures and stories. Rather than fighting these tendencies, the possibility of working with them is intriguing and exciting. I would like to adapt the course to better meet their needs and better hold their interest level. My goal is to adapt the teaching mode of the Interpersonal class to the visual mode of films with which students can more easily identify and which will present information in a manner more likely to be retained.

Films tell stories. From our earliest ancestors, stories have been used to teach information and to pass down values. Long before the printing press, stories were the main vehicle of teaching. It is a natural extension to move from those storytellers of long ago to the storytellers or filmmakers of today. Many films tell stories about human beings in relationship with each other including the problems they have and how they work those problems out. Today's students relate to these films, become emotionally connected, and therefore become more open to the interpersonal communication theories exemplified in them.

While most textbooks have taken the traditional approach of explaining concepts and having a few exercises to try to reach the student experientially, I am interested in developing a more inductive approach. I propose a study of existing textbooks to isolate the major concepts and a check of journal literature to update these concepts. Then I propose a study of at least 50 films to identify these same concepts. I will investigate the possibility of introducing films to students and then inductively leading students from the film to the theoretical

concepts of the course. I believe this inductive approach will increase the identification and emotional tie-in with the characters and the story and then increase the intake of the theoretical information.

PROJECT REPORT

Using films to teach Interpersonal Communication is a unique and exciting idea. My report will include the following:

- A review of current and older interpersonal textbooks to isolate the "Big Ideas" and to see suggestions for using films. Each "Big Idea" will be explained. Most of the "Big Ideas" will not be the ones presently used in interpersonal texts. Instead of the traditional chapter on self-concept, I might have a Big Idea about "Seeing Myself as a Problem Solver." Other possible big ideas include Communicating with humor and Inter-generational communication.
- Review journal articles to add currency to each of the "Big Ideas."
- Dialogue with other professionals in the field of speech and drama regarding teaching of films. Phone interviews, email exchanges and face-to-face interviews will be held;
- The isolation of major concepts of each big idea;
- A glossary of at least 150 key terms;
- A brief look at 50 films resulting in the creation of a matrix of major concepts and films as well as mini assignments for each of the 50 films. These mini-assignments could be used as alternatives to the more analyzed films, extra credit, or as lecture examples.
- A second viewing of 20-25 films for an in depth analysis that will include the creation of study guides for students, teachers guides, background material, and bibliographies.
- Final research on the top 20-25 films. This will include reading reviews, books about the films, biographies (directors, writers, actors), interviews if possible, visits to the UCLA library.
- Creation of Teacher Resource Library of the films. These films would be made available in individual notebooks that include student study guide, teachers' guide, background material, bibliographies. If funds can be obtained, a copy of the film will be included in the notebook. Any instructor teaching Interpersonal Communication at Mt. San Antonio College will be allowed to check out the resource notebook on the film or films of his / her choice.

BENEFITS

This project will provide benefits to myself as well as to my students, other communication instructors, the communication department, and to the college.

1. Benefits to me:

This will benefit me by

- Allowing me the creativity to approach the Interpersonal class in a new way
- Allowing me to teach the class with an increased sense of enthusiasm because of the use of one of my favorite things --films
- Allowing me to teach the Interpersonal class in a way that is exciting, emotionally involving and fulfilling
- Allowing me to help improve resources in the department

2. Benefits to the Students:

This will benefit the students by

- Helping them have what they deserve – a better quality of education because of the most up to date and innovative delivery of courses
- Bringing to them an Interpersonal course that is more relevant to their learning styles, more lively and more likely to hold their interest.
- Providing a powerful Interpersonal course that is meaningful to them. As students, the possible power of the course cannot be obtained by memorizing lists and taking objective tests. The only possible power comes from internalizing and using these ideas. Film allows the emotional connection that is the only way to make the personal commitment to change and look at communication differently. The visual, emotional students will connect with these characters and stories and in viewing how the characters solve their problems, the students will gain insight into how they can solve their own problems.

3. Benefits to the Department:

This research will benefit the department by

- Contributing the expertise of other professionals in the field to our knowledge base;
- Bringing the department up to date with a new teaching mode in one of its main courses;
- Providing all department members with the information developed on teaching Interpersonal Communication in this new style.
- Providing all department members with the potential excitement and fulfillment of teaching this course in a new way that will possibly be more meaningful to the students and thus more fulfilling to the professors.
- Starting a Teachers Resource Library

4. Benefits to the College:

This will benefit the college by

- Eventually bringing growth because of the extra courses offered in a newly popular Interpersonal Communication course.
- Bringing growth because of increased enrollment in Interpersonal. A film-based course would probably draw more students.


- Bringing about greater retention in the Interpersonal Course because of a unique approach that is more powerful and more relevant to the students;
- Attaining some progress towards Partnership for Excellence goals.
- Knowing that it is better helping students to become citizens capable of getting along better with their fellows because of increased interpersonal skills.

August	3rd	Textbook Review	Review current and older Interpersonal textbooks to isolate major concepts and to see suggestions for using films.
	4th	Textbook Review, continued	
September	1st	Textbook Review, continued	
	2nd	Outline "Big Ideas"	Outline new approach to Interpersonal Communication course. Isolate at least ten "Big Ideas."
	3rd	Journal Review	Review journal articles to add currency to each of the "Big Ideas."
	4th	Journal Review, continued	Review journal articles to add currency to each of the "Big Ideas."
October	1st	Dialogue with colleagues	Begin to dialogue with other professionals in the field of speech and drama regarding teaching of films. Phone interviews, email exchanges and face-to-face interviews will be held.
	2nd	First viewing - 5 films	Category: silent & early (Ex: The Little Tramp)
	3rd	First viewing - 5 films	Category: children (EX: Stand By Me)
	4th	First Viewing - 5 films	Category: teenagers (Ex: Breakfast Club)
November	1st	First viewing - 5 films	Category: School (Ex: Dead Poet's Society)
	2nd	First viewing - 5 films	Category: family (Ex: Ordinary People)
	3rd	First viewing - 5 films	Category: culture (Ex: Gung Ho, Joy Luck Club)
	4th	First viewing - 5 films	Category: hope (Ex: Shawshank Redemption)
December	1st	First viewing - 5 films	Category: Love (Ex: It's A Beautiful Life)
	2nd	First viewing - 5 films	Category: Work (Ex: Working Girl)
	3rd	First viewing - 5 films/Total 50	Category: Humor & Empathy (Ex: Patch Adams)
January	2nd	Create matrix of films & concepts as well as Mini-Assignments for all 50 films	
	3rd	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	4th	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
February	1st	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	2nd	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	3rd	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	4th	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
March	1st	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	2nd	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	3rd	Second viewing - 2 to 3 films	
	4th	Second viewing - 2 films / Total 25	
April	1st	Final Research on Top 25 Films	Reviews, books about the films, biographies, Interviews, UCLA film library.
	2nd	Final Research, continued	
	3rd	Final Research, continued	
May	1st	Write Report	Interweave: Ten Big Ideas, major concepts, key terms top 25 movies, study guides, teachers guides
	2nd	Write Report	
	3rd	Write Report	

MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

1100 NORTH GRAND AVENUE
WALNUT, CA 91789-1399



TO: Salary and Leaves Committee
FROM: Stephen Runnebohm 
RE: Sabbatical leave for Carolyn Inmon
DATE: November 30, 1999

Interpersonal Communication is a very popular class among our students. This class is crucial to all students regardless of whether they intend to transfer to a four-year college or university, or enter the work force. Carolyn's proposal for changing this class is one of the most creative approaches I have encountered. I believe our students will resonate with the content in the class as it is illustrated through film. Students, of necessity, will become active rather than passive learners as they engage in discussions of the various films. I suspect that many other full-time faculty as well as part-time faculty will adopt this approach.

Having received my Ph.D. in interpersonal and organizational communication, I believe this approach to teaching interpersonal communication will be of significant value to those who teach the class and to those who enroll as students. I anxiously await the results of her efforts.

Purpose:

The purpose of this sabbatical project is to investigate possible improvements to the speech department's current approach to teaching the Interpersonal Communication class.

The course has been taught in the traditional manner. Students read chapters from a textbook and then process them in a variety of ways including journal writing, class discussion, role-playing, and other interactive methods.

Films are commonly used by the teachers of Interpersonal Communication. Most of my peers use anywhere from a few film clips to the viewing of an entire film in class. In the past I have made a class assignment where everyone watched the same film. They then wrote a paper on it and we discussed it in class. This was always successful, sometimes amazingly so. That success led me to do more than review textbooks and articles; I wanted to discover why film had a greater impact on the students than the textbooks.

Table of Contents:

The Narrative	1
Textbook Review	1
Review of Journal Articles	3
Dialoguing with Other Professionals	3
And finally...the films	4
Criteria	4
The Method	5
Further Research	6
Film Criticism	6
Back Home Again	6
Researching the Internet	6
Distribution of the work	8
Conclusion	9

Appendices:

- A – Lists of Films
- B—Themes and Films
- C—Strategies
- D – Glossary
- E – Bibliography

Textbook Review:

My first task was to review current and older textbooks to isolate the "Big Ideas." I proceeded to do that. I carefully reviewed about twenty textbooks and found

them pretty much alike. Most members of the field agree on the concepts and the order in which they should be presented. In fact, this review was disappointing in that all the books were so similar. There were some exceptions. A colleague in Riverside has written a textbook basing interpersonal communication choices on values. However, its heavy handedness would not appeal to our students. Several of the textbooks were interesting but too technical, not appropriate for our student population. A few textbooks from other parts of the country lacked the diversity to make them meaningful to our students.

Most disappointing of all was that it appeared that I had to abandon my original idea which was to come up with different themes. Although it is an excellent idea and still has considerable merit, I sadly realized that it would entail the writing of a textbook and I could not do that in one year.

I realized, as rebels often do, that there is a reason that all of these textbooks cover the concepts in a similar way. It's a good way to do it. Therefore, I decided to continue with the traditional textbook with its presentation of units in a very familiar manner. Perhaps, it is the method of presentation that will produce creativity and uniqueness in the class. I chose *Looking Out Looking In* for its simplicity and beauty. It will serve our students well.

In the process, I gained much from studying the textbooks. Following are a few of the things that will enhance my teaching.

1. **Update ideas:** It was interesting to find references to such new concepts as CMC (Computer Mediated Communication). The popular myth is that email and chat rooms have ruined interpersonal communication. That has not been my personal experience. Although I can think of one argument with my cousin over my "tone of voice" in an email, my greater experience has been to strengthen and deepen my friendship with a woman from Moorpark College who has become my "best friend" as well as with my brother, Floyd, who lives in San Francisco. Therefore I was very interested in the textbook which found similar results. This new form of communication is a much more efficient way of keeping in touch.
2. **Options, strategies, and alternatives:** One of the most interesting strategies that I found in the newest textbooks was the use of real students and their experiences. Adler calls them "Looking at Diversity." In one article, for instance, a young woman tells of her experiences in the inner-city of Los Angeles where she lives and in the San Fernando Valley where she went to school. I have already had several students refer to this page in chapter one because they could identify with the young LA girl.
3. **New Assignments:** New quizzes, check sheets, written activities and role plays now reside in my files as a result of the textbook search.

4. Word Study: The most important thing that I did in the textbook review is the word study. It was interesting to read the various definitions from various authors. It increased my personal understanding of the terms and in many cases I'll be sharing multiple definitions with the students.

Review of journal articles:

The second thing I did was to review selected journal articles. What a joy to have time to read and simply contemplate ideas. I was able to savor philosophical thoughts about my field and update statistics as well. Philosophically, I am fascinated by silence as nonverbal communication and I was pleased to find articles to read on that topic. On the other hand, I was saddened to see the statistics on how poorly co-habitation is working out.

I am interested in anger and how it affects interpersonal communication so I studied everything from road rage to the reasons minority women are angry. New insights will improve my teaching of the chapter on emotions and expressing feelings.

I am also fascinated that even in academia we are sometimes guilty of age discrimination even though we would claim to be above that and too intelligent to discriminate against anyone because of age. Articles on Age-ism will be passed on to the youthful students of the youth culture.

Topics such as silence, cohabitation, anger, age-ism and others added to my appreciation of this interesting field – interpersonal communication in relationships.

Dialoguing with Other Professionals:

Dialoguing with other professionals on strategies to teaching film was one of the joys of having some time. I sat at the Academic Senate Plenary Session in San Francisco and talked with Mike Leigh, a giant in the speech field. We not only discussed the session and the difficulties of dieting while at conferences but we discussed using films as well. His ideas were creative and provided higher level thinking at its best.

Several instructors were concerned with privacy. Char Arnold from Moorpark has the students use a film character to exemplify points because it is less problematic than talking about themselves, a family member or friend. Mary Ann Pacheco, an English teacher, uses a film clip to introduce a controversial subject. In this way the students do not have to reveal more than they are comfortable revealing.

I chose not to limit myself to speech teachers but also conversed with instructors from the fields of radio, television, drama, English, and even music. All had

marvelous ideas to share. I promised them the complete list. It's a shame teachers don't share more often. How invigorating it is.

And finally...the films:

In the beginning I wondered if there would be enough films to properly cover the themes and concepts. As a matter of fact, it was exactly the opposite. Early on I realized for every film I used, there were ten to twenty that could have been used. I realized that I would barely scratch the surface. At UCLA, the index for the New York Times Review of Films is 3 inches thick. In fact, it was obvious to me that this was a project that would never be finished. Every weekend two to three films are released and the students tend to like most of them. The supply of material is never ending and the opportunities to update and refine are limitless.

Criteria

It became clear that a criteria would have to be used to select the films.

1. Films that appeal to the professor. My favorite films would have to be included. One of the first films I viewed was *The Shawshank Redemption*. The idea of hope and patience is so overwhelming in that film that I tremble at my lack of the ability to sit still. I almost did not include my favorite movie of all times. I was in the process of talking myself out of it with thoughts such as, "It's too old." "It's about the South." "The story is dated." I won't use it. How can I not use it? It's my favorite movie ever. So, with mixed emotions, I reluctantly put it in the viewer and started it. Gregory Peck appeared and *To Kill A Mockingbird* began. It was an example of the magic of the project. It didn't seem to fit neatly into one of the categories right away. So, I became completely involved, transporting myself to another time, place and dimension. I was in the South and a black man had been accused of a crime. I was there with Atticus, on the side of the black man. But we were alone. And, eventually, that was the answer. Atticus was a man of extreme character unlike heroes of most of today's movies. Yes, my favorites had to be included.
2. Films that appeal to the students. I realized I had to take the same advice that we give in the Public Speaking class and that is to keep the audience in mind. The speaker must keep the audience in mind as he/she prepares his/her speech. The speaker does not write for himself or herself but for these audience members. So, while I wrote to try to convince today's students that Atticus Finch deserves our attention, I also chose movies that would be sure to draw their attention. Yes, I even watched *Happy Gilmore* and *Liar Liar*. On occasion, such as when viewing *Happy Gilmore* I could barely stand it. But on other occasions, such as viewing Jim Carey, I laughed a great deal and understood what the younger generation sees in him. In order to make these choices I employed a "panel of experts." My panel was a small group of

outspoken, bright "twenty-somethings." I continually asked if our Mt. San Antonio College students would make a connection with these films and discarded them if they didn't meet that criterion.

3. Films that are diverse: The panel of experts helped me make sure that every ethnicity was represented. They even talked me into seeing *American Me*. Although it was not the best movie ever made, it shed light on the communication of a culture.
4. Films that teach interpersonal communication: I had originally thought I would probably choose films from all decades of filmmaking. But, as I began to watch the films, I realized that this is not a film history class and that was not my goal. My goal had to stay firmly in mind and that is to teach the concepts in interpersonal communication. What films would appeal to the audience of Mt. San Antonio College students the best and communicate the concepts the best? Therefore, I ended up choosing mostly modern films. As the years progress and I add other movies, I may choose more of the great old films. But since the great old films are so often about "white people" and, worse yet, "rich white people," they may have to remain few and far between.

The Method:

I divided the course into ten themes with major concepts within each one. I then watched each movie and decided what its main idea was. Every scene has a myriad of ideas so I was looking for the major impact. While another professional or even casual observer might make a case for something else being the main idea, I can justify the one I chose. And that is exactly what I did for each film. Then I isolated more ideas for the student and teacher to discuss. As I did this, I was once again convinced how much more effective this is apt to be than reading about these ideas in a text. There it is on the screen. The characters are having a conflict. How do they resolve it? Would the textbook agree they resolved it in the most effective way? Each film is rich with possibilities for observation, discussion, and hopefully insight.

It is important to distinguish between fact and opinion. My original proposal emphasized the uniqueness of this project. In the field of interpersonal communication, there is not a lot written about films. Therefore, my analysis of each film and scenes to illustrate interpersonal concepts was just that – my analysis. It was not research in the traditional way, but rather, my personal opinion of what these scenes illustrated. The choice of films was mine. The choice of concepts was mine. And the in depth analysis that resulted in forging a relationship between the two was all my original work. Film reviews were merely included as background material. Since they deal primarily with concepts of film not of interpersonal communication, they were rarely included in one of the assignments.

This sabbatical report took a look at 52 films. My original proposal was to briefly view 50 movies and take a second look at 20 to 25 of them producing an in-depth analysis of the 20-25. That was impossible – for me at least. I had to include all 50. In fact that number grew to 52 because my powers of decision making left me a couple of times and I viewed both when a decision might have produced one. The “problem,” if it was that, is that with the Interpersonal hat on my head, I saw so much in every film that I just had to use them all. As I viewed each film, the faces of different students popped into my head and I thought things like “Jorge would really like this scene,” or “Sandra would understand what is going on here.” So the appendix with the Themes and Films is a bit longer than originally intended.

Further Research:

Film Criticism

How do movies work? It was interesting to have time to read books on film-making and film-criticism. I also had the opportunity to read a few books on how to write about films and how to teach students to write about films. In addition to the skills of writing about a film, many of the books pointed out that students write better about something they like and they like few things as well as they like movies.

When one tends to dismiss movies - or a paper about movies - as frivolous, one is reminded of how important movies are to the American public. Almost seventy years ago, Erwin Panofsky wrote that if the poets, composers, painters and sculptors disappeared few people would notice and fewer would care but if the same thing happened to the movies it would be catastrophic. That is probably more true today than when he wrote these words in 1934. It was interesting to have the time to contemplate such interesting and profound thoughts.

This was an opportunity to read in a related field and helped me to better understand the movies.

Back “home” again:

A visit to the UCLA Arts Library sent me on a déjà vu trip. I’ve been here before! I felt transported back several decades to when I was a student there. It was peaceful to wander through the sculpture garden and reach the library with its wealth of material. Reading reviews in the New York Times and Variety was great fun. I was reminded once again that some reviewers don’t like anything. But most reviewers agreed with me that despite great films in the intervening years, it’s hard to beat *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

Researching on the Internet:

Despite the beauty of the trees that have grown in the twenty years since I've been on that part of the UCLA campus, I found my greatest source on the Internet. What a fun time I had finding reviews and articles from every source. Diversity became my criteria as I looked at diversity in terms of philosophy, geography, age and other factors. Philosophical diversity caused me to read reviews from Rolling Stones as well as the New Republic. A different kind of philosophical consideration was parental. Many modern students may have to do homework with their children and this would allow a parent to take a look at ratings before watching one of the movies with a child. Instead of excluding their children to do homework, they could include them and teach them some interpersonal concepts along the way.

Geographical diversity took me on a world tour right in my home office. I went to Australia and the UK to read reviews written in English and see different points of view on American films. Just for fun, I went to a German site, an Italian site and a site in Spanish. I put them in the bibliographies. Perhaps a student who speaks one of those languages would enjoy reading a review in his/her native tongue. Here is a sampling of the sites I visited:

Traditional:

- CNN.com
- Christian Science Monitor
- Hollywood Reporter
- People.com
- Reel Views
- Roger Ebert on Movies
- Time.com
- USA Today

Philosophical – Political:

- New Republic
- Rollingstone.com

Parental Guidance;

- Christian Spotlight in the movies
- Entertainment Reviews for Parents.ScreenIt.Com
- Film Values/Family Values: A parents guide
- Focus of the Family. Plugged In Film Reviews
- Grading the Movies.com
- Kids-in-mind.com

Geographical:

Australia:

- In Film Australia
- Movie Reviews Down Under

England:

BBC Online
 Empire Online, UK
 Movie Reviews UK
 The UK Critic.com
 WHSmith.co.uk

Spanish:

El Tiempo Latino

United States:

Calendar Live.com LA Times.
 Chicago Reader On Film
 New York Times
 San Francisco Chronicle
 San Francisco Examiner
 Washington Post.com

Age – Youth Worldwide:

Edinburgh University Film Society
 Garps World Cinema
 Stanford Daily
 Syracuse New Times
 Tech MIT

Racial:

3 Black Chicks.com

Wacked Out:

Cranky Critic
 Flick Filosopher
 JoBlo's Movie Emporium
 Movie Mom

An unexpected outcome of the sabbatical project was an improvement in computer usage. I not only learned about researching on the Internet but my appreciation for the process was greatly increased. I discovered many new opportunities for learning and many new people to "meet." Imagine me sitting in my home in Irvine reading the words of a person in Australia discussing an American movie. Thinking of the story, themes, situations and characters from his perspective was fascinating. Yes, indeed. The world is getting smaller.

Distribution of the work:

The creation of a Teacher Resource Library of the films doesn't seem as if it will work out at this time. The Communication Department does not have room for a library and we are in a temporary facility. Instead, I've decided to print the entire 150-page section of themes and films and present it to each member of the department at a workshop / social gathering. I think it would be good for my department to get together more often for social as well as intellectual reasons.

Although it will be copyrighted they are free to use this material in class. At the workshop, I plan to introduce the idea of purchasing a number of these films for the department.

Conclusion

It is hard to write about the benefits, there are so many. First of all, there were the benefits to me personally. A year to create is a magical thing. I've never had it before in my 36 years of teaching. I took time off to create and nurture a child but that was different. Last year something happened that I didn't realize would happen. And that is the movement into a mental space that is impossible when the busy routine and stress filled life style dominate. And that is most of the time. Years ago, I was teaching in the gifted program of the Irvine Unified School District. I went to a special stress workshop. My coordinator sent me because as she said, "You can't be creative when you're under stress." What a terrible thing. When you work in a pressure filled program like that, you are under constant stress and you are expected to be creative. I never forgot the idea of stress preventing creativity.

This year the concept was proven to me in a dramatic way. As we all know, Mt. San Antonio College can be stressful. Having time off to lessen the stress and get away from the pressure was a marvelous gift. During the viewing of many movies, I noticed concepts and took notes. A step up from that was to re-enjoy a great story and a marvelous work of art. But, a surprisingly wonderful thing happened many times. I was truly transported to a mental state that allowed me to see a film in a totally new way. I gave myself to the experience in these cases and came out of them with new insights that I did not expect to gain. I had to be somewhat stress free for this to occur, and because it occurred I was rejuvenated even more.

One of the things that happened in a profound way is that these films caused me to appreciate diversity on a deeper level than ever before. In my 35 years of teaching I have appreciated difference. But, in viewing these films and getting inside the heads and hearts of these characters, I appreciate the difficulties that many of our students have faced and continue to face. I have never, for instance, had it assumed, as Jaime Escalante's students did, that my work was not my own. I don't know what that feels like, but *Stand and Deliver* brought me closer to the empathy I need to best nurture our students. I do have renewed enthusiasm about teaching the class. In fact it is wider than that. The first day of class last summer I felt somewhat disoriented and unorganized. But after I got into the classroom I realized how much I missed it and how excited I was to be there.

One unexpected benefit is that I truly understand many concepts at a deeper and more philosophical level. From the insights of gifted directors and actors I can see the vision they were trying to create and the concept they were attempting to

portray. Seeing an interpersonal concept through the eyes of different creative souls caused the concept to become more a part of my inner being instead of words from a textbook to be delivered.

The future benefits to the students go without saying. Students are visual and love movies. They relate to the characters on the screen. I used to think that using film was some kind of an easy way out. Only "lazy" teachers would use movies was my archaic thinking. Actually, many people still think this way. In my talking to peers about teaching strategies for films, a friend and colleague practically said these same words. Then, realizing what she had done, she tried to back out of her faux faux. I assured her that it was all right and that I had thought similarly not too long ago.

I am not the center of attention in the interpersonal class. Therefore lecturing is not the center of my teaching. And I am not lazy when I use other more interactive methods. The question is, will the students relate better to my lecture or to film characters. The answer is obvious and it only took me a decade or so to realize it. They identify with Lou Diamond Phillips better than they do with Carolyn Inmon. The emotional connection is made with the characters in the stories and then translated to their lives. Connections are key and they are strongly made with films.

Something that is happening recently is that students are getting quieter. They seem less willing to share their personal stories than they did awhile ago. The pendulum may be swinging back. Years ago people didn't share their "dirty linen" in public. Then the pendulum went very far and people seemed to feel it was appropriate to share everything including much that neither the teacher nor the class wanted to hear. It is moving back. It is less vulnerable to talk about the characters on the screen than to talk about yourself. Perhaps it is more appropriate to do so. And it is for sure that privacy is better protected.

Benefits to the department will be many. More of our professors are asking to teach the interpersonal class and this work will benefit them. In creating the section on Peer Strategies, I began a dialogue with department members and we all agreed that this needs to continue. Speech teachers are strong, capable, independent and leaders. We are often seen all over campus being involved in many things and often leading them. We need to take time to be together socially and interpersonally and we need to take time to share intellectually. What a shame if all that brain power and creativity remained within each department member instead of being shared with each other and ultimately the students.

Benefits to the college are yet to be determined. There is the benefit to the college of having a faculty member go from near-burn out back to energetic and enthusiastic with a desire to be productive. That cannot be underestimated. Hopefully greater retention in the course and growth in enrollment will occur along with helping students operate better in their lives.

Alphabetical List of Films

A.I.
American Beauty
American Me
American President
As Good as it Gets
Babe
Boyz N the Hood
Breakfast Club
Cast Away
Children of A Lesser God
Cider House Rules
Comic Classics by Charlie Chaplin
Cool Runnings
Dead Poet's Society
Doctor
Ferris Bueller's Day Off
Finding Forrester
Gung Ho
Happy Gilmore
Hurricane
Joy Luck Club
Jungle Fever
LA Confidential
LA Story
La Bamba
Liar Liar
Life is Beautiful
Man in the Iron Mask
Men of Honor
Miss Congeniality
Music of the Heart
Nell
Ordinary People
Out of Africa
Parenthood
Patch Adams
Pledge
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Rain Man
Rudy
Save the Last Dance
Selena
Shawshank Redemption
Shreck
Stand and Deliver
Stand by Me
Swimming with Sharks
Terms of Endearment
To Kill A Mockingbird
U-571
War of the Roses
When a Man Loves a Woman

List of Films by Themes and Concepts

Theme 1 - Introduction

Cast Away
Life is Beautiful

The importance of relationship
Love, family and imagination conquer all

Theme 2 - Self-concept

Boyz N the Hood
Rudy
Selena
To Kill A Mockingbird
Gung Ho
Stand and Deliver

Parents and self-concept
Reflected appraisal
Gender and barriers
Persons with high self-esteem
Culture and self-concept
Self-fulfilling prophecy

Theme 3 - Perception

As Good As It Gets
Miss Congeniality
Babe
American President
Shawshank Redemption
Shrek
Doctor
Patch Adams

Stereotyping
Overcoming stereotypes
Roles
Occupational roles
Multiple perspectives
Perception checking
Empathy
Empathy

Theme 4 - Emotions

AI (Artificial Intelligence)
Rain Man
L.A. Confidential
American Me
U-571
Ordinary People
LA Story
Music of the Heart
Terms of Endearment
La Bamba
Ferris Bueller's Day Off

Emotions make us human
Unexpressed feelings
Anger
Cultural influences on emotions
Gender influences on emotions
Fear of self-disclosure
Recognizing your feelings
Overcoming fear
Grief
Facilitative and debilitating emotions
Self-talk

Theme 5 - Language

Nell
Out of Africa
Children of a Lesser God (1986)
Save the Last Dance (2001)

The importance of language
Storytelling
Cultural influences on language
Cultural influences on language

Theme 6 - Non-verbal

Raiders of the Lost Ark (1984)
Comic Classics by Charlie Chaplin
Man in the Iron Mask
The Pledge
Happy Gilmore

Exaggerated non-verbal communication
Types of non-verbal communication
Posture, face and eyes
Physical attractiveness
Clothing

Theme 7 - Listening

When a Man Loves a Woman
Finding Forrester (2001)

Insulated listening
Faulty assumptions

List of Films by Themes and Concepts

Theme 8 - Relational Dynamics

The Breakfast Club
The Hurricane
American Beauty
Parenthood
Liar, Liar (1997)
Cider House Rules
Cool Runnings
Jungle Fever
Stand By Me (1986)

Intimacy
Afraid to trust
Deterioration of a relationship
Self-disclosure
Lying: What if we stopped lying?
Ethics of evasion
Group cohesiveness
Interracial relationships
Childhood freindship includes support

Theme 9 - Climate

Dead Poets Society

Climate and positive relationships

Theme 10 - Conflict

Swimming with Sharks
Men of Honor
Joy Luck Club
War of the Roses

Direct aggression
Aggression and assertion
Conflict and culture
Lose-lose method

Themes & Films

Theme #1: The Importance of Interpersonal Communication	3
1: Cast Away	4
2: Life is Beautiful	7
Theme #2: Self-Concept	9
3: Boys N the Hood	10
4: Rudy	12
5: Selena	16
6: To Kill a Mockingbird	19
7: Gung Ho	21
8: Stand and Deliver	23
Theme #3: Perception	25
9: As Good As It Gets	26
10: Miss Congeniality	29
11: Babe	32
12: American President	35
13: Shawshank Redemption	37
14: Shreck	40
15: The Doctor	42
16: Patch Adams	44
Theme #4: Emotion	46
17: A.I.	48
18: Rain Man	52
19: L.A. Confidential	54
20: American Me	56
21: U-571	58
22: Ordinary People	60
23: LA Story	62
24: Music of the Heart	63
25: Terms of Endearment	66
26: La Bamba	69
27: Ferris Bueller's Day Off	71
Theme #5: Language	73
28: Nell	74
29: Out of Africa	76
30: Children of a Lesser God	78
31: Save the Last Dance	79

Theme #6: Nonverbal Communication	82
32: Raiders of the Lost Ark	83
33: Comic Classics by Charlie Chaplin	84
34: Man in the Iron Mask	87
35: The Pledge	89
36: Happy Gilmore	91
Theme #7: Listening	93
37: When a Man Loves a Woman	94
38: Finding Forrester	97
Theme #8: Relational Dynamics	100
39: The Breakfast Club	101
40: The Hurricane	103
41: American Beauty	106
42: Parenthood	110
43: Liar, Liar	113
44: Cider House Rules	116
45: Cool Runnings	119
46: Jungle Fever	122
47: Stand By Me	125
Theme #9: Climate	127
48: Dead Poets Society	128
Theme #10: Conflict	132
49: Swimming with Sharks	133
50: Men of Honor	136
51: Joy Luck Club	140
52: War of the Roses	143

Theme #1: The Importance of Interpersonal Communication

We all need relationships. Relationships are vital to our humanity. They are vital to our emotional health but they are vital to our physical health as well. Prisoners of war have created their own communication systems in order to keep in touch with each other. Senator John Mc Cain was one of these courageous soldiers who understands the very basic need to communicate.

Students might ask why they should take a course in Interpersonal Communication. They might ask why this course is important. What will it do for them? The answer is that the tools of Interpersonal Communication may be able to improve their lives immensely. Listening to a significant other or a boss will increase the quality of the relationship at home or at work.

Perhaps we agree with Tom Bodett when he says, "***They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world. Someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.***" This course has the potential to improve relationships, to communicate better with those we love and those we work with; to increase the probability therefore of maintaining personal relationships and work relationships. What we can hope for is a life filled with open mindedness, healthy intimate relationships, positive conflict and the contented feeling that comes to the excellent communicator.

Film is an incredible tool. Films mirror society. They reflect our struggles, hopes, dreams, concerns, problems, joys and sorrows. To view film in order to see ourselves can be effective. The following 52 films are organized into 10 themes.

A strong start to the class can be provided by the introduction of two magnificent films. What is the theme of ***Cast Away***? Audiences liked it because it starred one of their favorites, Tom Hanks. But what was it about? More than anything else it showed the importance of relationships. When Chuck Noland becomes a cast away, he is faced with incredible isolation and loneliness. He is so in need of a relationship that he creates one. He imbues the soccer ball with a personality and the ability to listen. When the ball went away, the audience gasped. They knew how important Wilson was to Chuck. In another amazing recent film, an Italian family shows that love, family and imagination can conquer all. ***Life is Beautiful*** is a true example of perception, showing that the characters thought it was beautiful so it was. How could we explain the beauty of true love any better than the wife and mother getting on a train when she didn't have to and the father creating a game to protect his beautiful son from a harsh reality that would ruin his innocence.

- 1 ***Cast Away***
- 2 ***Life is Beautiful***

**The importance of relationship
Love, family & imagination conquer**

Movie: 1
Title: CAST AWAY
Rating: PG-13
Year: 2000

Summary:

In this thought-provoking film, a Fed-Ex troubleshooter is stranded on an island for four years after his plane crashed. Everyone at home assumes he is dead and they go on with their lives. He must learn to survive physically and emotionally while isolated on this island.

The Main Idea: The Importance of relationship

Humans need each other. Social interaction is crucial. And when the human spirit doesn't have another human to relate to, as in this film, it makes up something. Such is the case of the Tom Hanks character, Chuck Noland, in The Cast Away. Deprived of human contact, he must have contact with somebody or, as a last resort, something. So, he turns a volleyball into a friend, listener, and confidant. He becomes deeply attached to it, sharing his feelings and thoughts with his inanimate friend. He needs to talk to something about what he has learned, his ideas, his feelings, fears, funny stories and jokes. Many people would go crazy without someone to talk to. Some people can't even sit through a movie without using their cell phone. But Chuck finds a friend in Wilson, and his adoption of Wilson shows the need for someone to talk to.

At the end, when Wilson goes, he almost cries at the loss of his friend. I was more heartbroken when he lost Wilson than when he lost Kelly (Helen Hunt). It was the single most devastating moment of the movie.

More Ideas:

1. **Time – a symbol of nonverbal communication**: How does Chuck's relationship to time change in the film?
2. **Assumptions**: What assumptions are made by characters in the movie?
3. **Survival**: How does survival change Chuck?
4. **Nonverbal**: How many actors could play this part? Give examples of nonverbal communication from Tom Hanks in his portrayal of Chuck Noland.
5. **Expression of feelings**: Describe how the characters express their feelings in the film.
6. **Perception**: Discuss Chuck's change in perception during the film.

7. **Everyman – Identification:** What is the everyman concept? Do you identify with Chuck?
8. **The survivor:** In his review, James Berardinelli said that this was way above "Gilligan's Island" and "Survivor." Why?

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Movie: 2
Title: Life is Beautiful
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1998

Summary: Guido courts Dora and they marry and have a beautiful child, Giosue. Their life is changed and they are sent to a Nazi concentration camp. Hope remains as Guido creates an imaginary world for his young son.

The Main Idea: Love, family and imagination conquer all

True love is not a sex scene in a modern movie. It is much more than that. In this beautiful movie, Roberto Benigni shows us love at it's highest level. Dora gets on the train and goes to the concentration because she loves her husband and son. She didn't have to do that. Guido concocts an enormous story to protect his young son from the horrors of the concentration camp. His imagination goes to work to tell his son that this is all a game, that they must get 1000 points to win the game. Guido takes terrible risks in the name of love. He plays her music on the speaker system of the camp because it is the only way he can communicate with his beloved Dora who is in another part of the camp. In the end we know that love, true family and imagination can conquer even the most awful events.

More Ideas:

1. **Humor:** Reviewers discussed Roberto Benigni's use of humor in this movie. Janet Maslin, New York Times, stated, "...he dares to find humor and tenderness in the midst of the Holocaust, playing a Jewish waiter named Guido who jokes his way through this nightmare for the sake of his loved ones." Later in the review, she states, "It dares to laugh in the face of the unthinkable." How did you feel about the humor? Was it appropriate? Was it helpful? Can you imagine doing what he did?
2. **Silence:** What is the importance of silence in the film?
3. **First impressions:** Describe the first meetings between Dora and Guido.
4. **Schopenhauer:** With willpower, you can do anything. Explain what this means and how it is shown in the film.
5. **Lying:** Why does Guido pretend to be the inspector and why does he go to the school?
6. **Lying:** At the theater, why does Guido tell his date he is looking sideways?
7. **Discrimination:** What happens to Guido's uncle's horse? Why?

8. **Changing relationships:** What is Guido's relationship with Dr. Lessing? How does it change?
9. **The shower:** What is the significance of the shower?
10. **Emotions:** In his review, Roger Ebert says, "The film falls into two parts. One is pure comedy. The other smiles through tears." How can you smile through tears? How does Roberto Benigni achieve this complicated emotional situation?
11. **Delicacy:** Roger Ebert states that, "The film finds the right notes to negotiate its delicate subject matter." Do you agree? If so, how does Benigni achieve this?
12. **Human story:** The film ignores politics. Instead it tells a simple story about people and human ingenuity. This has caused some criticism. Ironically, as Janet Maslin tells us, "The film is likely to offend those who haven't seen it." Some people didn't see it because they thought it would be offensive. Do you agree that it is offensive? Or, do you like the telling of a tale of what happens to a family during a war?

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Theme #2: Self-Concept

The self-concept is the idea a person has of herself or himself. The self-concept is formed and developed because of messages from significant others and the reflected appraisal of social groups. Once established, the self-concept tends to remain fixed and is reluctant to change. Our self-concept moderates competing internal messages and influences our perception of others. It greatly influences our personal communication style.

Parents influence our self-concept as we will see in *Boys N the Hood*. One young man has a strong father who molds him and his ideas and goals and picture of himself. Other boys in the film are not this lucky. We see parental influence in *Selena*, where once again a strong father molds a child, this time a talented daughter. The mother supports her too and this young woman becomes powerful enough to break gender barriers. Sometimes parents don't encourage their children. In *Rudy*, we see a young man with a dream and a family that laughed at the dream. But he looked in the mirror and said he could do it. And he did. Persons with high self-esteem communicate differently than those without it. Where in film history is there a better example of this than Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Atticus stood alone, a white man supporting a black man accused of raping a young white woman. Atticus was quietly confident that he was right and remarkable for his courage and strength. Culture influences self-concept as we see in *Gung Ho*, a delightful little movie where we see two cultures in action and individuals from these cultures communicating in certain ways because of their cultures. Unfortunately, self-fulfilling prophecies can hurt us, causing us to act in ways that turn these expectations into reality. But self-fulfilling prophecies can be helpful as they are in *Stand and Deliver*. Based on a real Los Angeles story, a gifted and dedicated teacher had high expectations and his students met them.

3 *Boyz N the Hood*

4 *Rudy*

5 *Selena*

6 *To Kill A Mockingbird*

7 *Gung Ho*

8 *Stand and Deliver*

Parents and self-concept

Reflected appraisal

Gender and barriers

Persons with high self-esteem

Culture & the self-concept

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Movie: 3
Title: Boys N the Hood
Rating: R
Year: 1991

Summary: This is the story of three friends who grow up in the black urban America of South Central Los Angeles. Unemployment and drive-by shootings are their reality. But their reality is much more than this.

The Main Idea: Parents and self-concept

There is a significant difference in the film between how the boys are raised and as a result how they turn out. The parents of Tre Styles teach him responsibility by setting barriers. They also praise him. Their communication helps to assure that he has a high self-concept. Tre's father Furious (Larry Fishburne) tells him that any fool can make a baby but only a real man can raise a child. He practices what he preaches as he raises Tre. In contrast, other boys in the film have no guidance.

More Ideas:

1. **Nonverbal:** In the beginning of the film, the teacher gives a lecture about the Native-Americans and the Pilgrims. In response, the children draw pictures. Describe them.
2. **Anger – feelings:** Discuss Tre's anger. Include what the teacher tells his mother in the beginning of the film. What happened because of that conversation?
3. **Stereotypes and assumptions:** Discuss stereotypes and assumptions. Begin with the teacher's assumptions about Tre's mother. Include Tre and his girlfriend Brandy. Why does Tre want Brandy to "get with the program."
4. **Racism and stereotypes:** Discuss racism in the film and how it is a result of stereotypes. Include what the cops say and do. Is this typical?
5. **Conversation Topics:** What are the conversation topics among the boys? Are they what you talked about when you were a child?
6. **Vocabulary:** Discuss the use of cursing, slang, sex, racial slurs, and gender slurs in the movie.
7. **Assertiveness:** Furious teaches Tre about assertiveness. What are the three rules he gives him?
8. **Lying:** Does Tre lie in the movie? Is it justifiable?

9. **Nonverbal in the neighborhood:** Discuss neighborhood shooting as nonverbal communication. How do Tre and his girlfriend react to it?
10. **Empathy - emotions:** Why does Doughboy get upset when the television news discusses violence in other countries?

Sources:

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Movie: 4
Title: Rudy
Rating: PG
Year: 1993

Summary: Daniel "Rudy" Ruettiger, Jr. is an average kid. Everyone sees him that way. His biggest dream is to play football for Notre Dame. Almost everyone except Fortune, the Notre Dame groundskeeper, laughs at his dream; but through his perseverance he finally makes it and gains respect in the process.

The Main Idea: Reflected appraisal

All his life, people tell Rudy (Sean Astin) that he is not good enough, smart enough or big enough to do much of anything. His father (Ned Beatty) thinks his dreams are foolish. In the very first scene, this theme is introduced as the other children tell him that he has to play center because he is too small for any other position. This continues. When he announces that he is going to play football for Notre Dame, his brother says he is going to buy a mansion and they all laugh. The priest puts down dreamers. Rudy tries to go on the field trip, but the priest tells him he can't because his grades aren't high enough.

More Ideas:

1. **The human spirit:** Roger Ebert believes that "It's a small but powerful illustration of the human spirit." What does this mean? Do you agree?
2. **Support:** Rudy meets an understanding priest (Robert Prosky) at Holy Cross. The priest encourages Rudy to get good grades so that he can get into Notre Dame. What does that support mean to Rudy? Can you identify with him at this point in the film?
3. **Confirming messages:** Who gives these to Rudy? Give examples.
4. **Disconfirming messages:** Who gives these to Rudy? Give examples. How does Rudy decide not to listen to people anymore? Do these disconfirming messages continue anyway?
5. **Emotions:** Why does the sadness of Pete's funeral cause Rudy to make the decision to go to Notre Dame? What happens when Rudy gets accepted into Notre Dame? Describe his father's emotional reaction when he sees the stadium for the first time. How did you feel when Rudy led the team out onto the field?
6. **Assumptions:** Assumptions abound throughout the film. Give examples of what people assume about Rudy?

7. **Assertiveness:** Discuss Rudy's assertiveness as he tries to make his dreams come true. There are many examples in the film. Include them in your discussion.
8. **Nonverbal:** Describe Rudy when he makes the team, when he shows up for practice and other times. Describe the nonverbal communication involved when the team members return their jerseys. Describe examples of symbolic and nonverbal acts of communication at the end of the movie.
9. **Communication of sternness:** Ara Parseghian (Jason Miller) is portrayed in the film as the gruff, stern, demanding coach of the Notre Dame football team. What do you think of his style of communicating? Is it necessary for the situation?
10. **Underdog movie:** Roger Ebert states that "Underdog movies are a durable genre and never go out of style." Even though you've seen this basic theme before, is it appealing once again? Why does the underdog movie remain appealing?

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Movie: 5
Title: Selena
Rating: PG
Year: 1997

Summary: Based on a true story, Selena is the story of Tejano princess Selena Quintanilla Perez, a rising star who was gunned down by the president of her fan club. Her father was a Mexican immigrant and doo-wop singer

The Main Idea: Gender and Barriers

From the very beginning, Selena (Jennifer Lopez) is allowed to break gender barriers. Her father Abraham Quintanilla (Edward James Olmos) allows her to play drums. One of her brothers says, "Girls don't play the drums." Even a sister says, "Sick, sick sick! Have you ever seen a girl play the drums?" But, the father recognizes talent and allows Selena to do this. This is an analogy to the larger issue that is brought up by Marcella who tells Abraham that women don't make it in music. Ultimately, after the English album, her father talks about the barriers she has broken and says regarding the barriers, "Maybe for you they don't exist."

More Ideas:

1. **Self-concept:** How did the support of her parents help Selena? Her father told her, "You gotta be who you are." Is that true? Was it true for Selena? Is it true for you?
2. **Prejudice, racism and assumptions:** Discuss these issues as portrayed in several generations in the film.
3. **Conflict:** Discuss conflict in the film. Include that between Abraham and Marcella as well as Selena and the people around her.
4. **Lying and promises:** Is it a lie when you make a promise that you can't keep? When Abraham promises Marcella things but can't follow through because of his dreams, is he lying to her?
5. **Cultural identity:** Selena doesn't really speak Spanish until her father teaches her to do so. Abraham tells her she has to sing from what she is, and she is Mexican-American, between two worlds, and that's tough. Does she have problems with identity growing up in two cultures? Do the other members of her family? Can you identify with this problem?
6. **Define familia:** According to Roger Ebert, the writer "places her firmly inside a close, loving family." How important is that to her as a person? How important is that to her success? Describe the importance of the family and how family communication occurs in this film.

7. **The unapproachable father:** It is hard for the family members to talk to Abraham. Why? How is the bustierre an example of this problem?
8. **Nonverbal appearance:** There are many makeovers in the film. Discuss the makeover of the new guy. What is the difference in terms of nonverbal communication when someone changes his or her appearance?
9. **Emotions – love and anger:** Describe her relationship with the talented guitarist, Chris Perez (Jon Seda). Discuss their love and their anger. What emotions are shown by Abraham when he finds out about their love? After they elope, how does the family react emotionally?
10. **Confrontation:** Describe the confrontation with Yolanda Salvidar (Lupe Ontiveros). What did you learn about confrontation from this scene?
11. **Grief:** How does each person express his or her grief when Selena dies?

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Movie: 6
Title: To Kill a Mockingbird
Rating: Not Rated.
Year: 1962

Summary: A young southern girl tells the story of her father defending a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman. Bigotry abounds in this story which is based on the novel by Harper Lee.

The Main Idea: Persons with High Self-esteem

Atticus Finch is one of the most dignified characters in the history of American film. As Bosley Crowther of the New York Times states, "Atticus... is the kindest man in town." He wears suits at all times. He talks in a quiet manner. He stands up to people in a quiet manner. He never insults anyone. On page 60 of *Looking Out Looking In*, there is a chart that describes Atticus. He is an example of a person with high self-esteem. The qualities are:

- Likely to think well of others.
- Expect to be accepted by others.
- Evaluate their own performance more favorably than people with low self-esteem.
- Perform well when being watched: not afraid of others' reactions.
- Work harder for people who demand high standards of performance.
- Included to feel comfortable with others they view as superior in some way.
- Able to defend themselves against negative comments of others.

MORE IDEAS:

1. **Complementary relationship:** Define it and show how the relationship of Atticus and Mr. Cunningham is an example of it. Atticus seems especially sensitive since he has the upper power position. Give an example of that.
2. **Direct Aggression:** Define it and show how the scene that takes place after Atticus takes the case is an example of it.
3. **(38:45-40:58) Empathy:** Define and show how the scene between Atticus and Scout on the porch is an example of it. He then teaches her about compromise. How does he do that?
4. **The communication of children:** Bosley Crowther of the New York Times, states that "there is so much feeling for children in the film... so much delightful observation of their spirit, energy and charm." Give examples of their spirit, energy and charm. How are these traits communicated?
5. **Nonverbal Appearances:** Comment on Atticus' attire and what it means.

6. **Nonverbal Symbolism:** At the trial, where do Scout and Jem sit? Why? What is the symbolism of this?
7. **Lying:** Even though she swears to tell the whole truth, Miss May Ella lies on the stand. How does Atticus prove it?
8. **Racist Language:** The wording in the film is strong. How did it affect you? Do you think that the movie should be redone eliminating this racist language? Why? Why not?
9. **Unwritten codes and faulty assumptions:** How does Atticus use these concepts in his defense?
10. **Nonverbal Respect:** Why does the Reverend ask Scout to stand up?
11. **Emotions:** What were the reactions after the trial?
12. **(1:47:43-1:51:04) Grief and dignity:** Describe how the awful news was communicated including the fact that it was done with dignity.
13. What happened when the children were walking home?
14. **Responsibility, Respect and dignity:** Does Atticus make excuses for his children? How is Boo shown respect and dignity?

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Movie: 7
Title: Gung Ho
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1986

Summary: This film is the story of the problems that exist when a Japanese firm buys out a failing American auto plant. The main character becomes the town hero of Hadleyville, Pennsylvania, for his part in overcoming the culture clash and bringing about compromise.

The Main Idea: Culture and the Self-concept

Our self-concept is formed in part by our culture. Nowhere is this more evident than in this film. The American workers are individualistic, nurturing, achievement-oriented people who all think they are special. Americans communicate in a direct manner (low context). The Japanese bosses are success driven. As members of a collectivist culture, work comes first. Personal matters are not important. They communicate in an indirect manner (high context). Both groups are ethnocentric, thinking their culture is best. The following topics show this in more detail.

More Ideas

1. **Cultural misunderstandings:** Misunderstandings because of culture occur throughout the film. Why is this important? Give examples. How does Hunt Stevenson's (Michael Keaton) jokes, sexy pictures and slang hurt his first impression with the Japanese? When the factory starts up, the Japanese expect the Americans to act like Japanese. Is this typical? Have you seen this type of expectation?
2. **Drawing conclusions:** Hunt goes to Japan to convince them to locate their factory in his small town. He thinks he did a terrible job. He draws his own conclusions based on his culture. When does he find out that he is incorrect? How?
3. **Mirroring:** Define mirroring and show how it occurs.
4. **Common ground:** How does Hunt use common ground to speak to the hostile union audience?
5. **Individualism versus collectivism:** Show how the bosses from the two cultures exhibit these concepts as they talk to the workers.
6. **High context versus low context:** Define these two concepts and show how they are portrayed in the film.

7. **Achievement versus nurturing:** Define these two concepts and give examples of them from the movie.
8. **Ethnocentrism:** What does ethnocentrism mean? Is it evident in the film? How?
9. **Lying:** What lie does Hunt tell the workers? Why does he do this? Is his communication bad or good because he lies?
10. **Sharing cultures:** How is this shown when Hunt and Kaz make the car by themselves?
11. **Stereotypes:** Rober Ebert's review stated, "What I got was a disappointment, a movie in which the Japanese are mostly used for the mechanical requirements of the plot, and the Americans are constructed from durable but boring stereotypes." Ouch. Do you agree?

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Movie: 8
Title: Stand and Deliver
Rating: PG
Year: 1988

Summary: This movie is based on a true story of a Los Angeles class that was not expected to achieve in anything, especially math. Their teacher changed the expectation and thus, the results but not without trouble.

The Main Idea: Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Everyone at the high school expects the students to be mediocre and even fail. At a teacher's meeting, one of the teachers says, "You can't teach logarithms to illiterates." Jaime Escalante (Edward James Olmos) disagrees, when he says, "Students will rise to the level of expectations." He goes on to say that all we need is ganas. He then goes about to prove this and does. In class, He announces that there will be a quiz each day. He deals with their ethnicity directly when he tells them, "There are some people in this world will know less than you do because of your name and your complexion. But math is the great equalizer. When you go for a job, the person giving you that job will not hear your problems and neither do I. All I ask of you is ganas, desire."

He pushes them into great achievement but the negative self-fulfilling prophecy continues. The examining board doubts that these students did that well. In fact, they think that the students cheated. Ultimately, they are successful. The positive self-fulfilling prophesy wins.

MORE IDEAS:

1. **Nonverbal:** Describe the first scene of Jaime Escalante driving to work. How do the nonverbal images show you the culture of the neighborhood?
2. **First impressions:** What are your first impressions of the students? How does Jaime deal with them?
3. **Nonverbal – toughness:** When the tough kids accost him, what does he do? Roger Ebert says, "He doesn't confront them. He outflanks them." What does that mean? Why did he make this choice?
4. **Examples:** Escalante teaches using examples out of every day life. Is this effective? If so, why?
5. **Acceptance:** Why does Angel (Lou Diamond Phillips) want several books?
6. **Nonverbal-Use of time:** Angel is late. What happens?

7. **Listening:** Why does Angel (Lou) accuse Jaime of not listening? And, what does he do when Jaime doesn't listen?
8. **Stress:** What happens to Jaime from overwork and worry?
9. **Emotions – Joy:** How do they celebrate finishing the test?
10. **(1:21:24-1:26:26) Faulty Assumptions:** Why does the ETS assume that the students cheated? Do they have any "right," in your opinion, to make these assumptions? Is this ever cleared up?
11. **Expectations:** Roger Ebert states, "What he proved is that motivation and hard work can rewrite the destinies of kids that society might be willing to write off." Define "society." Why is "society" willing to write off people?
12. **(1:26:53-1:28:00) Pride:** Why do they decide to take the test again? What does Jaime tell them? How can we tell what Jaime feels when he hears the scores from the second test?

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Theme #3: Perception

Perception is the process of gathering sensory information and assigning meaning to it. Accurate perceptions and inaccurate perceptions are equally possible, and the latter causes us to see the world as we would like it to be rather than how it is.

This must be one of my favorite themes. The selection of films shows quantity and quality. I have chosen eight movies in this theme and several of my all time favorites are here.

Stereotypes are mistakes in perception, putting people into boxes and ignoring individuality. We see stereotypes in the popular movie, ***As Good As It Gets***. Simon stereotypes everybody and it is the brilliance of the film that brings Simon into relationship with these people. As his stereotypes diminish, his relationships increase. Overcoming stereotypes is also the theme of ***Miss Congeniality***. In this film, Gracie stereotypes beauty queens. Much to her surprise, she becomes friends with them as she moves past the stereotypes to knowing them as individuals. Roles are important in relationships or the lack of relationships. In ***Babe***, the cat patiently explains to Babe that each of the animals has a role, and the barnyard animals don't like him because he is violating his role. Babe works past this depressing analysis, steps out of his role and is successful. The president of the United States and his girlfriend have the same task. Their occupational roles impede their relationship in ***American President***. But they move past roles and see their individuality and fall in love. In one of my favorite movies of all times, ***Shawshank Redemption***, we are reminded that there are many ways to look at things. While some prisoners prefer the thought pattern that there is no hope, the main character believes that hope is the only way to survive. It is this hopeful attitude in the midst of awfulness that makes it my favorite movie. Moving back to animation for our 14th movie, this summer's ***Shrek*** reminds us of how much trouble we can get into when we fail to use the tool of perception checking. Interesting that film-makers choose doctors in two of my favorite movies to show empathy. The positive view is seen in ***Patch Adams*** while the negative is portrayed in ***The Doctor***. Thankfully, the William Hurt character is dynamic and moves to a place of empathy as he battles illness and truly sees it all from the other side.

9. **As Good As It Gets**

10. **Miss Congeniality**

11. **Babe**

12. **American President**

13. **Shawshank Redemption**

14. **Shrek**

15. **Doctor**

16. **Patch Adams**

Stereotyping

Overcoming Stereotypes

Roles

Occupational roles

Multiple Perspectives

Perception Checking

Empathy

Empathy

Movie: 9
Title: As Good As It Gets
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1997

Summary: Melvin Udall is a despicable character. He is an obsessive-compulsive as well as being bigoted against most everybody. Carol Connelly, a waitress, is part of his daily life since he eats breakfast daily at her restaurant. His gay neighbor's dog and the illness of Carol's son change Melvin and thus the rest of the characters.

The Main Idea: Stereotyping

Melvin Udall (Jack Nicholson) stereotypes Simon Bishop (Greg Kinnear) because he is gay. This is especially bad since his language is particularly insulting including his use of such words as fudgepacker, sweetheart, prancing, etc. Melvin stereotypes Carol Connelly (Helen Hunt). He also stereotypes Frank Sachs (Cuba Gooding Jr.) as "colored." He insults the Jews in the restaurant. The restaurant manager stereotypes Melvin. He finally kicks him out of the restaurant and all the other customers clap. Melvin stereotypes women. "I think of a man and I take away reason and accountability." Melvin stereotypes Nora the Hispanic maid. Melvin introduces his two new friends, "Carol the waitress, this is Simon the fag."

More Ideas:

1. **Nonverbal:** What are some of the symptoms of Melvin's obsessive compulsiveness?
2. **Insults:** In his review, Roger Ebert states that Melvin's "communication with the world is mostly limited to insults—not funny ones, but comments intended to wound...He hurls racist, sexist, homophobic and physical insults at everyone he meets...." Why is Melvin like this? What effect does his language have on the people around him? What effect did it have on you as you watched the film?
3. **Conflict:** Describe each character's method of handling conflict.
4. **Aggression:** How does the beating of Simon change things?
5. **Fear:** Why does Jackie, Simon's assistant, need to use notes when she tells Simon he is broke?
6. **(1:09:02-1:12:51)** Carol's mom wants to go out but Carol needs to finish her thank you note to Melvin. What is revealed about her character in this scene?

7. **Embarrassment:** Why doesn't Melvin want Carol to thank him? What does she say when she does thank him and how does he react?
8. **(1:25:47-1:30:01) Listening.** Evaluate Carol's listening skills. Is she a good listener when Simon is speaking?
9. **(1:30:06-1:30:46) Intimacy/closeness and truthful conversation.** Describe the conversation between Melvin and Simon where their relationship changes to a new level.
10. **(1:35:05-1:44:17) Assertiveness, Confirming Messages & Intimacy:** Why does Carol demand a compliment from Melvin? What happens because of this?
11. **(1:54:18-1:55:38) Disconfirming messages:** What is the result of disconfirming messages at the end of the trip?
12. **(1:55:31-1:57:39) Stereotypes turn into intimacy.** What happens when Melvin and Simon get home?
13. **(1:58:03-2:04:30) Listening.** Why does Carol tell Melvin to stop answering everything she says and to listen to her?
14. **(2:04:31-2:13:34) Intimacy:** What happens in the final scene of the movie when Melvin goes to see Carol?
15. In his review, George Popodopoulos states: "James L. Brooks loves people. He loves the way people form relationships, the way they communicate, their emotions, their ups and downs, and above all, their humanity." Comment on these issues.

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Movie: 10
Title: Miss Congeniality
Rated: PG-13
Year: 2000

Summary: Gracie Hart (Sandra Bullock) is a successful FBI agent but sometimes a bit impulsive in her cases. She goes undercover when the Miss United States pageant is threatened by a terrorist. She doesn't believe in femininity. In fact she puts it down. So it is a complete makeover that she undergoes in order to be a contestant. She becomes a glamorous beauty queen as well as a successful agent.

Main Idea: Overcoming Stereotypes in order to make friends

Gracie had the typical feminist view that beauty pageants were for bimbos and the girls were superficial and stupid. In the beginning, the girls don't care for her either. Miss Texas is rather rude to her. But, Gracie genuinely likes Cheryl and helps her. Gracie also gets pizza and beer for them. When Vic abandons her, the girls help her get made up. Eventually they like each other, overcoming stereotypes to become friends. The girls name her Miss Congeniality and she says, "This experience has been one of the most liberating of my life." But she goes on and says that "If anyone hurts one of my new friends, I'll hunt them down and hurt them."

More Ideas:

1. **Traditional stories:** The various reviews say that this movie was inspired by *My Fair Lady*, *Pygmalion* or *The Ugly Duckling*. Do you agree? Is there anything wrong with that? How many plots do you think there are?
2. **Gender stereotypes:** Describe Gracie as a little girl. How does this foreshadow her character as an adult? Describe Gracie Hart as an adult. What is a tomboy? Is she one?
3. **Following orders and Arguing:** Describe Gracie's communication style. Why does she argue so much?
4. **Femininity:** How does Gracie feel about the nonverbal things that usually go with femininity?
5. **Language Labels:** Discuss the use of labels in the language the characters use.
6. **Language Multiple Meanings:** Give examples of the multiple meanings used in the film.

7. **Non-verbal – Appearance:** How is the make-over an example of nonverbal communication? What all does beauty-pageant consultant Victor Melling (Michael Caine) tell Gracie during the make-over? Why is this the “biggest challenge of his life?”
8. **Appearance-lack of vanity:** As Robert Horton points out in his review, Miss Congeniality is “...another movie in which Bullock evinces almost no vanity.” Could you play the part and not be vain?
9. **Friendship:** How does the friendship with Cheryl start to change Gracie’s attitude?
10. **Conflict:** Why does Gracie have so much conflict with Kathy Morningside (Candice Bergen) and her sidekick, Stan (William Shatner)?
11. **Interviewing:** What does Victor teach Gracie about interviewing?
12. **Relationships:** Does Gracie have relationships at home or does she replace them with something else? If so, what?
13. **Man problems:** The Cranky Critic talks about Gracie’s man problems. The Cranky Critic says Gracie can beat them up or save them from getting beaten up but she doesn’t date them. What changes in the film?
14. **Growing Relationship:** Describe the growing relationship between Eric Matthews (Benjamin Bratt) and Gracie.
15. **Stereotype – Lesbians:** What happens to the stereotype of the beauty pageant contestant?

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Movie: 11
Title: Babe
Rating: G
Year: 1995

Summary: According to reviewer Ben Brantley, 'Babe' is "the winsome fable out of Australia." He goes on to describe Babe as the pig that decides to become a sheepdog and is laughed at in the process. It is based on a novel entitled "The Sheep-Pig." When the farmer first wins the little pig and brings him home, he is lonely and frightened. But a collie dog is nice to him. And eventually he helps the family and the farm.

Main Idea: Roles

This film is an example of roles. In the beginning the animals think that things are a certain way and that's the way it is. There are rules and roles and everyone needs to follow them. For instance, only dogs and cats are allowed in the house. When Babe asks why, he is told "That's just the way things are." The work is divided according to roles. The dogs, especially, have work that is only for them. Babe, by doing the work of the dogs, challenges this assumption. Punishment occurs for breaking the rules. Duck challenges the rules too because "This is bigger than rules. This is life and death." He goes on to tell Babe that humans eat ducks. Babe is told, "From now on, we'll all respect the rules: each creature his own destiny; every animal in it's proper place."

More Ideas:

1. **Prejudice and stereotypes:** How did Babe change all of them regarding prejudice?
2. **Assertiveness:** Give examples of Babe's assertiveness.
3. **Sensitivity:** How does the horse show sensitivity when saying something about family? Give other examples of the animals being sensitive.
4. **Vocabulary:** Show how Babe increases his vocabulary.
5. **End of innocence:** How does innocence and childhood end when Fly's pups are sold?
6. **Acceptance:** What lesson does Ferdinand have to learn when Rosanna is served up for Christmas dinner?
7. **Attitude, Equality or Inferiority and the resulting conversation:** Describe the difference between the way Rex treats the sheep and how Babe treats them.

8. **Emotions:** Anger and jealousy: Describe the growing battle between Fly and Rex.
9. **Revenge and the cat:** What does the cat mean when she says, "I probably shouldn't say this but I'm not sure if you realize how much the other animals are laughing at you with this sheep dog business... They say that you've forgotten that you're a pig. Isn't that silly? They even say that you don't know what pigs are for... You know - why pigs are here. Well, the cows are here to be milked. The dogs are here to help the boss' husband with the sheep. I'm here to be beautiful and affectionate to the boss. Yes the fact is that pigs don't have a purpose. Just like ducks don't have a purpose. Alright, for your own sake, I'll be blunt. Why do the bosses keep ducks? To eat them. So, why do the bosses keep a pig? The fact is that animals that don't seem to have a purpose really do have a purpose. The bosses have to eat. It's probably the most noble purpose of all when you come to think about it. Pork they call it. Or bacon. They only call them pigs when they're alive." Why is the cat so mean?
10. **Truth and lying:** Babe asks Fly to tell him the truth. Does she?
11. **Conversational style:** How does Babe talk to the sheep at the competition?
12. **Loveable and laughable:** Babe was very popular and apparently loveable. Why? What nonverbal communication behaviors caused the audiences to love him? At the same time, people made fun of the pig, the fact he wanted to herd sheep, and in the end the fact that the film was nominated for an academy award. Even Susan Sarandon, nominated for Best Actress, said "Thank heaven I'm not competing against that pig." Why did people laugh at the pig and his movie?
13. **The little pig that could:** Based on the children's story about the little engine that could, people said this was the little hero that could and ultimately the film was the little movie that could. Ben Brantley talked about this in the New York Times story on the Academy Awards nominations. Brantley even compared it to the ultimate underdog, Rocky. He said that Americans love to root for characters in movies. Why do Americans like underdogs so much?

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Movie: 12
Title: American President
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1995

Summary: The President of the United States, a widower, falls in love with a public relations person. Their romance is made difficult because of their careers and public expectations.

Main Idea: Occupational Roles

President Andrew Shephard (Michael Douglas) and Sydney Ellen Wade (Annette Bening) are attracted to each other and want to have a relationship. It is very difficult, however, because their jobs get in the way. The president is hounded, watched and everything he does is commented upon. Sydney is a PR person; her job is to be objective about the president. She can hardly be sleeping with him. They have a lot to overcome.

More Ideas:

1. **Nonverbal Communication – gifts as symbols:** Throughout the film, President Shephard tries to buy Sydney flowers. Why is this nonverbal communication? Why does he have so much trouble?
2. **Perception:** Look up the definition of perception in your textbook and then explain the phrase, "Politics is perception" as it is used by characters in the film.
3. **Listening – responding:** President Shephard doesn't always reply when people speak to him. Why not? Do you think communicators should always respond?
4. **Nonverbal behavior and lying:** What does Sydney say about what he does when he is lying? Does the textbook discuss nonverbal communication while lying? Explain. She asks him if he liked the dinner she prepared. He says yes but she says she doesn't believe him because he does something with his face when he lies.
5. **Anger and Aggressiveness:** When Lewis tells off the congressperson, what happens? What does his colleague mean when he says he may need to work on his people skills?
6. **The communication of apology:** What advice does the president's daughter give him about apologizing?

7. **Image:** Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* states that Annetter Bening "is given the impossible job of delivering both heavyweight professionalism and an adorableness that sets the whole Shepherd Administration reeling." Ms. Maslin also writes that Ms. Bening does not do this very well. What nonverbal behaviors communicate professionalism? What nonverbal behaviors communicate "adorableness." Is it impossible to be both at the same time? Why or why not?
8. **Credibility:** Why did Sydney lose her credibility?
9. **Conflict:** Why do President Shepherd and A.J. (Martin Sheen) have a fight? Does it end in an hostile or a cooperative way?

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Movie: 13
Title: Shawshank Redemption
Rating: R
Year: 1994

Summary: A bank Vice President is put in prison for a murder that he did not commit. He sets about to get out of prison but while he is there he makes the best of it.

Main Idea: Multiple Perspectives

Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) is culturally different than the other prisoners; he has a different perspective about prison. His perception is that he has hope and they don't. Andy is a well-educated, Caucasian, former Vice President of a bank. In the beginning, he arrives at the prison to a jeering, noisy crowd of prisoners. Even the atmosphere isn't what he is used to. Red Redding (Morgan Freeman) refers to Andy's silver spoon as well as calling him "a wife killing banker" and saying that Andy feels that "his shit smells sweeter than most." As narrator, Red says that Andy even walked differently than the others. He kind of strolled. Later, when he plays opera on the PA system, he says that the warden and guards can't take the music away from him. He adds that there are places in the world that aren't made of stone. He says he has something inside that they can't touch no matter how many times they put him in the hole. It is hope. Red warns him that this is dangerous and can drive a man insane. He says hope has no place on the inside (of the prison). Later, he confesses to Red his dream of going to Mexico and having a boat and being a fisherman. Red says, "I don't think I could make it on the outside, Andy..." Red again encourages him not to hope and not to dream. But Andy says, "Get busy living or get busy dying." Andy escapes and ultimately, encourages Red to join him in freedom)

More Ideas:

1. **Nonverbal:** In the beginning of the film, there are two scenes that are woven. One is of Andy leading up to the death of his wife. The second is of Andy on trial for her murder. Compare and contrast the two in terms of facial expressions, tone of voice, attitude.
2. **Survival:** Describe how Andy has to survive. He is a banker but he is thrown into the tough prison with its brutality and cutthroat activities. Is strength always loud and noticeable? Can it be quiet?
3. **Identity Management:** How can you reconcile the warden's beating the prisoners but talking about God, his son Jesus and the Bible?
4. **(19:48-23:31) Perception:** What happens at Andy's first meal? Who does he meet during this incident? What happens to them as the story develops.

5. **Listening**: How does Andy get to know the men and the ways of the prison?
6. **Conflict**: Does Andy seek or avoid conflict? How does that work out?
7. **Acceptance**: What incident made the guys like Andy?
8. **Self-disclosure**: How does the growing friendship between Andy and Red lead to self-divulsion?
9. **Symbol**: What was the symbolism of the poster and how did it change over the years? What was the real reason for it?
10. **Roles**: How does Andy get a new job?
11. **Aggression**: Why does Brooks want to kill Hayward? What happens when Brooks leaves Shawshank?
12. **Emotions**: When is the first time we see Andy happy and smiling? What does he do to celebrate? What are the reactions of the men? How does the warden assert control?
13. **Relationship - Taking Tommy under his wing**: Describe the relationship between Andy and Tommy.
14. **Emotions**: What happened when Andy talked to the warden?
15. **(1:40:25-1:47:08) Gender Communication**: Why does Andy think he is guilty for his wife's murder?
16. **Friendship**: The group cares about him. How do they show it?
17. **(2:00:20) Emotions—Joy**: The climax of the movie is the rain scene. What happens?
18. **(2:05:39-2:08:09) Language—Definition of words**: What happens in Red's parole rejection hearing at 40 years?
19. **Nonverbal Communication is continuous**: How is this true as Red is released?
20. **Time**: Discuss the passage of time in the prison.

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Movie: 14
Title: Shrek
Rating: PG
Year: 2001

Summary: Shrek (Mike Myers) is an ogre. He is isolated because he thinks people don't like him so he isolates himself. Lord Farquaard (John Lithgow) turns Shrek's home into a relocation camp for fairy-tale creatures. This ruins Shrek's peace and quiet. Shrek and the talkative donkey (Eddie Murphy) go to find the princess (Cameron Diaz). A surprise is in store regarding the princess. Ultimately, Shrek ends up with romance and his peaceful swamp.

Main Idea: Perception Checking

Shrek overhears the Princess talking about herself. She is saying something about the ugly ogre. He thinks she is talking about him and without checking it out, he shuns her and delivers her to the king.

More Ideas:

1. **Stereotypes:** What is the stereotype of Shrek? Why is it so solidly in place?
2. **Negating the stereotype:** In the beginning, Shrek asks the Donkey what he looks like to him. The donkey answers, "You're tall!" Donkey doesn't go along with the stereotype of Shrek. Why not?
3. **Emotions – lovable:** Roger Ebert states, "...all the craft in the world would not have made 'Shrek' work if the story hadn't been fun and the ogre so lovable." Is he right? Is the ogre lovable? Why? What does it take to be lovable?
4. **Silence:** Why does Shrek like isolation and silence? How do you feel when you are alone and it is totally quiet?
5. **Aggressiveness:** Shrek uses aggressiveness to scare people. Why?
6. **Self-fulfilling prophesy:** Everybody says that Shrek is mean, argumentative, aggressive and isolated. Does this help bring about that very behavior?
7. **Emotions:** Describe the emotions shown in the film. Focus on Shrek and describe his feelings.
8. **Non-Verbal communication:** The non-verbal communication of the characters is evident. Please describe some of them, especially Shrek.
9. **Avoidance:** Describe Shrek's withdrawal and avoidance of the towns folk. Why does he do it? Does it work?

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Movie: 15
Title: The Doctor
Rating: Not Rated
Year: 1991

Summary: A successful, high-paid, and insensitive surgeon experiences the cold bureaucracy of his profession when he is diagnosed with throat cancer. He learns the difference between treatment and care.

Main Idea: Empathy

Jack is an arrogant, insensitive physician. He learns empathy the hard way. He becomes sick and is treated badly by arrogant physicians. He moves from noncaring to caring. In the beginning he tells his interns not to be involved with their patients. At the end, he shows them what it is to be a patient and demands that they care. In the beginning he doesn't use the patient's names. An orderly calls him the wrong name and gives him an enema he doesn't need. After his illness, he uses names and gets to know his patients. Jack is afraid and nobody cares or helps him. The largest reason for his change is his relationship with June, a patient who didn't get a procedure she needed. Through her eyes, he sees how arrogant and uncaring doctors and the profession can be.

More Ideas

1. **The sharing of Emotions:** What is the opening song? How does it foretell the themes of the film?
2. **Humor:** How does humor fit into the doctor's job?
3. **Intimacy and Distance:** Describe the intimacy and distance between Jack and his wife, Ann.
4. **Nonverbal for luxury:** Describe the nonverbal communication of the house and furniture that belong to Jack and Ann. How do you know they have money even though they don't say so?
5. **Uncaring communication:** How does Dr. Leslie Abbott exemplify lack of caring?
6. **Time – a nonverbal expression of priorities:** Describe Jack's changing use of time as a nonverbal expression of priorities.
7. **Fear:** How is the emotion of fear portrayed in the film? How do the characters communicate their fear?
8. **Emotional Support:** Where does Jack get it from?

9. **Civility and hostility:** Discuss the communication of those around Jack as they portray civility and hostility towards him and his illness.
10. **Inclusion and Exclusion:** How is inclusion communicated? How is exclusion communicated?
11. **Lying and the truth:** Is it always necessary to tell the truth? Is it sometimes alright to lie? Who lies and who tells the truth in this movie?
12. **Basic Recognition-names:** How does Jack change re: what they call patients?
13. **Grief and identification:** How do the people in the waiting room share their grief?
14. **Trust:** Describe how trust is communicated in the film.

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Movie: 16
Title: Patch Adams
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1998

Summary: Based on a true story, Patch Adams treated his patients with care and humor, not just with medicine and traditional techniques. Modern science doesn't use humor at all and Patch believed in its healing power.

Main Idea: Empathy

The doctor in the mental hospital is not very empathetic. His nonverbal communication shows this. He plays with his coffee cup and looks around. He doesn't really listen. Patch is one of the patients in that hospital. It is this experience that helps him decide to become a doctor and it helps him to be an unusual one. Reviewer Janet Maslin points out that his "own period of mental illness helps him empathize with patients." Patch is empathetic to all his patients and those of other doctors. He was upset when the woman was made to fill out forms before seeing her daughter. He was very compassionate to Larry. Unfortunately, his compassion did not lead to the results that he anticipated.

More Ideas:

1. **Culture:** Describe the cultures of the mental hospital and the medical school.
2. **Perception:** What did Mendelsohn teach Patch about perception? How did this get applied later when Patch realized his dream? How did the posting of the grades change Corinne's perception of Patch? Why was the mental hospital the best thing that ever happened to Patch? Is this an example of perception?
3. **The nonverbal and verbal communication of arrogance:** Describe the roommate's arrogance. How does Patch deal with it? How did the nurses feel about the ego of doctors? Why did Patch decorate the medical school as he did for the visit of the doctors? Is Patch arrogant when he refuses to follow the rules? Why did Corinne want the white coat, to be called a doctor and the recognition? Why were these things unimportant to Patch?
4. **Trust:** Why was the school supposed to "train the humanity out of you" and what did that have to do with trust? Why was Patch accused of cheating?
5. **Dynamic character:** Trace Corinne's character as shown by her communication.

6. **Greetings and names:** Discuss the hello experiment and the many examples of the use of names. Why was Patch so concerned with names? Give examples. What is transference? Why does Patch correct the dean when he calls him Hunter? At the end, what does Patch know about interviewing skills?
7. **Humor:** Describe the change in the children when Patch first met them. Why is it good to laugh? What evidence from the American Journal of Medicine does Patch give for this? Did this prove to be true? Patch was called names because of his use of humor? What were they and why? Why did his humor threaten them? In the free hospital, Patch referred to comedy as medication? Do you agree?
8. **Fantasy:** Why did Patch think this was important? Was he right? Give examples. Be sure to include Mrs. Kennedy.
9. **Language:** How does Patch use synonyms for death? Why?
10. **Emotions:** Discuss how the following emotions were used in the movie: grief; guilt; excessive happiness.
11. **Self-concept:** Why was Patch a non-conformist? Why did he make people uncomfortable?
12. **Nonverbal behavior:** Patch was told that "proper" appearance and demeanor are necessary to earn a patient's respect. Is that correct?
13. **Courtroom public speaking:** Janet Maslin of the New York Times refers to Patch's "heartfelt courtroom-style speech in defense of his method." Was he effective in this speech? Why or why not?

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Theme # 4 Emotion

Feelings play a great part in communication. Whether we try to hide them or express them eloquently, they are in the middle of our communication. Our feelings of sadness, anger and joy affect our communication. We want others to share our emotions. We may or may not be able to listen to them and/or to share their emotional space.

It is often great emotion that makes a great film. The importance of this theme can be seen in the fact that 11 of the films in the study are in this section. We begin with ***AI (Artificial Intelligence)*** where the fundamental question of what makes a human being is discussed. And the authors conclude that it is emotions that make us human. Recognizing what your feelings are is a theme that the makers of ***LA Story*** delved into. Beyond the super chic and superficiality of Los Angeles, could the characters find true feelings? Beyond having emotions and recognizing them, it is then necessary to express them. ***Rain Man*** is the story of a young man that is filled with unexpressed feelings. And it is as he expresses them that he is able to experience true and meaningful human relationships. The fear of self-disclosure is real to us all and especially to the characters in ***Ordinary People***. It is frightening to become vulnerable as the characters in these two movies knew. How interesting since fear is an emotion of itself. In fact, the main theme of ***Music of the Heart*** is overcoming fear and reaching your dreams.

There are other reasons why people express or don't express their emotions. ***American Me*** explores the cultural influences on emotions while ***U-571*** takes a look at gender influences on emotions and portrays the special ways males show their feelings.

Two of the strongest emotions are anger and sadness. ***LA Confidential*** explores extreme anger and what it does to people and their emotions. Extreme sadness, or grief, is one of the major themes of ***Terms of Endearment***. I cry in the same place every time. Right on cue!

Debilitative emotions are evident in ***La Bamba***. The brothers waste their whole lives in negative and unproductive territory. By the time they learn to express their emotions in a healthy way, it is too late.

And finally, we take a fun look at self talk as we once again enjoy ***Ferris Bueller's Day Off***.

17 ***AI (Artificial Intelligence)***

18 ***Rain Man***

19 ***L.A. Confidential***

Emotions make us human

Unexpressed feelings

Anger

- 20 *American Me*
- 21 *U-571*
- 22 *Ordinary People*
- 23 *LA Story*
- 24 *Music of the Heart*
- 25 *Terms of Endearment*
- 26 *La Bamba*
- 27 *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*

- Cultural influences on emotions
- Gender influences on emotions
- Fear of self-disclosure
- Recognizing your feelings
- Overcoming fear
- Grief
- Debilitative emotions
- Self-talk

Movie: 17
Title: A.I. (Artificial Intelligence)
Rating: PG-13
Year: 2001

Summary: This story takes place in the future. A race of robots has been constructed. The 11 year old robot/boy is adopted by a family because their son is gone. But, the natural son returns and the story centers around what happens after that.

Main Idea: Emotions make us human

In the very beginning, Profossor Hobby (William Hurt) explains to his team that the new robot will be "articulate in speech, not lacking in human response." What is this human response? Emotions and the ability to express them, of course. The professor wants to create a robot that has feelings and can love. The question of the ages is thus asked, what does it mean to be human? And according to Steven Spielberg, the answer seems to be the ability to feel.

- A beautiful girl robot describes love as such things as the widening of the eyes. She is told that this describes sensuality but not love.
- David (Haley Joel Osment), the boy robot will imprint on his human parents and genuinely love them.
- We begin to see that love is self-motivated and includes the ability to dream.
- One of the teams questions if they can get a human to love the boy robot back. She stresses that this is the team's responsibility. The professor answers that this a moral dilemma and the oldest question of all. Even God created Adam to love him.
- The family enters the picture. The mother Monica is reading and playing classical music for her son who has died and is in a casket. The father Henry has a discussion about her ability to grieve for their lost son. He brings David home and says to his wife, "I love you. Don't kill me."

More Ideas

1. **Childhood:** What does it mean to be a child? What is the true nature of childhood and childishness?
2. **Motherhood:** What does it mean to be a mother? What is the true nature of motherhood? What does it entail?
3. **Grief:** They have talked about Monica's inability to grieve but it looks like she is grieving. Are there many ways to grieve?
4. **Certainty of parenthood:** Why must they be certain before they allow David to imprint on them? Is parenthood certain? Does it apply to us?

5. **Nonverbal:** Describe the first breakfast in terms of nonverbal communication.
6. **Nonverbal:** Describe the family's first dinner together.
7. **Language:** What are the seven words? Why did the author choose them? What names do the three of them use after the imprinting?
8. **Nonverbal:** What nonverbal behaviors precede the imprinting and follow it?
9. **Stress:** Monica seems really stressed throughout the movie. Give examples of this stress. How does it affect her personality and relationships with others?
10. **Point of view:** David is told, "The most wonderful thing in the world has happened. This is Martin. This is my son." David doesn't agree. Why not? How can there be two points of view on the issue?
11. **Language:** They compete for Teddy. How does this foreshadow the rest of the movie. What impact is there when Martin calls David a supertoy? What is the power of the word? Why does Martin have the mother read Pinocchio to them?
12. **Taunting:** Why does Martin taunt David? What does he say? What effect do the words and the taunting have?
13. **Emotions-love and hate:** When David steals the lock of his mother's hair, the father says, "If he was created to love, it's reasonable to assume he knows how to hate." What is the importance of hate in this regard?
14. **Ignoring David:** What happens at the birthday party? Who is the "real" son.
15. **Emotions-happy tears:** Monica, the mother, drives David back. He asks her, "Are those happy tears?" Are they? Why is she crying? She tells him she has to leave him there. He cries and begs her not to.
16. **Deception:** What is the significance of the robot man who makes love to women and says, "You'll never want a real man again." Are robots better than real people? Why? Why not?
17. **Horror:** Malcolm Johnson, in his article on child actors playing grown ups, states, "David's encounters with discarded, disintegrating robots and his wanderings through dark woods, mean streets and a drowned amusement park must have had some impact on the mind of the movie-television veteran who turned 13 in April." Do you think that the horror of these scenes would have a negative effect on Haley Joel Osment? Would it have a negative effect on the viewer? How did you feel about these scenes?

18. **Mecca and emotions:** One of the characters says, "Mecca don't plead for their lives." Why not? Is this a human thing to do?
19. **Humor:** At one point a character says, "You couldn't tell a joke from a poke." Is humor only for humans? Can any other creature or being enjoy humor? What is in the essential nature of humor?
20. **Emotions-hate:** Joe tells David, "They hate us you know." Why do the humans hate the robots?
21. **Emotions-love-motherhood:** David says that he loves his mommy. Joe responds "She loves what you do for her; she doesn't love you." Explain what this means. What is the difference? Is this true of many relationships?
22. **Sadness:** Professor Hobby says, "for the world is more full of weeping than you can understand." Why is this so?
23. **Home and Desire:** How did David find his way home to the professor? What emotions enabled him to do this? The professor states that, "It is a single human gift to chase down our dreams." Is that how David did it? What is a home? What does it mean to be home? Why is David's homeward journey so important? Do you identify with it in any way?
24. **Begging:** David begs the blue fairy. He says, "Please, please, please make me into a real live boy. Please." He repeats this. Why does he hang onto this dream? How long does it take him to get his answer? What is the answer? Why?
25. **One day:** Why does he go back for one day? This was "the everlasting moment he had been waiting for." Why? What happens?
26. **The critics:** A.I. had the most reviews. Read two of them. Summarize what the authors were saying. Compare and contrast their points of view.

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Movie: 18
Title: Rain Man
Rating: R
Year: 1988

Summary: Charlie Babbitt (Tom Cruise) is a hustler. He finds out that his father is dead. Even more surprising, he finds out that he has a brother, Raymond (Dustin Hoffman). Raymond is institutionalized and is receiving the three million dollars from the estate. Charlie kidnaps Raymond, hoping to get some of the money. He begins to care about Raymond, something he has not done before in any relationship. The money becomes less important than the welfare of his brother.

Main Idea: Unexpressed Emotions

Discuss Charlie Babbitt (Tom Cruise) as an example of a character without the ability to express his emotions. Why does he change? How does he change? Compare and contrast Charlie in the beginning and at the end of the film. In the beginning of the film, Susanna, Charlie's girlfriend, asks him to talk to her. She even says to him, "Could you say ten or twelve words before we get to the hotel? Consider it foreplay." Irritated, Charlie replies that he'd talk if he had anything to say. When he gets the call that his father has died, he shows absolutely no reaction. Eventually, Susanna leaves him because of poor communication.

Eventually, Charlie finds out that his Rain Man was really a baby trying to say Raymond. Charlie says, "You sang to me." And they sing a song that was sung 20 years earlier. When Charlie turns on the hot water in the tub, Raymond starts screaming and it comes out that Raymond hurt the baby Charlie and that is why they put Ray in an institution. Charlie is kinder and more gentle from then on. At the trial, Charlie says, "He learned more in one week with me than he did with you in 20 years." Summarizing the reasons for his inability to express his emotions, Charlie says, "*I had a father I hardly knew, a mother I never knew, and a brother I didn't know about.*" He goes on to say that this is about family. In the most important scene in the movie Charlie says, "*I made a connection!*" Charlie clearly cares about Raymond now. "*He's capable of a lot more than you know.*" They keep asking Ray the same questions. Charlie asks them to stop, telling them that they've made their point and they don't have to humiliate him.

More Ideas:

1. **Power:** Describe Charlie Babbitt making the deal.
2. **Gender communication:** Arriving at Charlie's father's house, what does Charlie notice and what does Susanna notice?
3. **Symbolism:** The 1949 Buick Roadmaster Convertible. Why is the car so important?

4. **Verbal Communication:** Define autistic savant? Describe Raymond's behavior.
5. **Disconfirming Statements:** How is Charlie disconfirming to Raymond?
6. **Nonverbal - touch:** Describe the nonverbal behavior of touching that occurs between Ray and Charlie.
7. **Caring:** When does Charlie begin to truly care about Raymond? Why does this happen? What changes in his behavior and attitude occur when he allows himself to love?

SOURCES:

"Rain Man." [Yahoo! Movies](#).

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Movie: 19
Title: L.A. Confidential
Rating: R
Year: 1997

Summary: Reviewer, Stephen Holden calls this a "nearly flawless" movie and asserts that it "may be the best American film noir since 'Chinatown.'" This is a story set in Los Angeles in the 1950s. Corrupt cops, elegant hookers, and murder cover-ups are part of the scene. Although the plot is confusing for awhile, we finally find out who are the good guys and the bad guys.

Main Idea: Anger

Because of his past, Budd has a problem with anger. In the very beginning, he tears the Christmas decorations off the roof. He hits people. He appears to possibly be a Racist cop when he beats up the Mexicans. He was very upset when his fellow cop was killed. He puts a gun into the mouth of a person because a girl is in danger. He beats Exley up. He also beats up the D.A. Throughout the movie, Bud seems to be especially upset when a woman is harmed. Later we find out the reason. He tells Lynn, "When I was twelve, my old man went after my mother with a bottle." Lynn asks if he saved her and he responds that it wasn't for long as his father later beat her to death with a tire iron. He falls for Lynn and is obsessed with her. At one point, Lynn says, "I see Budd because he can't hide the good inside him." This foreshadows the ending where she chooses him over Exley. And, it is her love that allows him to break loose from his anger.

More Ideas:

1. **Nonverbal - Rich poor gap:** How is the gap between the rich and the poor depicted in the film through non verbal communication?
2. **Lying:** How does lying play a part in the movie?
3. **Nonverbal communication-image:** Describe the character's difficulty changing his image as a child molester. How do we get an image? Why is it so hard to change it? One of the characters has the image of a child molester. It is almost impossible for him to change it.
4. **Stereotypes:** Describe the stereotypes in the film.
5. **Self-Concept:** Describe self-concept issues in the film.
6. **Language-Vocabulary:** Discuss the use of cop-speak in the film. The word jacket is an example. What are other examples?

7. **Assumptions:** The Lana Turner joke is so famous that it is in several of the reviews of the movie. What assumption was it based upon?
8. **Intensity:** Rick Lyman, New York Times movie critic, calls this film an "intense and complex drama." What is intense about it? How is intensity communicated on the screen? How does it make you feel?

SOURCES:

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Maslin, Janet. "L.A. Confidential Wins Critics Circle Award." New York Times, January 9, 1998. E1:3.

Movie: 20
Title: American Me
Rating: R
Year: 1992

Summary: Prison is filled with criminals. The surprising thing to some is that prison is also filled with crime. This is the story of one Hispanic drug lord who creates an empire within the prison. Out of prison, he falls in love, changing his value system and ultimately, what he wants out of life.

Main Idea: Cultural influences on emotions

Humans experience emotions in a similar fashion. But, they display them differently and much of the reason for that is the cultural influences on them. The main character, Santana, doesn't seem to have any feelings. He is sent to juvenile hall for breaking into a store. His very first night, another guy sodomizes him and he kills the attacker. He gains instant respect as well and a ticket to prison when he is eighteen. He doesn't have any feelings as he starts a drug business and whatever he has to do to maintain his gang and his business he does. For instance, a fellow prisoner takes more than his share of drugs and they kill him. Santana writes poetry and it is often about feelings. One example is:

*I was proud I didn't let my felings get in the way
 Of doing what we had to do to bypass that day
 Killing one of our own that day
 Got us new respect
 But none of us knew the price.*

He shows his feelings on occasion, for instance, when his mother dies. His poem accompanying that event ends with:

*You ride behind pride
 Thinking you can hide
 Feelings deep within you.*

When he gets out of Folsom, he meets a woman. In her presence, he begins to express emotions. He falls for her as much as he is capable of doing. Ultimately, we get the idea that falling for the woman and letting his feelings out makes it impossible for him to be so tough anymore and that causes his death.

More Ideas:

1. **Identity:** What does it mean in the movie that Santana is "two people?" Do you know people that are "two people?"
2. **Aggressive communication – violence:** What happened the night after the zoot suit riots? Why?
3. **Family:** Describe the feelings about family, home boys and others.

4. **Appearance as nonverbal communication:** How does appearance communicate who you are? Why is appearance important? How do the members of the gang dress? Why? Is this typical of teenagers?
5. **Language – poetry:** Describe Santana's use of poetry. In addition to the examples above, he wrote the following:
*Thought I knew it all; ended up in juvey hall.
 The state is so lame they paid for the game.*
6. **Define respect.** What part does it play in the movie? What does Santana tell the shoe salesman he has to do to show him respect?
7. **Education:** Education is an ongoing theme in the movie. Give examples of this. Why is it so important to the characters? How did Santana get educated? What does the woman teach him? What does she want to do? What prevents her from doing it? He says that even in this cage he can learn. He says that all the books he has ever read are in an attempt to get power.
8. **Nonverbal communication:** Even though there are no words, do you know what is happening
9. **The communication of revenge?** Is revenge communication? What kind? What happens in the movie for revenge? Why?
10. **Hate:** What does Santana find out at his mother's grave?
11. **Loyalty:** Describe the place of loyalty in the film.
12. **Self-fulfilling prophesy:** What is the significance of the final scene?

Sources:

"American Me." Yahoo! Movies.
 <<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800171593>>

Movie: 21
Title: U-571
Rating: PG-13
Year: 2000

Summary: The crew of the S-33 is young and inexperienced. Their mission is to intercept a disabled German u-boat, U-571. The purpose is to capture the encryption system. It doesn't go quite as planned and the story of heroism ensues.

Main Idea: Gender influences on emotions

The textbook discusses gender influences on emotion. This is a good movie to analyze male emotions and to describe them. We see fear, anger, excitement, surprise and grief. They are described individually below.

More Ideas

1. **Courage:** The Yahoo.com review tells us that this movie "pays earnest homage to the pluck and determination of ordinary people forced to overcome extraordinary odds." Give examples. How much of this courage and determination is shown through communication?
2. **Male energy:** Bob Aulert of Culturevulture states, "It's a testosterone-fest of sweaty, gritty sailors shooting at lots of stuff and blowing things up." How is male energy communicated on screen? How is it different from female energy?
3. **Nonverbal Communication:** In the first scenes, even though you could not understand German, can you describe the feelings of the men through their nonverbal statements?
4. **(10:25 – 12:00) Confrontation:** What communication skills does Lieutenant Andrew Tyler (Matthew Mc Conaughey) use when he confronts Lt. Comdr. Mike Dahlgren (Bill Paxton)?
5. **Conflict:** Discuss conflict as it occurs throughout the film.
6. **Perception:** Describe the difference in perception between the captain and Lt. Tyler.
7. **Support:** How do the men support Tyler when he doesn't get his ship? Give other examples of the men supporting each other.
8. **Self-disclosure:** Give examples of it in the film.
9. **Fear:** Describe what fear looks like during the attack of the German boat.

10. **Power & Leadership:** Describe the power structure after the captain dies.
There is a theory of leadership
11. **Grief:** Give examples of grief in the film.
12. **Cliches:** The Flick Philosopher believes that U-571 is "chock full of cliches both hoary and brand-spanking new." Define cliché. Give examples from the film.
13. **Jargon:** Christopher Null refers to the navy jargon in the film. Define jargon.
Give examples from the film.

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Movie: 22
Title: Ordinary People
Rating: R
Year: 1980

Summary: This is the story of an American family. They had two sons. The oldest one is dead. The father Calvin (Donald Sutherland) and his wife Beth (Mary Tyler Moore) are devastated. Conrad (Timothy Hutton) attempts suicide. Beth withdraws. Calvin tries to relate to Conrad but it is difficult. This tragedy causes all of them to be paralyzed with grief. The story is how they try to get back to being a family again.

Main Idea: Fear of self-disclosure

Throughout the movie, this family is plagued by the inability to talk to each other in a meaningful and significant way. The family is torn apart by guilt and lack of understanding of the death of one of the two sons. The father smiles a lot and says everything is great. The mother is cold and can't relate to either of them. She loved the dead son more than the one that lived and almost can't be with the remaining son. This of course adds to the remaining son's guilt. He has been troubled anyway and her coldness makes it worse. They all fear telling the truth, feeling, and talking to each other. The men finally are able to do it and the movie ends with father and son expressing their love for each other.

More Ideas:

1. **Conflict:** Conrad is clearly disturbed by something. What is it? What are the signs of conflict between Conrad and his parents?
2. **Nonverbal Communication:** What are the nonverbal symptoms that let the audience know that Conrad is upset?
3. **Grief:** How has everybody handled their grief because Buck died?
4. **Appearances:** How do the parents differ in terms of the image they portray to the outside world? Does Conrad go along with it?
5. **Parent and Child Communication:** What is the significance of the pigeon? How are mother and son doing in their communication? How are father and son doing in their communication?
6. **Conversations with the coach:** Describe Conrad's relationship with the coach.
7. **Friendship:** Conrad's friend tries to help him. What does Conrad do?

8. **Feelings:** Conrad seems to be afraid to feel. Why? What does he tell Judd about feeling? Have you ever felt this way? Who else in the film has trouble with feelings?
9. **The building of a relationship with Jeanine:** Describe it.
10. **Lying & Secrets:** What happens the day the Christmas tree comes home?
11. **Listening:** Describe the scene when Calvin and his partner are running.
12. **Sharing & Listening:** Why does Calvin want to talk to Beth about Buck's funeral.
13. **Anger:** Describe anger in the film.
14. **Denial:** Describe Karen and her relationship with Conrad and her recovery or lack of it.

Sources:

"Ordinary People." Yahoo! Movies.

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800103663>>

Movie: 23
Title: LA Story
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1991

Summary: Los Angeles is portrayed with all its superficiality. A TV weatherman is bored with his life. He receives a message from a freeway sign. He loses everything important to him. And then, he starts living life as he was meant to be.

Main Idea: Recognize your feelings

At one point, Harris Tellemacher (Steve Martin) says, "I was deeply unhappy but I didn't know it because I was so happy all the time." He was so out of touch with his emotions, he didn't know how he felt. He was so busy pretending to be happy, he didn't realize he was unhappy.

1. **The communication of phoniness:** Describe the first lunch. What nonverbal behavior is evident? What verbal language makes us laugh and think these people are superficial?
2. **Communicating about Los Angeles:** What does the film portray about Los Angeles? Is it true? Is Los Angeles like this?
3. **The communication of showing off:** What does Harris mean, "When I'm around you I find myself showing off. It's the idiot's version of being interesting." Why does he show off? Describe the relationship between Harris and Sarah.
4. **The communication of symbolism:** Describe the relationship of Harris and the freeway sign.
5. **Communication and dreams:** Sarah is writing a story. She quotes people as saying that if you turned off the sprinklers in LA, it would turn back into a desert. On the contrary, she thinks that "they've taken a dessert and turned it into their dreams." What does she mean?
6. **Emotions – anger:** What happens at the El Pollo Del Mar? What happens with Harris and Sarah?
7. **The relationship of romance:** By the end of the movie, what did he learn about romance?

Sources:

"L.A. Story." [Yahoo! Movies.](http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800151054)

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Movie: 24
Title: Music of the Heart
Rating: PG
Year: 1999

Summary: Based on the true story of violin teacher Roberta Guaspari, this inspiring movie is about a woman who is suddenly divorced and suddenly filled with the challenges of making money and raising her two sons. She goes back to work, teaching violin to children in the East Harlem. Her successes are awe-inspiring ending with a concert in Carnegie Hall.

Main Idea: Overcoming fear

She has to overcome fear when her husband leaves. She has depended on him in many ways, especially since she has been a Navy wife. She hasn't developed her own independence and talents. She has to overcome fear of working. But she does get a job wrapping presents. She is still avoiding following her dreams because of fear but she overcomes that fear and gets a job teaching music. To do that, she has to overcome fears of interviewing. She teaches the children to overcome fear through discipline and hard work. Rudy, the tenured music teacher, is afraid of her and her talent and what she accomplishes with the children. She encourages Naim's mother to overcome the fear of the white culture. Bryan is afraid to be in a committed relationship. So, she overcomes the fear of being alone when she sends Bryan away. She encourages her children not to be afraid when they are afraid they will have to take care of her. In the second group of children, there are also cultural fears. Carlos is afraid of not being cool. Finally at Carnegie Hall, she tells the children to play from the heart and they won't be afraid.

More Ideas

1. **Grief:** How does Roberta Gaspari show her grief for her broken marriage.
2. **Tough Love:** What is tough love and how do the people in Roberta's life practice it on her?
3. **Interviewing:** How does Roberta do on the interview with the principal? And what does she do after the interview for follow up?
4. **Discipline and unorthodox methods:** What is her idea of discipline? Does it change? She tells the children that their playing is so bad it would make their parents sick. Do you agree with these unorthodox methods?
5. **Passion:** Anne Daugherty refers to the passion in the movie. Define passion. Explain how it works in this film.

6. **Self-esteem:** Tom Keogh in his review talks about the children gaining self-esteem because of violin training. How does this work?
7. **Accepting Criticism:** What does she do when she is criticized?
8. **Trust:** How does she get the children to trust her?
9. **Conflict:** What conflict occurs at the school? How does Roberta handle it?
10. **Culture:** Na'im's mother and Roberta have a conflict. What happens?
11. **Support:** Who gives Roberta support? How do they do it? How does Roberta support other people?
12. **To Talk or not to talk / avoidance re: problems:** What happens when Roberta tries to get people to talk over problems?
13. **Avoidance of the truth:** At 33:13, there is a poignant scene between Roberta and her son, Nick. He asks if his daddy is returning. When she tries to answer, he changes the subject. Why do we avoid the truth at times?
14. **Group Cohesiveness:** Describe the development of the class as a group.
15. **Intimacy & Distance:** When Roberta tells Bryan that she hopes he will move into the new house, what occurs?
16. **Fear:** What happens when Roberta and Nick have the conflict? How does fear enter into it?
17. **Disconfirming Messages:** Describe Rudy, the tenured music teacher.
18. **Perfectionism:** Describe the special student.
19. **Assertiveness:** Describe Roberta's assertiveness.
20. How does the benefit concert bring together all the concepts of the movie?
21. **(1:45) When bad is really good.** Thank you mom and Charles: What did she thank them for?
22. **Actress:** Wes Addiego in his San Francisco Examiner review states that Meryl Streep is second fiddle to none. Why is she such a good actress? How does she communicate on screen to be so believable?

Sources:

Addiego, Walter. "Strong performance makes Wes Craven's 'Music of the Heart' ring true." San Francisco Examiner. October 29, 1999. <<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/examiner/archive/1999/10/20/WEEKEND11491.dtl>>

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Movie: 25
Title: Terms of Endearment
Rating: PG
Year: 1983

Summary: Oscars were given for Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Director, and Best Screenplay Adaptation. This is the story of a hardened mother and her relationships. Aurora has trouble showing emotion. She is sarcastic to everyone. She finally has a relationship with her astronaut neighbor. Her daughter Emma is a major part of the movie. When Emma is dying, Aurora talks about herself. The daughter says "It's not always about you." The grief when the death occurs is overpowering.

Main Idea: Grief

The five stages of grief are shown in this movie about Emma's (Debra Winger) cancer. Aurora (Shirley Mac Laine) has trouble throughout the movie showing emotion. She has no trouble when she finds out that Emma has cancer, breaking down. Later, when the pain pill is late, she becomes extremely angry. Garrett (Jack Nicholson) returns to be supportive to Aurora. When Flap visits Emma in the hospital room, he wears the tie she gave him. They talk about their love. He says he'll lose his identity as "the man who failed Emma." They talk about who will raise the kids, and he admits he would probably screw up the job. The most moving scene in the movie is when Emma says goodbye to the boys. Teddy hugs her and says he wants her to come home. Tommy tries to be nice. He asks her if she is getting well and she says no. He tries to give her advice and his brother tells him to shut up. Emma deals directly with the problems. She says to Tommy, "Stop trying to pretend you hate me." He denies it and she tells him how much she loves him and reminds him of his baseball glove, reading stories and letting him goof off. She tries to relieve him of guilt but he is still hostile. Later Tommy insults his mother and Aurora slaps him. They talk and hug. When Emma dies, Flap is asleep and the nurse has to tell him. Aurora says she thought it would be a relief and it isn't. Flap even tries to console her. At the funeral, Flap tries to get Tommy to talk but it is Garret who gets through to Tommy, talking about swimming. Patsy consoles Flap. Garrett is nice to Vern. Each character deals with Emma's death in his or her own way.

MORE IDEAS

1. **Overprotectiveness:** How does the beginning scene foreshadow the rest of the film?
2. **Emotions:** Emma reminds her mother that the men she sees have feelings too. What is her mother doing to cause Emma to say this?
3. **Truth:** Do you think that the mother should have been honest in her talk with Emma the night before the wedding. (Scene: 7:40 - 10:36)

4. **Setting boundaries:** How did Flap try to set boundaries in the conversation with Mrs. Greenway?
5. **Listening – Reacting:** How does Mrs. Greenway respond to Emma's announcement that she is pregnant? Does she react for herself or is she cognizant of Emma's feelings?
6. **Emotions - Aurora:** Throughout the film, it is hard for Aurora to show emotions. Why? Give examples of this. Include the parting of mother and daughter, her sarcasm to Garrett, and what happens when she finds out her daughter has malignancy.
7. **Support:** Is Aurora supportive of Emma when Emma gets pregnant?
8. **Argument and shame:** Why do Emma and Flap start fighting? How does shame enter their lives? Why is Tommy ashamed?
9. **Telling the truth:** How does the relationship between Emma and Sam begin? Is it based on truth or lies?
10. **Emotions – joy:** The director weaves two scenes together. Why? One scene is Aurora's first date with Garrett. The second scene is Emma's first time making love with Sam. What do mother and daughter have in common in these scenes?
11. **Support:** Describe the two times Aurora comments on Garrett's momentos from being an astronaut. In the first instance she is sarcastic. In the second she is supportive. Why the difference? What does each contribute to the relationship?
12. **Mutual disrespect:** What happens when Emma goes to the college to find Flap?
13. **Appropriate Listening:** Was it appropriate that Tommy and Teddy overheard the phone call between their parents?
14. **Anger:** Describe Tommy's growing anger. Why is he hurt and angry?
15. **Ending relationships:** Describe the goodbyes of Garrett to Aurora and Emma to Sam. What communication principles are shown by each of them?
16. **Over intellectual and cold:** Describe Janise's response to Emma when Janise says, "There isn't a feeling you're having that I can't validate."

17. **A Trite Doctor:** What happened when Aurora and Patsy met with the doctor? What is wrong with trite communication? Does Aurora let him get away with this?
18. **Conversation Topics:** Compare Emma and the professional women in New York including what topics of conversation they think are appropriate.
19. **Response to listening:** Describe the conversation between Aurora and Emma when Aurora tells her daughter that she loves Garrett. What is Emma's response?
20. **Truth:** Describe the scene between Flap and Aurora in the hospital cafeteria regarding who is going to raise the children.

SOURCES:

"Terms of Endearment." Yahoo! Movies.

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800125964>>

Movie: 26
Title: La Bamba
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1987

Summary: This is the story of Ritchie Valens, a young Mexican-American, who became a great hit and was killed prematurely in a plane crash.

Main Idea: Debilitative Emotions

Debilitative emotions are those which interfere with proper functioning. Bob has been in prison and has problems with his self-concept, his emotions and his communication. He is angry and jealous and while a certain amount of these emotions are good, the intensity causes them to be debilitative. He is also a perpetual victim even though he brings a lot of this on himself. Rosie is angry with Bob because he smokes pot. Instead of working it out with her, he breaks down the door and forces her to have sex. When Rose tells him she is pregnant, his reaction is, "It's not my first or my last." He doesn't support her and they fight. With his music, Ritchie is getting to be the center of attention and Bob is jealous and wrecks the American Legion concert. He says, "Do you think the whole world revolves around you?"

Bob enters an art contest but no matter what Bob does, Ritchie tops him. When Ritchie sings on American Bandstand, Bob is drunk in a bar and then he goes home and ruins his art. Bob is sad because his mother worries more about Ritchie than him. Ritchie buys her a house and she responds, "Oh, Ritchie, You're the best." Ritchie returns from New York to a surprise party. Bob forgot to buy the mother a dress and Ritchie asks about it. Bob responds, "You're the asshole with all the money. Why don't you buy it yourself?" In his jealousy and anger, Bob tells Ritchie that Steve wasn't really his dad and they have a fight. Ritchie tells Bob that he is a victim and he has done this to himself. But they make up. The night he is to die, Ritchie calls Bob and asks him to join him for the rest of the tour. But it is too late as Ritchie dies that night. At the end, Bob is sober and trying to be a good family man. Perhaps he will change it into positive emotions.

More Ideas:

1. **Stereotypes:** There are many stereotypes in the film. Give some examples:
2. **Support:** Describe the mother's support.
3. **Basic Recognition - Name:** What does the textbook say about naming and identifying? What is their reaction to changing names?
4. **Assertive:** What does Ritchie do when Donna doesn't come to the telephone?

5. **Symbol:** There is a symbol of flying in the film. Why is it there? What does it seem to mean?
6. **Prejudice:** What does she overcome to finally admit her love for Ritchie?
7. **(1:40:41-1:44:20) Grief.** Describe how everyone takes the news of Ritchie dying at seventeen years old.

SOURCES:

"La Bamba." [Yahoo! Movies](#).

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800086182>>

Movie: 27
Title: Ferris Bueller's Day Off
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1986

Summary: Ferris Bueller is a fast-talker who seems to be able to get away with whatever he wants. He convinces his nurturing mother and father that he is ill and takes a day off from school. He talks his best friend, Cameron, and his girlfriend Sloane Peterson into going with him to have fun. Their downtown Chicago adventure is filled with risk taking, fun, and eventually some truth.

Main Idea: Self Talk

In the hallway, Jeanne (Jennifer Grey) is participating in self talk. Her jealousy of Ferris (Matthew Broderick) is evident when she says that he gets to do whatever he wants to do. She is jealous of his ability to get away with things. She participates in self-talk in the hallway of the high school .

Ferris engages in self-talk when he talks to the camera which is really talking to the audience. Ferris tells us what he is going to get away with and what he is going to do

More Ideas:

1. **Sibling Rivalry:** Describe the relationship between Ferris and his sister, Jeanne. Why does she hate him so much?
2. **Focus on self:** What does the guy in the police station tell Jeanne she should do?
3. **Perspective – what is important:** Ferris has a test on European socialists but says he doesn't care because "It still doesn't change the fact that I don't own a car."
4. **Compare stressed out and loose:** Ferris is very loose and Cameron is the poster boy for stress. It is interesting that they are friends. Why does Ferris seem to get by with everything and Cameron always gets caught? Why does Cameron say that this was the best day of his life?
5. **Standing up for himself:** What happens to change Cameron? Why decision does he make? Why does he wreck the Ferrari after being so afraid something would happen to it? Why isn't Cameron afraid of his dad?
6. **Stereotype – the teacher:** Describe the teacher. What are the nonverbal reactions from the students?
7. **Assumptions:** What assumptions are made by the school personnel? What do they say that they shouldn't because of the assumptions they have made? What is the problem with assuming things?

8. **Generation gap:** In this film, the teenagers pretty much make the adults look stupid. Describe how this happens including Ferris' parents and the dean.
9. **Best friends:** How does Ferris treat Cameron? Give examples. How does Cameron react to his friend treating him this way?
10. **Public and Private self:** Describe how the secretary treats people and then talks behind their backs. Do we all act two ways with people?
11. **Breaking Out – Cameron and Jeanne:** Tell how Cameron and Jeanne break out during the film? Show how Cameron defies his father and overcomes his fear. Show how Jeanne overcomes her hatred of Ferris and becomes happier because of it.
12. **Enjoying life:** Ferris tells us, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in awhile, you could miss is." What does he mean? Does he live his life this way? Is it good advice?

SOURCES:

'Ferris Bueller's Day Off.' [Yahoo! Movies](#).

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800064675>>

Theme #5: Language

One of the major ways we communicate orally is through words. To put it simply, we say things to each other. The use of language is difficult because it is imperfect. We have a thought and we encode it into a message, which we send to another human being. Because of our backgrounds, value systems and experiences we each have different meanings for the words. The sender often feels that because he/she has said something, the receiver has received it with the same meaning. Far too often that is not the case. More care must be taken as we use this marvelous, but imperfect, tool of language to communicate.

There are so many films but four will have to do for now. The importance of language is seen in *Nell*. Nell does not have language as we know it and this severely limits her ability to communicate. Nell is linguistically isolated and through her we see how important words are to us.

The ancient art of storytelling is seen best in *Out of Africa*. Having been on safari myself I understand being isolated from modern day entertainment. What a joy to be isolated and to use the imagination and beauty of the English language to weave tales.

Two cultures are explored as they affect language. We see the challenges of the hearing communicating with the non-hearing in *Children of a Lesser God*. And in one of the surprise delights of 2001, *Save the Last Dance*, the different worlds of the sophisticated and the less sophisticated come together when Sara moves to the city, giving up everything she loves most: her mother, her home, her ballet, her friends. Sara's difficulties in communication are a major theme of the movie.

28 *Nell*

29 *Out of Africa*

30 *Children of a Lesser God (1986)*

31 *Save the Last Dance (2001)*

The importance of language

Storytelling

Cultural influences on language

Cultural influences on language

Movie: 28
Title: Nell
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1994

Summary: Nell is the story of a grown woman who was raised in the wild without contact with civilization. A therapist and a social worker treat this woman who speaks in a language of her own invention. Nell is an intelligent young woman but misdiagnosed as having limited mental abilities because of lack of ability to communicate.

The Main Idea: The Importance of Language

Nell doesn't have language, as we know it. And yet, when the doctor goes back in the cabin he says, "I'm going to talk to her." It is possible to communicate with Nell without words but this film slowly shows the importance of language as a means to communicate. For instance, the doctor fights for her in court because she cannot fight for herself. The lack of language makes it impossible for her to protect herself and make decisions for herself. The story of how the doctor gets to know her and becomes her friend without language is fascinating. Nell teaches him her language. She lets him know about her dead twin and he learns about twinspeak. After much progress, she returns to silence. Once again, Dr. Lovell fights for her. Because of his assertiveness, she breaks the silence and talks to the judge. Jerry interprets for her and she tells the judge of her hunger for quietness. She tells Jerry not to be frightened for her or to weep for her. Five years later, Jerry and Paula and their child return to visit her. She is happy. .

More Ideas

1. **Stereotypes:** Are the characters stereotypical or do they seem real to you? Why? Include Nell (Jodie Foster), Dr. Jerry Lovell (Liam Neeson), and Dr. Paula Olsen (Natasha Richardson)
2. **Emotions - compassion:** The doctor shows right away how much compassion he has when he says, "You'd speak funny too if you spoke out of one side of your mouth." Discuss compassion in the film, giving other examples.
3. **Distance / Isolation:** Discuss distance, being alone and isolation. Nell is alone. Is she lonely? Is it always bad to be isolated or to have distance? Why is it a problem to live with people?
4. **Emotions - fear:** Nell is afraid of strangers. Why? Fear is often of the unknown. How do the doctors try to treat her phobia? How do they neutralize her fear?
5. **Nonverbal:** Describe how Nell's joy is shown in her nonverbal communication.

6. **Emotions-anger:** Describe Nell's temper tantrum. How is she described after that? What happens with the reporter from the Charlotte Tribune? What does she do when the two doctors fight?
7. **Nonverbal - Appearance:** How do the doctors dress her for her trip to the city? How does Nell feel about this?
8. **Noise:** How does Nell react to the noise in the city? Why is she afraid of it? How does it compare to her usual environment? How does Jerry reassure her?
9. **Sensory Overload:** Why does Nell experience sensory overload in the grocery store?
10. **Appropriate nonverbal communication:** What does Nell do in the bar? Why is it inappropriate? Why is it dangerous? What do the doctors give her? Why? Was this a problem they anticipated?
11. **Empathy and comforting:** How does Nell comfort Paula Olson, the woman therapist? How does Nell comfort the policeman's wife? What do these events say about Nell? Why does Nell have empathy for others?
12. **Silence:** Why does she turn silent? How does Jerry react?
13. **Assertiveness:** Describe Dr. Lovell's assertiveness in court. Why does it cause her to break her silence?

Sources:

"Nell." Yahoo! Movies. <<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=18000229631>>

Movie: 29
Title: Out of Africa
Rating: PG
Year: 1985

Summary: Karen Blixen (Meryl Streep) is an hard working woman who goes to Africa with her husband. They start a coffee plantation but it turns out that she does all the work. Her husband cheats on her and they divorce. She falls in love with Denys George Finch Hatton (Robert Redford) and the story is their romantic story. Through his eyes she sees a true Africa and falls in love with it as she falls in love with him. He will not marry. Eventually he is killed and she is bankrupt and must leave the country she has fallen in love with.

The Main Idea: Storytelling

Karen Blixen is the narrator of this marvelous story that was the Best Movie of the year in 1985. Out of Africa is the story of Karen Blixen, a strong-willed woman who falls in love with the land, its people and the mysterious white hunter, Dennis Finch Hatton (Robert Redford). Within the large story, Karen and Dennis Finch Hatton have a game where they make up stories, taking turns supplying sentences. With no entertainment of the modern variety, they make up their own entertainment. One of the most beautiful examples of this is also one of the sexiest scenes in the film as it is the first time Karen and Dennis make love. (1:37:10-1:40:35) Karen makes up stories while Dennis is away and when he returns, he listens to them. Karen begins a school so the children will learn stories. Dennis doesn't think this is a good idea. He tells her that the natives have their own stories. They just aren't written down. (approximately 1:14:00) Later, she tells the chief that reading is a valuable thing. He responds that the British can read and what good has it done them.

MORE IDEAS

1. **Lying/Honesty:** Discuss lying and honesty in the film. The film begins with a lie. What is it? What other lies exist in the film including those of her husband?
2. **Culture:** Discuss Karen's adjustment to the African culture. Include adjustments to the African men and women, the Anglo men in the club, the animals. But even Africa changes and she has to readjust to those changes. What does she tell the houseboy who wants to come with her when she leaves?
3. **Attraction:** People usually get together for reasons such as attraction or rewards. Why is Karen attracted to Blixen and what does he say about making friends.
4. **Decision-making:** How are decisions made?

5. **Living in the moment:** This concept is one of the Masai. Dennis agrees. Describe this concept as it is portrayed in the film.
6. **Abandonment:** Describe Karen's men.
7. **(2:06:41-2:10:34) The Power of Language:** In this powerful scene, she asks Dennis for commitment. In a fight he responds, "You have no idea what effect that language has on me." He moves out.
8. **(2:19:19-2:24:20) Emotions - The sorrow of goodbye:** Describe her last night in the house and Dennis' visit. He tells her, "You've ruined it for me, you know." What has she ruined? Why?
9. **(2:25:08-2:27:43) The message of grief – Baron Blixen brings Karen a message.** What is it? What is her reaction?
10. **(2:27:44-) Grief - The funeral:** Describe the funeral. Where were all the guests. What did Karen mean when she said in her speech, "*He was not ours. He was not mine.*"

SOURCES:

"Out of Africa." [Yahoo! Movies.](http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800103924)
<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800103924>>

Movie: 30
Title: Children of a Lesser God
Rated: R
Year: 1986

Summary: A teacher (William Hurt) of the deaf becomes involved with a deaf woman (Marlee Matlin). She is angry and confused and their relationship has its ups and downs.

The Main Idea: Cultural Influences on Language

There is a culture of the non-hearing. Sarah doesn't hear and is a member of this culture. Intercultural communication then exists because James is from the hearing culture and Sarah is from the non-hearing sub-culture. As they form their relationship, communication challenges arise.

MORE IDEAS:

1. **Communication climate:** Describe the climate between Sarah and James. Why does Sarah feel defensive around James? What does she do about it?
2. **Power:** Describe how James' power is used in the film.
3. **Anger:** Give examples of her anger in the film. Why is she so angry?
4. **Relational stages:** Show the creation of the relation between the two stars. How does it begin and evolve.
5. **Autonomy and connection:** Discuss the dialectical tension of autonomy and connection between James and Sarah in the film. Sometimes they seem to want to be together and sometimes they want to be alone. Is this normal?

SOURCES:

"Children of a Lesser God." [Yahoo! Movies](#).

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800046832>>

Movie: 31
Title: Save the Last Dance
Rating: PG-13
Year: 2001

Summary: When her mother dies in an accident, Sara Johnson (Julia Stiles) is forced to move to the city to live with her father in his ghetto apartment. Her dreams of being a professional ballerina seem to be gone. She is immediately confronted with new issues of race and class. She meets Derek (Sean Patrick Thomas). He is a popular black student and their friendship brings back her guilt, sorrow, and dreams. Bigotry greets their passionate romance.

The Main Idea: Cultural Influences on Language

Culture is important in the film. All the characters in the film are in two worlds or two cultures. Sara (Julia Stiles) is in culture shock when she moves to the city. She has to adjust to her new home in the city, new apartment, new school, new friends, and new ways of doing things. Her adjustment is not without problems. One character says, "just because you brought the Brady Bunch to the Negro club." She learns the lesson that there are cultural influences on language. At one point she says, "You talk a lot of shit and never says anything." She doesn't understand their language yet, but, she begins to when she changes her descriptor from "cool" to "slammen." Another example of vocabulary difference is that breaking up is referred to as being "fired" or "laid off."

MORE IDEAS:

1. **Support and Abandonment:** This film is filled with issues between parents and teenagers. Discuss the support of Sara's mom for her. Compare it to what happens with Derrick (Sean P. Thomas) and Chenille's mom. Would it be worse to have a supportive mom that abandoned you or a very dysfunctional mom who didn't?
2. **Family, Race & Responsibility:** Cody Clark states that the three themes are family, race and responsibility. How do they emerge in the film and how are they developed?
3. **Relational Development:** Discuss Sara's relationship with her father, Roy and how it changes during the film. How is her bedroom a symbol of their dynamic relationship?
4. **Significant others:** Interpersonal textbooks discuss significant others and their influence on children and their self-concepts. Roy and Kenny are fathers. Compare and contrast them as significant others of their children and what their fathering means to each child involved.

6. **Names:** The most basic (lowest) form of recognition is knowing people's names. Show how this keeps coming up at the beginning of the movie. Did it seem important to you?
7. **Language – mistakes:** Discuss how Sara finds out that Derrick is Chenille's brother. What is the importance of this mistake in language?
8. **Language – Visual language:** Discuss the placement of the sign "Consider Consequences" as Malakai is discussing having been in juvenile hall.
9. **Language of responsibility:** Derrick encourages Sara to "make it happen" and he encourages Molokai to "just walk away." How is this language of responsibility?
10. **Nonverbal communication:** Compare and contrast Derrick and Sara's apartments. Give other examples of how important nonverbal communication is in the movie including Derrick's reaction when he gets his letter of acceptance from Georgetown, the lady on the train, Sara's dance lesson, and Sara being watched by the black children at the clinic.
11. **Stages of death and dying:** Discuss the stages of death and dying in terms of the following losses that Sara faces: Sara's loss of her mother, her loss of her friends and her loss of her first love – ballet.
12. **Intimacy and distance:** Show the development of the relationship between Derrick and Sara. How do they create closeness (intimacy) and how do they push each other away (distance)? As a parallel relationship, show the closeness and pushing away between Derrick and Molokai. How do the two relationships intertwine and what do they have to do with each other?
13. **The Communication of Apology:** Derrick apologizes to Sara. What does an apology do to a relationship?
14. **Loyalty:** Should friends be loyal to each other no matter what? Is Derrick's loyalty to Molokai misplaced?
15. **Stereotyping:** Does Molokai fall for the stereotype as he discusses "the black man's life?"
16. **Cliches:** Read the two reviews by Ebert and Rosen who disagree on the use of cliches in the film. Which one thinks there are cliches? Which one says that the movie avoids them? How could there be two perspectives which disagree? Which do you think is true?

SOURCES:

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Theme #6: Nonverbal Communication

Body language is an extremely important part of interpersonal communication. According to the psychologist, Albert Mehrabian, 93 percent of the emotional impact of a message comes from a nonverbal source whereas only 7 percent comes from the verbal. Much of our unintentional communication is nonverbal. Most of our relational communication is nonverbal. The novice interpersonal communication student has no idea of the importance of nonverbal communication.

But rather than talk about it verbally, let's look at it on the screen. We could have an entire course on this topic alone but for this introductory course, let's look at five movies. We could begin by looking at the types of nonverbal communication. They are all portrayed in the marvelous silent movies. The **Comic Classics by Charlie Chaplin** include every aspect of nonverbal communication. Exaggeration is sometimes a fun teaching tool so we take a look at the 1984 classic **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, a Saturday morning type adventure movie, to see exaggerated non-verbal communication. Leonardo Di Caprio shows us the power of nonverbal communication in **Man in the Iron Mask** as he portrays two brothers and we believe there are really two characters because of his artful portrayal of good posture to show confidence and poor posture to show a lack of confidence.

Although Hollywood is usually guilty of having only the beautiful people in it's films, they didn't do it in **The Pledge**. An analysis of the minor characters in this film shows us that appearance is indeed an important aspect of nonverbal communication. Along the same lines, the use of clothing to communicate is investigated in the fun film, **Happy Gilmore**. Happy communicates his rebellion when he refuses to dress like the other golfers.

32 Raiders of the Lost Ark (1984)	Exaggerated non-verbal Communication
33 Comic Classics by Charlie Chaplin	Types of nonverbal communication
34 Man in the Iron Mask	Posture, face & eyes
35 The Pledge	Physical attractiveness
36 Happy Gilmore	Clothing

Movie: 32
Title: Raiders of the Lost Ark
Rating: PG
Year: 1981

Summary: Harrison Ford stars as Dr. Indiana Jones in this collaboration of Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. The Saturday matinee cliffhanger is the style intended. The Allies find out that the Nazis are about to use the Lost Ark of the Covenant as a weapon. The U.S. government gets Indiana Jones to locate the ark. The adventure ensues.

The Main Idea: Exaggerated Non-Verbal Communication

This is like a Saturday morning flick which was characterized by exaggerated non-verbal communication. In his university classes, Dr. Jones is a mild mannered, serious professor of archaeology but out on an adventure, he is a different fellow. As Indiana Jones, his face is more animated. He laughs louder than he would at home. For example, he hates snakes and as he tells the owner of the plane, his fear and hatred clearly show on his face. When talking to his adversary, anger is overdone and obvious in his facial expressions. When driving the truck successfully, we can see extreme glee in his eyes. Subtlety is not the method used by any of the characters in this film. Characters look at each other with pronounced fear and anticipation. One character is caught with a whip and his eyes get not just big but huge. All emotions are portrayed in a larger than life way: joy, anticipation, fear, and anger.

More Ideas:

1. **Making Up:** What did Indy have to do to Marian to make up?
2. **Stereotypes:** Are there any? Describe.
3. **Cultural insensitivity:** Does this take place? If so, describe.
4. **Emotions – fear – phobias:** What is Indy's fear? What happens in the movie?
5. **Appearance:** What do different clothes do for the characters?
6. **Communication styles:** How does the mean German communicate?

Sources:

"Raiders of the Lost Ark." Yahoo! Movies.
 <<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=1800024141>>

Movie: 33
Title: **Comic Classics by Charlie Chaplin**
Year: **Varies**

Summary:

Born in London, Charlie Chaplin was a very versatile performer who wrote and directed almost all of his silent pictures and composed the musical scores for all of his sound films. He was often called "the funniest man in the world." We see that in these two films.

Summary: *By the Sea*

In this charming little film, Charlie is at the seashore. He and another man are fooling around. They fall down; they knock each other down; Charley motions with one finger for the other guy to join him and the other guy points his finger to his own chest as if to indicate "me?"

As always, a pretty woman walks by. Charlie pretends he is a macho guy by putting his foot on his friend as if he has beaten him in a fight. Charlie pursues her and they share a humorous moment. She smiles at him.

The words say ***Let's Be Pals*** and we are back to the two guys. They do pal things such as shaking hands and walking together. Chaplin hits his pal in the butt many different ways. At a refreshment stand by the sea, they have an ice cream. They have a fight. A rich man enters the story and he is with the woman but while he is off somewhere, Chaplin sits by her. The rich guy returns and doesn't like this one bit. The story ends.

Summary: *The Bank*

Chaplin enters the bank. He looks at the audience as if to say, "Follow me and I'll tell you a story." He performs a prank. A man is on his hands and knees looking for something and Chaplin pulls him out from under the counter. He then pushes him back. There is no meaning to this. It is just funny.

Chaplin opens the vault and ironically gets his mop and pail from in there. He puts on his uniform because he is the janitor. He goes to the area where the rich men are and gets water all over them. His friend is the other janitor. Chaplin kicks him in the butt and then hits him in the face with the mop. These two gags are repeated. Eventually, he hits most everyone with the mop, including himself. He sweeps relentlessly but more paper enters the area indicating the never-ending aspect of his job.

Finally, the other janitor hits him and they fight with each other. To show the fight is over, the other janitor helps Chaplin put his jacket back on.

The marquee says ***To Edna with Love***. He enters Edna's office, taking flowers to her. He then waits in anticipation as she sees her flowers. She doesn't like

them or him and ignores him. He goes in her office and sees the flowers on the floor. He looks longingly at the direction in which she has gone. But then he picks the flowers and takes them with him. He sits down by the trash holding the flowers and wishing it had been different.

Chaplin appears to get a reprieve when robbers enter the bank. Gags are in order as robbers hit people and employees are put in the vault. Chaplin saves Edna and puts the bad guys in the vault. He puts her over his shoulder and goes off. There is a gun, which changes hands many times from Charlie, to other bad guys and even to Edna. But the robbers are subdued. The boss congratulates Charlie. He sits in Edna's chair and rediscovers the flowers inside his jacket. She returns to her office, picks up the flowers, smiles, and puts her head on his shoulder in gratitude. Unfortunately he then wakes up and we realize it was a dream.

The Main Idea: Types of Nonverbal Communication

Please answer the following questions re: the films you choose to watch:

1. **Body orientation:** Does he face his fellow characters? Does he turn away? How does he signal to other characters when he doesn't have the use of words?
2. **Posture:** How does Chaplin stand? How does he walk?
3. **Gestures:** What does he do with his hands and arms?
4. **Face and eyes:** Can we tell what he is thinking and feeling by looking at his face and eyes?
5. **Touch:** When touch occurs, what messages are being sent?
6. **Physical attractiveness:** Describe the physical attractiveness of the characters. Why did he choose people that looked like they did?
7. **Clothing:** Can you tell the rich people from the poor people?
8. **Proxemics:** How does Chaplin use space. As the director of the films, how does he have the other characters use it?
9. **Territoriality:** How does territory communicate the status of the characters?
10. **Physical environment:** How do the sets add to the story?
11. **Time:** Is time a factor in these films?

More Ideas:

1. Nonverbal communication exists: Explain.
2. All Nonverbal Behavior has communicative value: Explain.
3. Nonverbal communication is culture bound: Explain.
4. Nonverbal Communication is primarily relational: Explain.
5. Nonverbal Communication Serves Many Functions: Explain.

- **Repeating:** Nonverbal behaviors that duplicate the content of a verbal message.
- **Substituting:** Nonverbal behavior that takes the place of a verbal message.
- **Complementing:** Nonverbal behavior that reinforces a verbal message.
- **Accenting:** Nonverbal behaviors that emphasize part of a verbal message.
- **Regulating:** One function of nonverbal communication, in which nonverbal cues control the flow of verbal communication among individuals.
- **Contradicting:** Nonverbal behavior that is inconsistent with a verbal message.

6. Nonverbal Communication is ambiguous. Explain.
7. Nonverbal Communication is delivered by way of multiple channels. Explain.
8. Nonverbal Communication is Continuous. Explain.

Movie: 34
Title: Man in the Iron Mask
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1998

Summary: Louis XIV is the monarch who has imprisoned his twin brother. Leonardo Di Caprio plays both parts. The young men eventually change places through much adventure, and comradery of the three musketeers.

The Main Idea: Posture, Face & Eyes

What is the difference between King Louis XIV and prisoner 64389000? Leonardo di Caprio plays both. How does he delineate between the two? How do the musketeers change Phillippe so he can pass for Louis? Leonardo, as King Louis XIV, exudes confidence. His bearing, his smile and his gestures portray his arrogance. In contrast, Leonardo, as prisoner 64389000, is poor, beaten down. His bearing is weak, his shoulders humped. As his spirit has been weakened, his body physically takes on weak positions. But, he is polite and courteous thanking them for helping him.

The plan is to replace Louis with Phillippe. Aramis says, "**Louis has an arrogance, a manner.**" And Athos answers, "**which can be adopted.**" They teach him to fence, ride horseback and to dance. They work on his posture and get him a new wardrobe. Phillippe handles the goblet incorrectly and apologizes. Athos tells him never to be sorry. Phillippe tells him that his eyes are too caring. The eyes of Louis are cold and cruel.

More Ideas

1. **Compare and contrast versions:** View the versions of this film from 1939, 1976, and 1998. How are they different? Why?
2. **Nonverbal: Use of color:** Compare and contrast the trappings of the rich and the despair of the poor.
3. **Emotions-Anger:** What happens when Athos finds out that Raoul has been killed ?
4. **Listening:** Why does the King ask Christine to listen?
5. **Trust and Promises:** What does D'Artagnan say about his oath?
6. **First impressions:** What is your first impression of the prisoner? What is his first impression of himself?
7. **Self-concept:** Who is Phillippe? Why doesn't he know who he is? What effect do you think this has had on him?

8. **Lying.** Why does King Louis XIV lie to Christine? Did she believe him?
9. **Symbolism of Clothing:** Why do Porthos, Athos and Aramis wear their old musketeer uniforms to meet D'Artagnan?
10. **Strength:** The musketeers came to the prison to free Phillippe. What has happened to Phillippe's self-confidence?
11. **Redemption:** Phillippe sends Louis to the prison cell in the mask. How does he say Louis will get redemption?

SOURCES:

"Man in the Iron Mask." Yahoo! Movies.
<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800025808>>

Movie: 35
Title: The Pledge
Rating: R
Year: 2001

Summary: The pledge is a promise made by a policeman, Jerry Black (Jack Nicholson) to find the killer of a small child. He is retiring but feels he must solve one more case. It becomes almost an obsession as he devotes all his time to the task. The cop meets a waitress named Lori (Robin Wright Penn) and her daughter who looks like the other murdered little girls. He invites them to live with him. He falls in love with them. But he uses the daughter as bait for the killer and eventually that becomes a problem for them all.

The Main Idea: Physical Attractiveness

This movie is interesting because it is filled with fascinating minor characters who aren't the Hollywood glamour types. They are actually physically unattractive. Gary's mother has blotchy skin. Laurie has half a tooth. The daughter of the filling station owner is very strange looking. What difference does this make to the movie?

More Ideas:

1. **Grief:** Describe the scene in the turkey farm. Is it necessary to have words to communicate?
2. **Promise:** What promise does Jerry Black (Jack Nicholson) make? How does it affect his life? Is it important that he keep it? Would you do the same?
3. **Keeping your word – at all costs:** Reviewer, Tom Block says that this movie is the story of "what happens when a man's attempt to keep his word turns into a pursuit of his own sanity." Must you always keep your word? Do you keep it at any costs?
4. **Nonverbal---touch:** When Jerry reads to the child, what do you think it means? What other examples of touch did you notice?
5. **Emotions---fear:** How is fear portrayed when Jerry drives to the little girl?
6. **Secret:** Was it wrong for Jerry to keep the secret about the Wizard from Laurie?
7. **Acting:** Bill Diehl states in his ABC radio review that "It's without a doubt one of the best performances of Nicholson's career." Do you agree? Why or why not?

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Movie: 36
Title: Happy Gilmore
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1996

Summary: Happy is a hockey player who joins the pro golfing tour to get enough money to help his grandma with her house. He becomes the bad-boy of golf, upsetting the genteel and formal golfing community.

The Main Idea: Clothing

How important is appearance as nonverbal communication? Are there unwritten rules regarding appearance? Happy breaks the rules. He dresses how he wants to. The pro golfers dress more traditionally. Happy doesn't want to dress that way and he doesn't.

MORE IDEAS:

1. **Hero:** Stephen Holden, New York Times reviewer, calls Happy the "working-class hero." What does this mean? Why do Americans like working-class heroes?
2. **Nonconformity:** Holden calls Happy the "bad boy sensation of the professional circuit." Give examples of how Happy could get this title? What does a bad boy do? Is this nonconformity good? Bad?
3. **Anger:** Give examples of Happy's anger. Why do you think that he has so much anger? Why does he act with violence in a game that isn't known for it? He rages and stomps and throws his club in the air. How does this affect his communication with other people? How does anger affect his ability to focus?
4. **Unwritten rules:** There seems to be unwritten rules for nonverbal behavior. Who decides on these rules? Who decides what is appropriate behavior or inappropriate behavior? Is Happy appropriate? Give examples. Are his fans appropriate? Give examples.
5. **Direct language:** Is Happy's verbal language direct or indirect? He taunts his rivals. Why? What effect does this have on other people?
6. **Nonverbal Communication - Interesting characters:** The writers communicate their themes through some very interesting characters. The homeless caddy is one of them. Describe him. Which other minor characters do you think are the most interesting? What do they communicate nonverbally? Because Happy is a rebel, he seems to attract a "motley crew" of fans? How does this affect the game?

7. **Class warfare:** New York Times reviewer Holden says that this movie illustrates a kind of "class warfare in sports." Explain this comment. Do you agree with it?
8. **Happy place:** What is the purpose of a happy place? Is it a form of self-talk? Describe Happy's happy places?
9. **Grief:** At one point Happy says, "Everyone I get close to dies!" Does Happy grieve these instances? How does this affect his attitude and thus his communication with others.
10. **Hidden Agenda:** Define Hidden Agenda. Shooter shows his hidden agenda after Happy is hit by the driver of the Volkswagon. Describe this scene.
11. **Supportive communication:** Grandma says, "I just want you to be happy." Describe her support for him and how it affects him.

Sources:

"Happy Gilmore." Yahoo! Movies.
<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800253182>>

Holden, Stephen. "Happy Gilmore." New York Times, February 16, 1996.

Theme #7: Listening

I have always felt that the highest form of respect we can give to another human being is to listen – truly listen – to him or her. Genuine listening involves coming out of oneself for awhile to see what another human being is about and what that person wants to say. As the other person sincerely expresses both cognitive ideas and emotions, we listen for all that is said directly and “between the lines.”

The use of only two movies does not express the importance of the topic. It is extremely important. It is one of the four communication types: speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is in all 52 films. But let’s look at two which are specifically about listening.

When our loved one speaks, do we listen? Do we truly hear what he or she is saying and feeling? The problem with Michael, in ***When a Man Loves a Woman***, is that it takes him until the end of the film to learn to listen for Alice’s thoughts and emotions instead of trying to impose his ideas on her. He loves her throughout the film as the title implies but it is when he listens that he saves the relationship.

My favorite movie of 2001 was ***Finding Forrester***. You probably think it’s because Sean Connery is such a handsome old guy but that’s not the reason. The reason is the wonderful story line. Faulty assumptions abound throughout the film and seriously threaten the relationships. Faulty assumptions are a sign of poor listening and jumping to quick conclusions. When the characters stop doing this to one another, they get along better.

37 *When a Man Loves a Woman*
38 *Finding Forrester*

Insulated listening
Faulty assumptions

Movie: 37
Title: When a Man Loves a Woman
Rating: R
Year: 1994

Summary: What appears to be a perfect family is not. Alice's drinking and Michael's controlling threatens to ruin it all. Conflict, confusion, and trouble abound as she finally goes to rehabilitation and he learns what Alanons learn.

The Main Idea: Insulated listening

Michael (Andy Garcia) wants to fix everything, mainly Alice (Meg Ryan). He tries to help her. The problem is that Alice doesn't want him to "fix her." For her recovery to work, she has to fix herself. She tells him this in various ways but he doesn't listen. He disciplines the children. She wants to do this. She is trying to learn to live in reality. She needs some space and he is overly attentive. They go to therapy but he talks for her there too. He takes over everything. He thinks he can do it for her. She tells him not to but he doesn't listen. This makes her irritated and angry. She asks him to go to Alanon. He tries a meeting but doesn't get the concept at all. He felt the people were "losers." She is tolerant of people in recovery. She asks him to also feel that way and he doesn't listen. He continues to try to fix her. Finally she says, "I am not your problem. I am not your problem to solve." She is mad at him for trying to make it better. "You make me feel like a stupid, worthless, weak animal." He leaves saying, "You're clean. You're hopeless. When I touch someone I need to know their skin doesn't crawl." Eventually, Michael goes to Alanon and talks and admits he likes the meetings. He is learning he can't fix it all. He is learning to listen. After her speech when she gets her 6 month chip, Michael tells her that he understands now. He knows that he couldn't help her. She says that maybe helping wasn't his job. He admits, "I tried everything but listening, really listening." Their kiss tells the story. They are back.

MORE IDEAS:

1. **Conflict:** What are the early signs of a problem with alcohol and how do these incidents cause conflict? How does Andy react to the increasing alcohol abuse by his wife?
2. **Control and support:** Michael tries to control her drinking and he tries to support Alice. He also participates in the craziness on occasion. He stays home when she is out drinking. He takes her on vacation to Mexico. He even tells her that fixing her at the end of the day isn't as much fun as it used to be. Describe these honest attempts to solve the drinking problem and keep his family together. Do they work? Why or why not?

3. **Attraction:** In the chapter on relational dynamics, there is the concept of attraction. Define it. Show how Alice and Michael are a perfect example of this. Give examples and details.
4. **Disconfirming Messages:** How does grandma put Alice down?
5. **Deterioration of relationships – Alice's children:** How do the children respond to the drinking and behavior that occurs because of the drinking? How do the relationships deteriorate? What was Alice's bottom? In trying to help, what does Michael do? Is it detrimental to Alice?
6. **Nonverbal communication:** What does Jess know about alcoholism? Why does she know so much? Her description of the alcoholic includes nonverbal behaviors. List some of them.
7. **Self-disclosure:** Describe the scene where Alice confesses to Michael how much she drinks.
8. **Verbal communication – saying dumb things:** What does Michael do to make Alice think he doesn't understand? Why does he say, "I'm just running down my list of dumb things to say right now.")
9. **Lack of common ground:** Describe Michael being in the TV room with the men in the program.
10. **Assertiveness and apology:** Describe Amy's assertiveness the night the house is in chaos. Describe Michael's apology to her.
12. **Self-Concept:** Why does Alice say, "This is not the person that he married."
12. **Communication misconceptions:** More Communication is not always better. How does Michael interfere with her development? The growing nonverbal symptoms of distance: Describe the growing distance between Michael and Alice.
13. **Nonverbal – proximity:** Alice pulls away from him when they are shopping for clothes but in the next scene he returns home from a trip and Gary is there. They are sitting close and after he goes upstairs, Gary hugs Alice as he leaves. Why is Alice closer to Gary than her husband? What happens because of this?
14. **Communication in the lack of an invitation:** What happens to Jess? Why isn't she invited to the party by the girls? How is this reminiscent of her mother's childhood?
15. **Emotions:** How do the words of the song express how they are feeling?

*Everybody cries.
Everybody hurts sometime.
Sometimes everything is wrong.*

16. **Making up:** Alice asks Michael to come to her meeting to get her 6 month chip. She wants him to come home. What is his reply? How can you tell how she feels?
17. **The communication of abandonment:** Michael comes to the playground to say goodbye to Jess. This is the second father to leave her? This is one of the most poignant scenes in the film. Why does he say he is sorry?
18. **Responsibility, forgiveness and listening: (1:58:11 - 2:02:28)** Describe Alice's speech at the AA meeting when she gets her 6 month chip. What does she say about responsibility? Forgiveness?

Sources:

"When a Man Loves a Woman." Yahoo! Movies.

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800212014>>

Movie: 38
Title: Finding Forrester
Rating: PG-13
Year: 2000

Summary: A young boy, Jamal Wallace (Robert Brown) has a relationship with William Forrester (Sean Connery). Forrester is a famous writer now a recluse and Jamal is a young African man filled with talent. The older gentleman mentors the young one and they form a friendship strong enough to bring Forrester out of hiding.

The Main Idea: Faulty Assumptions

Faulty assumptions occur throughout this story. Examples include:

- The beginning shows a pile of classical books including James Joyce. Most audience members probably assume they belong to Forrester or at least their stereotype of a good student or scholar. They belong to Jamal Wallace.
- The public school English teacher assumes that Jamal has read the poem so she calls on him. He has read it but doesn't want to be put on the spot so he pretends he hasn't done the assignment.
- The visitor assumes that someone in the "bad" neighborhood will harm his BMW. The visitor has a conversation with Jamal where he assumes Jamal knows nothing about expensive cars. The visitor says, *"Anyone who knows anything about that company would know..."* Jamal retorts with a list of facts about BMW including their original airplane engine that went 6 miles up into the air and the meaning of the symbol. The visitor says, *"Thanks for the history lesson."* Jamal retorts, *"No problem, man."*
- Forrester reads the 5,000-word essay and says, *"And you're black. Remarkable."* Jamal essentially accuses him of being a racist. Forrester doesn't want to deal with the racist argument. They do argue and Jamal leaves, calling him an asshole.
- Forrester and Jamal are watching television. Because of Forrester's answer to one of the questions, Jamal says, *"Poor assumptions for 800, Alex."*
- Crawford assumes Jamal can't write because *"He's a basketball player from the Bronx."*
- Crawford assumes that Jamal didn't do his own writing *"given your previous education and your background..."* Jamal tells William that they wouldn't do this to the two comma kids. (the millionaires). Answering why people make assumptions, William says *"people fear what they don't understand. When we don't understand, we turn to our assumptions. And that is that you're black so you can't write."* Jamal responds saying, *"like I assume he's an asshole."*
- Before the state championship game, Dr. Spence offers Jamal a deal. If he will win the game they will drop the cheating charges and give him an easier schedule next year. Dr. Spence assumes Jamal isn't smart and cheated because he couldn't do the work.
- **The big assumption: People assuming things about Forrester and his first book.** To begin with, people assume they know what Forrester was

trying to say in his book. Forrester tells Jamal that the last thing he needs is for "another person telling me what it means. I know what it means." At one point Forrester said, *People have been talking about it for years. They just never say anything.* Later in the film, Forrester says, *"These assholes take something they couldn't do in a lifetime and tear it down in a day. When they tried to decide what I was trying to say, I decided one book was enough."* Jamal points out that was fifty years ago.

More Ideas:

1. **Truth:** What is the symbolism of the rap song during the credits that sings about running from the truth? Who is running from the truth?
2. **Symbolism:** What is the symbolism of the window.
3. **Trust:** Give examples of trust throughout the film.
4. **Nonverbal:** What do we find out about Forrester when Jamal enters his apartment without permission?
5. **Mentoring:** How does the writing mentor relationship begin?
6. **Boundaries:** How does Forrester create intimacy and distance with boundaries?
7. **Belonging:** Give examples of belonging in the film.
8. **Appropriate vocabulary:** Give examples about appropriateness in language.
9. **Sarcasm:** Why is Robert Crawford so mean to his students? Give examples of how Robert Crawford uses sarcasm to intimidate the students. How does Jamal respond?
10. **Nonverbal:** Why did Forrester yell at Jamal saying, "Punch the keys for God's sake!"
11. **Nonverbal:** How does Clair's dad show Jamal that Clair isn't for him?
12. **Gender communication:** How does Forrester advise Jamal about women?
13. **Emotions—fear:** What happens when Jamal takes Forrester to the stadium?
14. **Self-divulsion:** What happens at Yankee Stadium?
15. **The apology:** Jamal asks William's advice on apologizing.

16. **Out of isolation:** Describe the writing contest and what happens when William overcomes his fear and shows up to help the young man that he has mentored.

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Theme #8: Relational Dynamics

Relationships are difficult. The divorce rate proves this as does the number of people fired from jobs. After working so hard to create and maintain relationships, people terminate them because of problems.

The films in this section are from a wide range of topics, time periods and cultures. People from all time periods and cultures have difficulty with relationships. Intimacy is the main idea of the now classic ***The Breakfast Club***. How quickly should strangers self-disclose? Does instant intimacy last? And speaking of self-disclosure, ***Parenthood*** shows us what happens when family members self-disclose.

Trust is a major component of an excellent relationship. In ***The Hurricane***, the main character is afraid to trust. His experiences have not been good and he has every reason not to trust. As he learns to trust, his relationships become deep and meaningful. And, what if we violate trust by lying? What if we tell the truth even if people don't want to hear it. ***Liar, Liar*** explores these themes in a humorous way and although we laugh, we learn something more about relational dynamics. The ethics of evasion are further explored in ***Cider House Rules***. This film seems to say in a serious way what ***Liar, Liar*** said and that is that sometimes we have to lie.

Opposite ideas are explored in two more movies. In ***Cool Runnings***, we see strangers becoming a group and in ***American Beauty***, we see family members becoming strangers.

Finally two special kinds of relationships are viewed. The problems of interracial relationships are seen in ***Jungle Fever*** and the beauty of childhood friends is seen in ***Stand By Me***.

39 ***The Breakfast Club***
 40 ***The Hurricane***
 41 ***American Beauty***
 42 ***Parenthood***
 43 ***Liar, Liar (1997)***
 44 ***Cider House Rules***
 45 ***Cool Runnings***
 46 ***Jungle Fever***
 47 ***Stand By Me (1986)***

Intimacy
 Afraid to trust
 Deterioration of a relationship
 Self-disclosure
 Lying: What if we stopped lying?
 Ethics of evasion
 Group cohesiveness
 Interracial relationships
 Childhood freindship includes support

Movie: 39
Title: The Breakfast Club
Rating: R
Year: 1985

Summary: A diverse group of five high school students are forced to spend an entire Saturday in detention together. The film explores the "class" structure and peer pressure that is placed on teenagers.

Main Idea: Intimacy

There is no group and no intimacy at the beginning of the movie. Five students, who do not know each other, serve detention. Because they are so dissimilar, there is stress and they pick on each other. Each one, coming from a different peer group, acts out their stereotype for awhile. After the pot smoking scene, they start to bond, becoming open and honest. For instance, Andrew and Allison have a beautiful scene where they share intimacies. They end up sitting in a circle, sharing their intimate secrets. Clair and Allison talk about respect and sleeping around. Andrew admits he tortured a guy for his dad because his father abhors weakness. In a long speech he quietly tells the awful story and ends up upset because he hates his father. They admit their faults. Then they discuss what they can do. They promise not to laugh at each other but Bender laughs at Clair. They are friends now and Brian asks if they will remain friends on Monday. They all admit why they had to serve detention except Allison who came because she didn't have anything better to do. After she cons Brian into writing the paper, Clair does a makeover on Allison who looks beautiful and that leads to romance between Andrew and Allison. Clair comes on to Bender and they get romantic. At the end she gives him her diamond earrings.

The song at the end sings about telling me your troubles and ends with "Don't you forget about me." The essay ends telling the teacher that they found that they were all part of each other. Each one is a brain, athlete, princess, basket case and criminal.

More Ideas

1. **Stereotypes:** The narrator objects to writing the essay about who they think they are. He says to the teacher, "You see us as you want to see us." Explain why the five students were tagged with the following stereotypes:
 Brian Johnson (Anthony Michael Hall) – the brain
 Andrew Clark (Emilio Estevez) – the athlete
 Allison Reynolds (Ally Sheedy) – the basket case
 Clair Standish ((Molly Ringwald) – the princess
 John Bender (Judd Nelson) – the criminal
2. **Language:** How does language separate the five of them?

3. **Truth:** Most of the students accuse each other of not telling the truth including Allison who says that Andrew is not telling the truth. Do you see it that way?
4. **Feelings:** Describe the feelings of the five students as the day progresses.
5. **Disconfirming Messages:** What disconfirming messages did Bender receive? What disconfirming messages does Carl, the janitor, give to Richard, the teacher?

Sources:

"The Breakfast Club." Yahoo! Movies.

<<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=info&id=1800040967>>

Movie: 40
Title: The Hurricane
Rating: R
Year: 1999

Summary: This is the true story of the boxer Ruben "The Hurricane" Carter. He was convicted of a murder he didn't commit after being harassed by a certain policeman since he was a child. He appeals many times to no avail. A young boy reads his book after getting it at a used book store. He writes to Hurricane and they meet. The people who are taking care of the boy become interested also and eventually justice wins.

Main Idea: Afraid to Trust

Rubin defines freedom as not needing anything the prison can control. He decides not to want anything they have. He also tries to get his wife May to divorce him because he "can't do the time if he knows that they can take her beautiful face away from him anytime they want." His method of survival is to be isolated and independent of anyone and anything. He turns to yoga. He bends time, sleeping when they are awake and staying awake when they are asleep. The key to his survival is to do the time and he can't do that if he hopes or is dependent on another person. His number is 45472 and he is a prisoner. This plan might have worked completely except for a young boy named Lesra. His relationship with Les is the example of his being afraid to trust. Lesra writes to him and Rubin writes back, telling Les that he needed the nice feelings. (1:16:00 – 1:21) Lesra visits him. Ruben compliments him on his courage. Rube tells him that he has transcended the places that hold him down. He has learned to read and write. "Writing is a weapon and more powerful than a fist could ever be." After asking him if he thinks he killed the people and Lesra answering no, Rube says, "I'm so glad I met you, Lesra." Although Rubin is afraid, their friendship continues to grow. When Lesra brings Sam, Terry and Lisa, there is a problem in that Rubin goes back into his shell a bit. However, they write to him and he warms up to them. Eventually, he asks them to stop having contact with him because it makes it too hard. When he tells them, "I can't do the time," they move to a building near the prison to be near him and help him. Ultimately he can trust and touch and have relationships.

More Ideas

1. **Storytelling:** What does it take to make a good story? As Bob Aulert states in his review of this film, "When accepting last year's Irving Thalberg Award at the Oscars, Director Norman Jewison advised: 'Just find some good stories to move people to laughter and tears. Never mind the gross, the Top 10, the demographics. Just make films about people, that reveal truths about ourselves.'" Did Jewison do that with his movie "The Hurricane?"

2. **Touch:** Why does Ruben Hurricane Carter take a stand on not being touched?
3. **Fate and choice:** What is the significance of the quote, "You know, Les, Sometimes we don't pick the books we read. They pick us."
4. **Foreshadowing:** How did Ruben's first run in with the law foreshadow later life?
5. **Prejudice:** Describe the prejudice in the movie.
6. **(53:46 – 59:40) Self-Talk:** When he is in the hole, he develops two personalities. Why? How do they help him?
7. **(59:50 – 1:01:40) Negotiation:** Jimmy and Ruben negotiate what he will wear. How does negotiation work?
8. **(1:22:13 – 1:24:17) White folks – Stereotype:** Ruben and the African man discuss white folks. What do they say about stereotypes and exceptions?
9. **(1:24:20 – 1:27:46) The failure of empathy.** Lesra brings the Canadians, Sam, Terry and Lisa to visit Ruben. The Canadians try to show empathy. Why doesn't Ruben accept it?
10. **Aggression:** What does Della Pesca, the detective, say to the Canadians?
11. **(2:01:28 – 2:03:50) Time and Transcendence.** What does Ruben say about time and transcendence?
12. **Assumptions:** Why isn't the state ready in the "new" trial?
13. **(2:11 – 2:12:59) Power of Public speaking** What does Ruben say in his speech before the court?

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Movie: 41
Title: American Beauty
Rated: R
Year: 1999

Summary: The Brunhams are a typical American family. The mother runs the house and is a real estate agent. The father works in advertising and does pretty much what the women in his family want. The daughter is a sultry teenager embarrassed by her parents. But, once we look a little deeper we see lots of problems and that is what the film is all about. Lester has a breakdown, quits his job, buys the car of his dreams, smokes pot and ends up dead.

Main Idea: Deterioration of relationship

Lester and Carolyn Burnham don't have much of a relationship any more. Signs are that they tell each other what to do instead of asking nicely. At the beginning of the film, Lester says that he is already dead. He hates his job. His relationship is over. The dinner table is silent and hostile. Elevator music is being played. When he masterbates in bed, Carolyn attacks him and they fight. Carolyn says it isn't a marriage. Lester says that he has never hit her; in fact, he doesn't even touch her. Sex is obviously not in their lives anymore. When Carolyn returns one day, he asks her, "Carolyn, when did you become so joyless?" He asks whatever happened to the girl of long ago. He tries to make love to her and she breaks the spell by saying, "Lester, you're going to spill beer on the couch." Lester is at Mr. Smiley's when Buddy and Carolyn drive through. Jeanine says to Carolyn, "You are so busted." She tells Lester to stop it. He responds, "You don't get to tell me what to do -ever again." When Frank asks Lester where his wife is, Lester responds that she is probably out fucking the king of real estate and he doesn't care. Lester continues, saying, "Our marriage is just for show to show how normal we are when we're anything but." Frank comes on to him and Lester says, "I'm sorry; you have the wrong idea." Saying mantras such as "I don't have to be a victim anymore," Carolyn returns home to find him dead. She hysterically drops to the floor grabbing at his shirts. Their love which had been good, is gone and so is he.

More Ideas

1. **Stereotypes:** Are the characters stereotypes or are they more real than that? Include Jim and Jim, Lester Burnham, Carolyn Burnham, Janie Burnham, Buddy King, Frank Fitz, Barbara Fitz, Ricky Fitz, and Angela.
2. **Lester the icon:** The flick philosopher reviewer states that, "I think Lester Burnham is destined to become an iconic American character, one with a life well beyond the film that spawned him." She goes on to say he will join Forrest Gump and Norman Bates. Greg Schmitz agrees saying Lester will become an American symbol. Do you agree? What is an icon? Why would Lester become one?

3. **Passive, aggressive and assertive communication:** How are these styles portrayed in the film? This film is about Lester's change from passive to aggressive. Describe the change giving examples. Be sure to include Lester's job description that he writes. Also discuss these communication styles when portrayed by Carolyn, Ricky, and Frank.
4. **Family Communication:** How is the family getting along and how is their communication? Include the first dinner which is one of our first introductions to this family. Include the second dinner where Lester tells them about quitting his job. What is Frank Sinatra singing in the background? Why is this important?
5. **Personal space:** How is it violated? Include examples about ricky, Jane. How does Rilcky violate Jane's space? How do her parents violate her space? How does Frank violate Ricky's space?
6. **Presenting self – facework:** Describe Carolyn's facework at the party. What does she ask Lester to do to help her presenting self? Why does Lester embarrass her? How is Buddy involved? What does he believe about facework? What are Carolyn's affirmations? Why does she have them?
7. **Fantasy:** What is Lester's fantasy and why does it occur.
8. **Confirming messages:** Why does Carolyn give such confirming messages to Buddy Kane?
9. **Self-Concept and appearance:** How do the characters feel about their appearance and how does this show their self confidence? Include in your answer remarks about Angela, Carolyn and Ricky.
10. **Complementary relationship:** Describe Ricky's parents and their relationship. Why is the mother submissive? How do we know she is depressed? Why is Frank, the father, so domineering? What are specific instances of his anger and domination?
11. **Choosing not to hear:** How does Jane show Angela she doesn't want to listen to her?
12. **Lying and denial:** Discuss lying and denial as shown in the movie.
13. **Language - the metaphor:** Describe the use of analogy throughout the film. Include analogies to the king and analogies about time.
14. **Overcoming fear:** How does Ricky do it?

15. **Generation gap:** In comparing this film to *The Graduate*, John Hartl states that this film "actually demonstrates more compassion for the older generation than Nichols did." Do you agree? Why? Why not?

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Movie: 42
Title: Parenthood
Rated: PG-13
Year: 1989

Summary: The patriarch tells us parenthood is never, never over. His four children raise their children with different styles of parenting and the result is an interesting and fun comedy with serious undertones.

Main Idea: Self-disclosure

Sometimes, instead of self-disclosing, the characters mask their communication. For instance, Helen (Dianne Wiest) uses sarcasm when she talks to her daughter, Julie (Martha Plimpton). Others use other forms of aggression. But self-disclosure takes place for all of them before the film is over. Examples include when the patriarch Frank (Jason Robards) and his son Larry (Tom Hulse) discuss male topic of conversation including cars and getting laid. But, they also self-disclose and bond. Todd (Keanu Reeves) self-discloses to his new mother-in-law, Helen. They promise to "talk straight" in the future. Considering what has happened earlier in the film, this is very touching. Frank and Gil (Steve Martin) self-disclose in one of the most important scenes in the film. Frank says that parenting is never over and admits it is hard to be tough on his loser son. Gil listens to his father and talks of being a poor dad. Gil and his wife Karen (Mary Steenburgen) self-disclose throughout the movie. Nathan (Rick Moranis) self-discloses to Susan (Harley Kozak) how he truly feels about her. He loves her. He sings to her.

More Ideas:

1. **Decision Point:** Describe the first scene. What happened to Gil Buckman? What decision did he make because of that?
2. **Self-concept:** How do you think Patty's self-concept will be effected by the kind of communication from her father, Nathan? (14:10 – 14:48)
3. **Self-concept:** Kevin has some problems. Describe the scene with the parents and the principal and the school psychologist. (23:42-27:19)
4. **Sarcasm:** How does Helen's sarcasm hurt her daughter, Julie and cause Julie to become hostile? What happens when they fight? What other communication problems do you see? (28:03 - 30:50)
5. **Male communication – bonding and topics of conversation:** Describe the male bonding in the scene between the patriarch Frank and Larry. What topics of conversation do they engage in? (30:50 - 32:36)

6. **Parent communication – comfort of a mother:** Describe the supportive comfort that the Helen gives her daughter Julie when the police bring her home. (39:26 - 42:52)
7. **Disconfirming statements:** Define this concept and show how it occurs in the scene that begins at 42:50. (42:50 - 48:20)
8. **Trust:** Why is trust the foundation of any relationship? How does Nathan show that he doesn't trust Susan? But, does Susan have a good reason to do something behind his back? (48:22 - 49:22)
9. **Emotions:** Gary (Leaf Phoenix) calls his dad. Why is he is sad at what happens? (49:23 - 52:53)
10. **Self-concept:** Compare and contrast Justin and Patty at the birthday party. What does Gil do so his son won't be disappointed? (52:54 - 1:04:08)
11. **Emotions–anger:** How does Gary express his anger? (1:05:33 - 1:06:12)
12. **Trust – Feelings – self disclosure:** If trust is the basis of relationships, is it ever alright to violate trust? How does Helen show understanding for Gary's feelings? Show how Todd Self discloses to his new mother-in-law. (1:06:12 - 1:12:52)
13. **Confrontation:** What finally brings about the confrontation of the patriarch Frank to his loser son, Gary? (1:17:59 - 1:21:12)
14. **Non-verbal Announcement:** How does Susan announce that she is leaving Nathan? Why does she use this method? (1:21:15 - 1:22:26)
15. **Aggressive communication drives men away:** Gary accuses the women in the family of making the men leave. Is this legitimate? What in their communication makes the men leave? (1:22:27 - 1:25:36)
16. **Self-disclosure:** Father and son both engage in self-disclosing. Frank asks his son for advice. At one point, Frank says, "It never, never ends. I'm 64 and Larry is 27 and he's still my son. Do you think I want him to get hurt?" Discuss Gil's nonverbal reactions at the end of the scene. (1:31:35 - 1:38:29)
17. **Negotiations:** What happens at the dining room table between Frank and Larry? (Begins at 1: 38:40)
18. **Talking:** What does Nathan do to get Susan back? (1:41:36 -1:444:30)
19. **Support:** How do the women support Todd? (1:44:33 -1:48:56)

20. **Grandma's true value:** What does Grandma's analogy to life being like a roller coaster mean? Why do they appreciate her more? (1:48:58 - 1:53:16)
21. **Family portrait:** Describe the scene at the hospital when the baby arrives. (1:56:50 -2:00:40)
22. **Feelgood:** The BBC review refers to this as a feelgood movie. How could that be when there are so many problems? Is it possible to feel good despite problems? What has to be in place for this to happen?

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Movie: 43
Title: Liar, Liar
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1997

Summary: Fletcher is a very successful lawyer. He has sex with women when he's in the mood. He sees his son when he's in the mood but ends up neglecting him most of the time. He promises his son that he won't lie for a day and this brings him to some great truths.

Main Idea: What if we stopped Lying?

This is the premise of this movie. How much do we lie every day? How ingrained is it in our daily communication? And, finally, what would happen if we stopped doing it. Fletcher (Jim Carey) is a successful Los Angeles lawyer. Michael Medved stated in the New York Post, Jim Carey "plays a slick L.A. trial lawyer whose successful career depends on utter disregard for the truth." Kenneth Turan agreed in his L.A. Times review, "Fletcher never met a falsehood he wouldn't embrace." After lying to his son, Max, about why he has to miss his birthday party, Fletcher promises his son, Max, that he won't lie for a day. He is, according to Jeff Giles of Newsweek, "telling the truth against his will." This causes more trouble than he thought it would and of course, is the basis for all of the humor. We can identify with Fletcher and we know we would get "in a lot of trouble" if we stopped lying.

Fletcher hurts himself. He embarrasses himself when he admits to the people in the elevator that he is the one that farted. He gets himself in trouble when he tells the cop every bad thing he has done including the many unpaid parking tickets. But, telling the truth moves him toward self-awareness. At one point, he admits, "I'm a bad father" and as he says it, he realizes it is true and makes a commitment to be a better father.

He hurts other people's feelings. At one point, he tells his sexual partner that he's had better sex. Many of the audience members have thought this thought but would never admit it. They are protecting the other person.

Family relationships are effected. He ruins a minor fantasy by telling the truth when Max asks him "Is wrestling real?" He tells his mother the truth about why he doesn't want to talk to her. It's because she tells the truth; she tells him about his father's bowel movements. So we find that the lying concept is even more complicated than we thought.

Telling the truth gets him into trouble at work. He acts inappropriately when he refers to the new employee's boobs. We are reminded how much of civilized, appropriate behavior at work is really a form of lying. His work problems escalate when he goes to trial for Mrs. Cole and tells the truth. He takes the oath "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help me

God?" We ask, can a lawyer do his job if he tells the truth all the time? Could any of us? When he admits to his secretary the truth about a denied raise, she quits. And finally, he insults the members of the board, saying what he really thinks about them. They find it hilarious. Mr. Allen says he loves a good roast and that the company needs a little irreverence.

Somehow he does all this and is likeable while doing it. As Jack Mathews of Newsday states, "Fletcher Reede is a cartoon character with a real heart."

MORE IDEAS

1. **Truth and lies:** Define truth. Define lying. What does the textbook tell you about lying as a form of communication?
2. **Language – play on words:** Max tells his school classmates that his father is a liar when he means lawyer. What is the significance of this? Why is this funny?
3. **Nonverbal communication:** The first thing that Fletcher does with his son is "the claw." What is the symbolism of the claw throughout the movie? Max' mother, Audrey (Maura Tierney) says, "It's their own special world."
4. **"Normal" Lying:** When Fletcher stops by the office, he lies to everyone. He gets his secretary to lie too.
5. **The communication of breaking promises:** Fletcher breaks promises to his son all the time. Why does Fletcher miss Max' birthday party? Is breaking promises a form of lying? Why? Why not?
6. **The mind body connection:** What happens to Fletcher physically when he tries to lie?
7. **Reason for lying:** Fletcher tries to explain to Max why people have to lie. He explains why he called Max's mother beautiful when she was pregnant and then he says, "No one can survive in the adult world if they have to stick to the truth." Is this true? Do you lie?
8. **Moment of realization:** When is his moment of realization? What does he realize about fatherhood?
9. **The truth at last:** What truth is evident when Fletcher is laying on the stretcher?

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Movie: 44
Title: Cider House Rules
Rating: PG-13
Year: 1999

Summary: The story takes place in a home for orphans. Abortions also take place there. Dr. Larch does the abortions. He also takes care of the orphans with the help of wonderful nurses and Homer, an orphan that he is especially fond of. He is preparing Homer to take his place. But, Homer goes out into the world when a young couple comes for an abortion. He picks apples and learns a lot of things. He returns to the orphanage to the delight of the younger children. And Dr. Larch dies and Homer takes over.

Main Idea: The Ethics of Evasion

The movie is a beautiful journey into the world of ethics. Is it ethical to evade the truth? It happens on many levels but the most important one concerns Homer and what he should do with his life. Dr. Wilbur Larch (Michael Caine) is planning on lying about Homer's experience and credentials. He is going to pretend that Homer is a real doctor. The board indicates that they want some new blood. They probably want a doctor that won't perform abortions. Dr. Larch lies about knowing Homer. Since he knows that the board is unhappy with him, he tells them that he doesn't think Homer Wells is a good candidate. He tells the young nurse that if he appears to want it the board won't want it and vice versa. That is why he lied about wanting "Dr. Homer Wells."

Evasion also occurs when Fuzzy, the fetal alcohol syndrome child, dies. Dr. Larch tells Homer to tell the other boys that Fuzzy was adopted. The boy asks Dr. Larch if the children will believe the story and Dr. Larch says that they will because they will want to. Dr. Larch listens to the boy tell the children the lie and it makes him cry.

Mr. Rose wants a lie after Rose hurts him. He wants Homer and the other pickers to say that he killed "his own self." They agree to this lie because he wants it.

More Ideas:

1. **Narrator:** Discuss the use of the narrator and point of view in a film story.
2. **Homer's crying:** Discuss why Homer didn't cry when he was adopted the first time and did cry when he was adopted the second time. Why did Dr. Larch keep him as a permanent orphan and train him?
3. **The rules:** Discuss the rules in the movie. Include Dr. Larch's rules for the orphans. Discuss why Dr. Larch breaks the rule against abortions. Why does he think abortions are necessary? Discuss the Cider House rules.

4. **Secrecy:** A young woman with a botched abortion comes to St. Cloud. What does Dr. Larch mean when he says, "She died of secrecy. She died of ignorance."
5. **Responsible Parenthood and abortion:** How do these two concepts go together? What does Dr. Larch say about them? When one of the orphans asks Homer if he wants to find his parents, what does Homer say about what it means to be a parent?
6. **Enabling substance abuse:** How does the staff enable Dr. Larch's ether abuse? Why do they do it? What is it they understand about Dr. Larch? How does Homer protect his secret? What ultimately happens because of this problem?
7. **Self-concept:** How do Dr. Larch and Homer help the children with their self concept? Why does Dr. Larch end each day by saying, "Good night you princes of Maine, you kings of New England."
8. **Emotions:** How does everyone react to Homer's leaving?
9. **Growing up:** Why does Homer leave and why does he return?
10. **Difference:** Homer is different than the apple pickers. How do they greet him? Include Mr. Rose, Rose, and the African-American pickers.
11. **Rules:** Discuss the Cider House Rules. What are they? Who wrote them? Do the pickers abide by them? Why? Why not?
12. **Confrontation:** Why does Mr. Rose confront Jack? What happens because of the confrontation? Why doesn't Jack follow the rules?
13. **Confrontation and confiding:** What happens when Rose gets pregnant? Who is involved in confrontation? Who is involved in confiding?
14. **Decision making:** How do Wally's troubles lead to decision making? Why does the girl stay with Wally?

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Movie: 45
Title: Cool Runnings
Rating: PG
Year: 1993

Summary: One of the stars of the story wanted to be in the Olympics. This didn't happen so they decided to have a bobsled team from Jamaica. They finally talk a former coach into helping them. He had left the Olympics in disgrace.

Main Idea: Group Cohesiveness

In this film, the four members of the team and the coach go from being individuals and even enemies to a cohesive group or team. Junior, the handsome Olympic hopeful, tripped two of the others in his bid to gain a spot on the Olympic team. It would seem that their chances of becoming friends are not very good since they start out with disappointment and anger towards each other.

They have a new goal, however, the Jamaica bobsled team. And they all work for the goal. One thing they have to do is get some money. Sanka sings. Yul Brynner arm wrestles. Derise kisses the women. And Junior sells his car.

They begin to support each other in other ways. Junior, for instance, supports Yul in his dreams. In return, Yul supports Junior when he receives a telegram from his father to return home. The East Germans make fun of them, telling them that they "don't belong." Yul encourages Junior to be strong. He tells junior to say, "*I see pride. I see power. I see a bad ass mother who won't take no crap off of nobody.*" Junior goes out and confronts the East Germans. A huge brawl breaks out in the bar but the two young men are together.

As they train together, they become like one. Sanka gets them up by saying, "***Rise and shine. It's butt whipping time.***" They move toward group cohesiveness through their training, hard work, uniforms, and adopting their own, unique style. The last day, they talk about respect and we see that they are totally cohesiveness. As they carry their sled over the finish line, they do so as a team.

More Ideas

1. **Overachieving-underdog:** Reviewer, James Berardinelli says that the directors tried to force this movie into the overachieving-underdog mold. Do you agree? Is there anything wrong with that?
2. **Nonverbal-color:** Describe the colorful first scenes of the film and what they tell you about Jamaica.

3. **Dreams:** Dreams are dashed early in the film. What happened? Do they mope or let it go?
4. **Friendship.** What does Sanka tell Derise to say to him. Does it work?
5. **Persistence:** This film is about persistence. Give examples.
6. **Perspective:** Sanka and Irv talk about where they are coming from.
7. **Assertiveness:** Outline Junior and his father's relationship especially Junior standing up to him.
8. **Disconfirming messages:** How does everyone react when they hear about the bobsled team?
9. **Cheating:** What happens to Irv at the Olympics? Were the Americans right to be angry at Irv because of his cheating at the previous Olympics? Do you think it is acceptable to cheat? Are there any circumstances where it is acceptable?
10. **Nonverbal-Clothing:** Compare and contrast the Jamaicans with the Canadians in general and then with the other bobsled teams.
11. **The Communication of Challenge:** Why does Irv interrupt the board meeting. What does Irv admit in his speech? What does he say about his mistakes? Tell about his self-disclosure?
12. **Pride.** What are the people at home doing? Contrast this with the television announcers. After the first day, what do they do to make things better?
13. **Self-disclosure:** What does Derise ask coach Irv?
14. **Pride-crossing the finish line:** Describe the team as they cross the finish line. How did it make you feel?

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Movie: 46
Title: Jungle Fever
Rating: R
Year: 1991

Summary: A successful black architect whose parents are religious fanatics and brother a crack addict has an affair with his Italian-American secretary, which has far-reaching racial and social repercussions.

Main Idea: Interracial relationships

Flipper and Angie have an affair. The problems of the relationship are widespread. And the problems isolate them. At one point, Flipper refers to them as two outcasts and they pretty much are. Angie faces many difficulties. Her friends are not supportive. One girlfriend says that she's too good for a black man. Angie's father beats her up when he finds out. Flipper, the black architect, has difficulties also. His wife thinks he is doing this just because the girl is white. Gator, Flipper's brother, can't believe that Flipper has a white woman and she doesn't even have money. Flipper's father accuses Angela of only wanting a big black penis. White cops almost abuse Flipper because they think he is hurting Angela. He tells Angela to not tell the cops that they are lovers. The cops will not accept their interracial relationship. Angela asks Flipper about babies and he says no; he will have no mixed children. She reminds him that his daughter has white blood. He reminds her that her family is racist. Of course, his is too. Flipper breaks it off saying they were both curious about the other race but that they don't love each other.

Her old boyfriend, Paulie, faces trouble also. His friends think he should beat her as her father did. Later, Paulie becomes interested in the black woman who is trying to get him to go to college. When Paulie finally goes out with her, his father disowns him, saying, "You are not my son."

More Ideas

1. **Stereotypes:** Spike Lee believes that too often when people go to bed with someone from another race it is because of media-based stereotypes of sexual allure. Does that seem to be the case with these characters? Why? Why not?
2. **Romeo and Juliet - Barriers:** The Edinburgh University Film Society it states that ever since *Romeo and Juliet* people have been fascinated by love that crosses over cultural barriers. If you have read or seen *Romeo and Juliet*, compare the two stories.
3. **Hearing:** Hearing things you don't want to hear: How does the lovemaking in the movie portray this concept?

4. **Truth, lying, cheating & denial:** How does the little girl test her parents for truth? How does Gator, Flipper's brother, test his mother's truth? Does Flipper ever tell their mother the truth about Gator? When Flipper looks for Gator, how does truth and reality become dramatically portrayed in the scene? How does Gator finally tell his mother the truth? What does the father do? Why? How does truth become a difficult concept for Cyrus and his wife, Vera? How does truth change for Angie and Paulie?
5. **Discrimination:** Discrimination is, of course, important in the film. Discuss how it is brought out, giving examples.
6. **Apology:** Do families apologize to each other? What happens regarding Angie's cooking?
7. **Assertiveness & aggressiveness:** Give examples from the film. Include Angie's brothers in reference to Paulie, Flipper and his resignation, Drew's reaction to finding out about the affair, and Paulie finally standing up to his father.
8. **Roles:** What does Flipper tell Angela about cooking for her father and brothers? What does this have to do with expectations, roles, and individuality?
9. **Preoccupation with color:** What does Flipper say about it when they are having dinner?
10. **Confiding to friends:** Describe the reactions when Flipper and Angie tell their best friends about their relationship.
11. **Confrontation:** Describe the conversation at the dinner table between Flipper and his parents.
12. **Girlfriends talk about black men.** Describe the scene.
13. **Gender and emotion;** Describe Paulie and his grandfather and the concepts of emotion and how the different genders express it.
14. **Abuse:** What happens when Angie's father finds out she has had sex with a black man?
15. **Family conversation:** Describe the dinner when Flipper takes Angie home.
16. **Police discrimination, prejudice and abuse.** Describe the scene when Flipper and Angie are goofing around, pretending to fight.

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Movie: 47
Title: Stand By Me
Rating: R
Year: 1986

Summary: Based on a novella entitled, *The Body* by Stephen King, four boys have an adventure during the summer before high school. They go on a two-day trek to find a dead body. They discover a lot about life and friendship.

Main Idea: Childhood Friendship includes support

The song for which the movie is named gives us insight into what the movie is about.

*Stand by me; Stand by me
 Oh, stand, stand by me; Stand by me
 If the sky that we look upon
 Should tumble and fall
 Or the mountain should crumble to the sea
 I won't cry; I won't cry
 No, I won't shed a tear
 Just as long as you stand by me*

Sometimes adults think that children are like dolls; they don't have feelings. But, in this beautifully crafted movie, we see carefully developed characters who are children and have unique personalities, wide experiences and depth of feelings. They are also great friends. They share feelings, cry, talk, and support each other tremendously. As in the words of the song, they stand by each other.

Some of the boys suffer because of their families. Teddy Du champ cries because he is called a loony because of his mentally ill father. Chris cries because he has received such abuse from the town because of his family. When these things happen, the other boys are supportive.

When they return home, the town seems smaller. They say good-bye and say they'll see each other in junior high. As time went on they saw less and less of Teddy and Vern. The narrator was philosophical about this. He said that friendships are sometimes like that. Chris fears he will never get out of the town. Gordie says he can do anything he wants but Chris doesn't believe him. Chris enrolled in the college courses and eventually became a lawyer. He was in a fast food restaurant and two men with knives got into a fight. The narrator says "Chris, who always made the best peace, tried to break it up."

And the writer concludes the film by saying, "I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve."

More Ideas

1. **Rituals:** What young boy rituals are exhibited in the very first scene by Gordie La Chance (Will Wheaton), Teddy Duchamp (Corey Feldman), Chris Chambers (River Phoenix), and Vern Tessio (Jerry O'Connell)?
2. **Conversation patterns:** What are the conversation patterns of young boys?
3. **Emotions:** Do the boys share emotions, keep them in or what?
4. **Sibling Rivalry:** Discuss the sibling rivalry between Gordie and his brother. How do others encourage it? How does Gordie react?
5. **Exaggeration:** How did the boys learn about myth and reality or exaggeration?
6. **Disconfirming Messages:** Give examples from the film. Why were they given?
7. **Aggression:** What happens when the older boys and the younger boys meet at the dead body?

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Theme #9 Climate

Relationships are often referred to as hot or stormy. A person is called cold. Interpersonal relationships have climates.. Climate refers to the social tone of the relationship. The climates change. A new person or a new attitude can change the relationship from cold to hot or from tepid to exciting. We see this in ***Dead Poet's Society***. What has now become a classic, ***Dead Poet's Society*** shows just what one person can do to change the climate. Mr. Keating returns to his old school and inspires the young men to seize the day. In doing so, they get excited about learning, poetry and life.

48 *Dead Poets Society*

Climate & positive relationships

Movie: 48
Title: Dead Poet's Society
Rating: PG
Year: 1989

Summary: This story takes place in a boys school. The boys are from privileged homes and have been taught to quietly obey the rules. Mr. Keating returns to his school, Welton, and changes things. But tragedy occurs and we wonder if the boys will return to their old ways.

Main Idea: Climate and positive relationships

Mr. Keating changes the communication climate at Welton. Before he arrives, it is stuffy and stern. The boys do everything by rote. They are robot like students. Mr. Keating encourages them to seize the day. He introduces the concept of carpe diem.

More Ideas

1. **Self-concept: How did Mr. Keating's actions affect the self-concept of the students?** Many viewers say that Todd's self-concept changed the most during the story. Do you agree? Give examples.
2. **Values: Describe the difference in values between the school, the parents, and the boys.** How do the early scenes with the pillars foreshadow the main theme of the film?
3. **Language - The value of words:** What does Mr. Keating mean when he says, "No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world"? What else does he say about the importance of words, language and poetry?
4. **Oral language – The value of oral communication:** What does Mr. Keating say is the value of the spoken word? How does he use oral language himself?
5. **Dead Poet's Society:** What is the purpose of the Dead Poet's Society? Is it the same for the boys as it was in Keating's time?
6. **Perception:** Define perception and show how Mr. Keating helps the boys see things differently.
7. **Caring and support:** Discuss caring and how it is communicated in the film. Include how Mr. Keating communicates to the boys that he cares about them and how the boys communicate to him that they care about him.

8. **Conformity and nonconformity:** Define conformity and nonconformity. Give examples of each.
9. **Family communication:** Describe the familial communication between Neil and his father. Give examples of their ability or inability to listen and to talk. Comment on the mother's lack of support for Neil.
10. **Discuss Intimacy and Distance.** Show examples from the film.
11. **Assertiveness, Passiveness, and Aggressiveness:** Define these conflict styles. Give examples from the film.
12. **Power Distance:** Define the concept and show how it occurs in the film. Include the school administration as well as Neil's father.
13. **Truth and lies:** Why does Neil lie to Mr. Keating about working it out with his father? Why does Cameron tell the truth?
14. **Non-verbal communication:** Contrast the non-verbal communication of Neil in his acting and later with his father. What is the non-verbal communication of Neil as he gets ready to commit suicide?
15. **Grief reactions:** Discuss the reactions of at least three people to the suicide. How does each person communicate his or her grief?
16. **Group dynamics:** Describe how the individual students become a group during the film.
17. **Character:** Pick your favorite character and discuss his or her communication style. Include at least three communication concepts. Use plenty of examples to prove your points.
18. **Compare and Contrast Schools:** Rick Babcock states in his review that this is a good movie for seeing what private schools were like 40 years ago. Compare this school with yours.
19. **The communication of teaching:** "I wish Robin Williams had been my English teacher." States Desson Howe in the Washington Post. Did you have the same thought while watching the film? What communication qualities make a good teacher? What part does inspiration play? What inspires you?
20. **Emotions – crying:** In his review, Randy Parker states, "And I should warn you that *Dead Poets Society* will make many of you cry or come damn close." Did it make you cry? Why? Why not?

21. **Conversation and relationships:** In the Showcase review, the author states, "On the not so obvious level, it's the classic history of how young people find their directions and loves—not by the rote and rhetoric of pedagogy, but by accident, inspiration, conversation, and relationships." Discuss the concepts of conversation and relationship in terms of this movie and how you discover things.

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Theme #10: Conflict

Conflict is inevitable. We are not alike and we will disagree. We have no choice as to whether or not we will face conflict. Our only choice is how we will do it. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing. How boring it would be if we were all alike and agreed all the time. In fact an argument can be healthy and strengthen a relationship.

The key is to make it healthy conflict that will improve the relationship instead of destructive conflict that may help to destroy the relationship.

Films need conflict. It is interesting and captivates our attention. There are hundreds, even thousands of movies based on conflict. Let's look at four of them. The influences of culture on conflict is seen in ***The Joy Luck Club***. Different cultures have different ideas about how to argue. In this film the mothers are from one culture and the Americanized daughters are actually from another culture. As they work out their conflicts, we gain insights.

Aggression is not the best way to be in conflict. Perhaps this is why filmmakers like to look at it. One of the most extreme examples of direct aggression is seen in the movie ***Swimming with Sharks***. Perhaps this is extreme. So is ***War of the Roses*** where a once happy couple terminates their relationship and does so in a lose-lose way. Assertion is often viewed as healthier than aggression. The comparison of these two conflict styles is seen in ***Men of Honor***.

49 ***Swimming with Sharks***
 50 ***Men of Honor***
 51 ***Joy Luck Club***
 52 ***War of the Roses***

Direct aggression
 Aggression & assertion
 Conflict and culture
 Lose-lose method

Movie: 49
Title: Swimming with Sharks
Rating: R
Year: 1995

Summary: In this Hollywood satire corporate ladder climbing is the subject. Buddy Ackerman (Kevin Spacey) is a very mean movie executive. He yells at people. His personal assistant, Guy (Frank Whaley) takes most of the brunt of his arrogance and anger. Guy finally snaps. He ties Buddy up and torments him.

Main Idea: Direct Aggression

Yelling, screaming, berating and generally being extremely mean are the things that Buddy does as the greedy and ambitious Hollywood executive. The effectiveness of these methods is the question. Susan Rathke says that when she goes to the movies she likes cruelty.

More Ideas:

1. **The Communication of Amends:** Do you agree with the advice, "Never apologize. It's a sign of weakness." Who gives this advice? Why? What do these characters use instead of concepts like apologizing, making amends and cleaning things up? Are they good communicators?
2. **Flashback – payback:** What happens when Guy goes to Buddy's house? Why? What made him do it?
3. **Non-verbal communication:** Describe the working environment at the studio.
4. **Relationships:** Describe Guy's relationship with the producer, Dawn Lockart. How does it change over time? Give examples.
5. **Being the boss:** Describe Buddy's way of treating his employees.
6. **"Shut up. Listen. Learn." - Buddy's mantra:** Why is Buddy so loud and nasty? Why does he think this works?
7. **Assertiveness:** Guy assertively confronts Buddy about yelling at him. How does Buddy react? Would this happen in an office today?
8. **Ethics:** After Buddy's speech to Guy about Guy's work on the script, what does Buddy do?
9. **Dynamic character:** How does Guy change during the course of the movie?
10. **Truth:** What is the meaning of the fake phone call with Cyrus praising Guy?

11. **Getting to the top:** What do men and women do to get to the top? How does the hostage scene end?

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Movie: 50
Title: Men of Honor
Rating: R
Year: 2000

Summary: This is the story of one man's fight against racism. It is the true story of Carl Brashear, the first African-American to join the U.S. Navy's deep sea diving team.

Main Idea: Aggression and Assertion

In this film, Billy Sunday practices aggression and Carl Brashear (Cuba Gooding, Jr.) practices assertion.

At the beginning of the film, Billy Sunday is shown with two others. His face is hurt. One of the other sailors accuses him of being a "Nigger lover" and he hits him and forces him to address him as Master Chief. Against orders, Sunday dives into the water to help the man overboard. He is hurt and upon finding out his condition, goes a little crazy and wrecks the hospital ward. These are considered acts of misconduct and he is reassigned to a training unit.

In his first training session, Master Chief Sunday is abusive to Carl. He wakes him up by throwing water on him. He then hoses him with water. And finally he dunks his head in a barrel of water. This abuse continues and is dolled out to all the sailors.

Sunday is busted to Chief Petty Officer for assaulting his superior, the diver that ended his diving career. His anger is still there. The superior officer refers to Gwen as his daughter. Billy and Gwen are both drunk.

Carl's Brashear, on the other hand, uses assertiveness. Carl is shown as a young child. He respectfully stands up to his father and insists that he stay out of school to help his father plow the fields. After he gets in the Navy, Carl swims on white day. The white sailors don't want him to do it and they tell him so but he wants to make a point. He ends up behind bars. But he is transferred to the search and rescue unit. They make him continue to bunk with the stewards. The boss tells him, "You're the fastest swimmer on this ship and you've got the balls to prove it." This is especially meaningful because the stewards have just said that Negroes can only be stewards in the U. S. Navy. He proves this isn't true. Carl marches into the boss' office and asks to be a master diver. The boss says they'll never accept a colored into this unit. But after more persuading, the boss is convinced and recommends him. Carl assertively writes over 100 letters to get accepted. He waits at the gate even though they won't let him in. Master Chief Sunday talks to him everyday. One day he invites him into tow for a cold one on the premise that he'll then go home. Carl says he won't go home.

Sunday finally gives in. He quotes the Chinese saying, "Beware what you wish for" and tells the guard to let him in.

Carl goes to the library to learn so he can pass his next exam. He meets the librarian and an assistant librarian, Jo, a young woman studying for her medical exams. He admits to her that he has only finished the 7th grade. She asks him why he wants this so much and he replies that "because they told me I couldn't have it." He stays in the library all night. The next morning he shows her how much he has learned and she decides he is serious and she'll help him.

These are only some of the ways Carl shows his continual assertiveness.

More Ideas:

1. **Honor:** Define honor. How is it portrayed in this film? How does it work in your life?
2. **Perserverance:** A quote from the real Carl Brashear: "It's not a sin to get knocked down. It's a sin to stay down. And if you dream big and work towards those dreams with all your might, you'll be successful." Is this true?
3. **Parental Influence:** How does Carl's father encourage his son? Does it seem negative when you first hear it? Is it really positive?
4. **Language – to discriminate:** How are the words "nigger" and "ladies" used to discriminate?
5. **Trust:** How does the concept of trust get introduced to the film?
6. **Paralanguage – tone of voice:** When does Master Chief Sunday think that Carl has talked to him in too familiar a tone? Why?
7. **Grief as sadness and anger:** What happens when Carl finds out his father has died?
8. **Emotions - The contrast of extreme sadness and extreme joy:** What happens between Joan and Carl after the contest?
9. **Conflict, argument and confrontation:** Describe the argument when Sunday tells Carl he isn't going to be passed.
10. **Relationship – Support and boundaries:** Compare and contrast Carl and Sunday and their wives.
11. **Support in the midst of hostility:** Describe the hearing.

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Movie: 51
Title: Joy Luck Club
Rating: R
Year: 1993

Summary: Oliver Stone produced this story about four friends, their joys, heartbreaks, hopes, dreams and the events that shape their lives and bring about these things. The raising of the daughters is key to the story.

Main Idea: Conflict and culture

Four Chinese mothers flee China and raise daughters in a mixture of the old ways (Chinese) and the new ways (American). There is much conflict in the film and most of it comes from a clash of values. The old ways were from the high-context collectivist environment of China where open conflict is discouraged. In the United States individualistic notions are more open. The daughters use a low context, direct style and are more assertive and aggressive.

One of the first examples involves June and playing the piano. Because she does poorly in the recital, she thinks she won't have to play the piano anymore. She has a fight with her mother during which she says she isn't a slave. She says she wishes she wasn't her daughter and that she wishes she was dead like the daughters in China.

Waverly confronts her mother when she is a little girl. She doesn't want to play chess anymore. The mother uses passive aggressive techniques to get her to do what she wants. Silence is one of her methods. This technique continues when Waverly is an adult. The mother even pretends to not realize that she is living with Rich. They have a beautiful scene in the beauty parlor.

More Ideas:

1. **Gender:** What is different about America as compared to China in regards to daughters?
2. **Mothers and Daughters:** Linda McAlister in her radio review said that, "The Joy Luck Club" ...is probably the most intense and multifaceted exploration of the bonds between mothers and daughters that has ever been put on film." Do you agree? If you are a woman, what issues did it bring up for you regarding your mother?
3. **Emotions - Hope:** What is the meaning of the Joy Luck Club?
4. **Self-Concept:** What did June say it meant for her mother to believe in her? How did chess affect Waverly's self-concept?

5. **Abandonment**: What does Auntie Lindo have in common with the twins in China?
6. **Emotional Abuse**: One of the women says that her husband was "happiest when he was cruel." Describe how he acted.
7. **Lying**: What terrible lie did they tell regarding the Chinese twins and their mother?
8. **Racism**: Describe Rose and Ted and how racism is in their lives.
9. **Passive** conflict style: What happens to An Mei
10. **Gender** & respect: Describe how this occurs in the story of An Mei whose mother was the fourth wife of Wu Ching.
11. **Competition** & Disconfirming Remarks: Give examples of June and Waverly and their disconfirming remarks.
12. **Hope** and expectations: How is this true between June and her mother?
13. **Listening**: How did June feel about listening to her mother? Was it true?
14. **The pause - Nonverbal** communication: Describe the pause when June sees her sisters.
15. **Relationship**: Which of the mother/daughter combinations had the best relationship? Why? Which had the worst? Why?
16. **Interracial Relationships**: Why did so many of these girls marry white men? Tanaka Tomoyuki, in his review, states: "Never before in a single film have I seen such a clear categorization:
 ---Asian females are beautiful and good.
 ---Asian males are sexist and bad.
 ---White males are good."
 Do you agree that the movie made these stereotypes?

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Movie: 52
Title: War of the Roses
Rating: R
Year: 1989

Summary:

This film could be the poster child for black comedy. After being married for 18 years, Barbara and Oliver Rose decide to call it quits and decide to wage war on each other. Their new goal is to inflict as much misery as possible on each other. This divorce is not a civil one but, rather, war breaks out in their mansion. This is definitely an example of lose/lose as they fight over every possession and wage their vicious battle against each other.

Main Idea: Lose-Lose Method of Conflict

Looking Out Looking In defines lose-lose in the following way. "In lose-lose problem solving, neither side is satisfied with the outcome." (Looking Out Looking In, p. 464). The book goes on to say that although it is a discouraging title, it is unfortunately a fairly common way to handle conflicts.

When Barbara and Oliver get a divorce, they bypass healthier ways of doing it and go for lose-lose instead. They verbally insult each other. They lie. They physically abuse each other. It is an out and out battle. The lawyer tries and tries to get them to change the way they are doing it. For instance, when Oliver shows the plans of the house to his lawyer, the lawyer tries to get him to give up the house. Oliver states that he is going to win. And the lawyer Gavin responds, "There is no winning in this. There are only degrees of losing."

Ultimately, their inability to communicate leads to their deaths. As the film ends, Gavin finishes the story to his client, telling him, "A civilized divorce is a contradiction in terms."

He offers the client two choices. He can do a quick divorce so he can get on with his life, or "You can get up and go home and try to find some shred of what you once loved about the sweetheart of your youth. It's your life. Take a minute."

More Ideas

1. **Nonverbal:** How are disgusting personal traits used to further the theme of the film?
2. **Eye Contact:** What happened when Barbara tried to tell the story of getting the Baccarat crystal?
3. **Contrast:** Discuss the difference between the Roses in the first half of the film and in the second half of the film.

4. **Self-concept:** What happened to Barbara? Why did she change?
5. **Time:** What happens to them as a couple? Why was time a factor? Is time important in relationships?
6. **Abuse:** Is the abuse in this movie unusual?
7. **Family Communication:** Oliver says, "We've been a family that communicated. If anything important happens, everyone should know about it. That's the rule." Was the rule followed?
8. **Insults - Conflict:** What happens when she tells him she wants a divorce?
9. **Silence: What does the lawyer advise? Why does he want Oliver to keep quiet?**
10. **Negotiations:** What does Oliver try to negotiate? Why? Is he successful?
11. **Lying:** How does Oliver lie regarding the dead cat?
12. **Nonverbal:** Describe Barbara's nonverbal proposition.
13. **Anger:** What happens when the son is leaving for college?
14. **Begging, threatening, equivocation, total honesty and dirty tricks:** Describe the communication at their last dinner.

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Strategies from Peers

Lecture:

1. **Illustrate a concept:** Show a film clip to illustrate a concept but show it before lecture. (Jeff Archibald, Mt. San Antonio College)
2. **Using culturally specific films:** As something new I might suggest using films that are culturally specific. Good films that are culturally specific usually showcase, in a non-stereotypical way, how different groups of people value different interpersonal communicational skills. The films would also illuminate how we all share many of the same communicational hardships / rewards. (Olga Garcia, UCLA student)
3. **First impressions:** In discussing first impressions, I said think about sitting in the theater waiting for the first images of a movie to pop onto the screen. Think about the first sounds you hear. These first moments are carefully planned for optimum effect. In communication we use our first moments to capture the attention, interest and imaginations of our audience. (Greg Dolph, Mt. San Antonio College and Universal Studios)
4. **Humor:** I use clips from Candid Camera and discuss communication behavior. (Craig Grossman, Irvine Valley College)
5. **Using Technology:** I clipped scenes from films, documentaries and put the separately on CDs. That way, I can lecture, then show the 10-minute clip, the lecture/discuss, etc., then show the next clip, and it's easier because I'm not adjusting and rewinding videotape. (Kathy Henkins, English Department, Mt. San Antonio College)
6. **DVDs:** Reviewing specific scenes during discussion. DVD's are a beautiful thing. (Rolland Petrello, Moorpark College)
7. **Stop the clip:** Sometimes I will show a video/film and stop it at critical points just for a discussion about the issues/feelings elicited. (Audrey Yamagata-Noji, Vice President, Mt. San Antonio College)
8. **Other Styles:** I do a lot of outside consulting and facilitating on communication strategies and enhancing one's effectiveness. It is especially helpful for certain folks to visually experience other styles, as they are looking to improve their own. I use this a lot to show Asian Pacific American styles and the impact of cultural values on behaviors. (Audrey Yamagata-Noji, Vice President, Mt. San Antonio College)

Oral Discussion:

1. **Film Character to Exemplify:** After discussing a theory, ask if the students can think of a film character or situation that exemplifies the theory. There are always responses that others in the class can identify with. This way we have "concrete" examples without me asking if they have a friend who is an example of the theory. Thus we avoid violating the privacy of a friend. (Char Arnold, Moorpark College)
2. **Compare and contrast:** Pick two pieces of film that deal with the same element of interpersonal communication in a different way. Have students give analysis how the two contrasting / different film pieces both work to convey the same interpersonal element. An example would be the concept of grief. You could use my favorite scene in *Steel Magnolias*, the funeral scene, juxtaposed with some other scene of grief like the cutting scene in *Dances with Wolves* or the last scene of the *Grifters*. (Olga Garcia, UCLA student)
3. **Compare and contrast film and text:** I have the students discuss the difference between the texts and the movie. They evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the films and what they might have done differently had they been in charge. (Mary Ann Pacheco, Literature, Rio Hondo College)
4. **Cast and plan a movie:** The students have to cast and plan a movie. My British Lit class, for example, just completed the assignment for Beowulf. The assignment makes the literature less remote, more immediate, and leads to great discussion. It's a great way to discuss characters and character development. (Mary Ann Pacheco, Literature, Rio Hondo College)
5. **Pitch a movie:** Pitch a movie of one work that we've read rather than another. It's a fun way to do a compare and contrast assignment. (Mary Ann Pacheco, Literature, Rio Hondo College)
6. **Introducing a controversial subject:** I use a movie in writing classes to introduce a controversial subject. They are a great way to introduce controversial subjects and to get the initial discussion going in a relatively non-threatening way. (Mary Ann Pacheco, Literature, Rio Hondo College)
7. **Framework for telling a story:** I have used the Matrix to teach the Hero's Journey as a framework for telling a story. (Rolland Petrello, Moorpark College)
8. **To introduce mood:** I used the film clip with multiple moods and themes. It created great discussion. (Chaumonde Porterfield-Pyatt, College of the Sequoias)

9. **Complex Communication:** I like film clips because they show simultaneity – that different communication concepts are overlapped and often occur multiply. So I'll play a scene asking for a specific example of a specific concept. Then replay the scene asking for a completely different concept, then play it again asking for another. It really helps the kids see that communication is complex. (Steve Seagle, Comic Book writer and Mt. San Antonio College)
10. **Antagonist and Protagonist:** I will ask students who the antagonist and protagonist were and what told you which was which. Inevitably, they will realize that they form an opinion about who is whom before a line is spoken, based upon nonverbal cues. The Bad Guy will have sharp shadows, dark clothing, a lower voice, and often move less than the Good Guy. (Dan Smith, Television, Mt. San Antonio College)
11. **Conflict:** The dialogue in films must differ from real life, while seeming real. Students could compare situations from films, and note what seems real. Conflict in films is often forced, in order to advance the plot, where in real life we don't want conflict, and may back down more easily. In another area, romantic relationships seem to progress much more quickly and assuredly in films, allowing for another area of comparison. (Dan Smith, Television, Mt. San Antonio College)
12. **Nonverbal:** I show a movie ... that deals with advertising – the subtle and the blatant. It stimulates conversation regarding ads and what they're really saying. For example, why do car ads include beautiful women in bikinis? The ad is making guys think if they have this particular car, then women like this will be all over them. (Jillian Sterkin, Radio, Mt. San Antonio College)
13. **Differently:** In showing movies, I ask how the relationships could have been handled differently and better. (Jillian Sterkin, Radio, Mt. San Antonio College)
14. **Compare and Contrast:** I use the grave diggers scene and the final sword fight...from four different Hamlet films...we compare the different actors approach to the character...for example – Gibson really stressed humor – his Hamlet was a happy funny guy...why did he make this choice? Was it because of the modern American audience? (SL Wellen, Theater, Mt. San Antonio College)
15. **First impressions:** I show 2 versions of Romeo & Juliet...I alternately show the prologue of one and ask the class to tell me what kind of a show are we in for...then the prologue of the other one...(SL Wellen, Theater, Mt. San Antonio College)

16. **Stopping the film:** I sometimes stop the film before the ending and ask them to speculate on what they “think” the outcome will be, based on what has occurred....I’ve had students who couldn’t stand it and rented the film to see what happened. (Dee Wood, Communication, College of the Desert)

17. **Identification: We talk about the characters in the film,** their motivation, behaviors, communication (verbal-nonverbal) observed, if anyone could identify with what they saw. (Dee Wood, Communication, College of the Desert)

18. **Predicting the Ending:** I ask the students WHY they thought the ending would be “happy” or sad.” (Dee Wood, Communication, College of the Desert)

ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

1. **Movie Review Speech:** The student gives a short movie review speech and during the speech is required to show a clip from the film reviewed. (Ken Klawitter, Mt. San Antonio College)
2. **Visual Aids:** I talk about using film or documentary clips as visual aids for Informative or Persuasive speeches. (Ken Klawitter, Mt. San Antonio College)
3. **Group Multimedia:** I’ve assigned group multimedia clips where they’re required to use film supporting material. (Ken Klawitter, Mt. San Antonio College)
4. **The Trailer:** I ask the students to tell us how they would design the trailer of the movie to entice audiences into the theater. Which concepts would they choose to be important enough to catch the interest of the public? (Ron Reel, Mt. San Antonio College)

Written Assignments:

1. **Write a journal entry.** Pick a principle and analyze several films showing the principle or pick a film and show several concepts or principles discussed in class. (Jeff Archibald, Mt. San Antonio College)
2. **Journal Entry on a group:** I assign observation journals to all of my students. Options include using a movie that has a group at its center and evaluating the movie’s accurate portrayal of roles, norms, etc. They can also evaluate the movie’s effective (or unrealistic) portrayal of group decision making and conflict resolution.(Steve Schroeder, College of Du Page)

Quizzes and Tests:

1. **Listening Challenge:** I show films when I teach Listening as part of a listening challenge. I show the film and then quiz them on characters and plot twists to see how well they listened. (Ken Klawitter, Mt. San Antonio College.)
2. **The Final Exam:** Mike shows some very complicated scenes for his final examination. The students are to write an essay showing what concepts are in the scene. (Mike Leigh, Orange Coast College)
3. **Treasure Hunt:** My main film use in interpersonal is to make the students detectives. After giving lecture notes on something like non-verbals I'll show a scene or a film and have the students "treasure hunt" for examples of items from the lecture notes. Sometimes the result is a class discussion – comparing notes. Sometimes the result is a paper. (Steve Seagle, Comic Book writer and Mt. San Antonio College)

GLOSSARY

IMPORTANCE

1. **Affinity:** The degree to which persons like or appreciate one another.
2. **Behavior:** Observable actions that can be interpreted as communicative messages.
3. **Channel:** The medium through which a message passes from sender to receiver.
4. **Cognitive complexity:** The ability to construct a variety of frameworks for viewing an issue.
5. **Communication:** A continuous, transactional process involving participants who occupy different but overlapping environments and create relationships through the exchange of messages, many of which are affected by external, physiological, and psychological noise.
6. **Communication competence:** The ability to accomplish one's personal goals in a manner that maintains a relationship on terms that are acceptable to all parties.
7. **Complementary relationship:** One in which the distribution of power is unequal, with one party occupying a "one-up" and the other a "one-down" position.
8. **Computer-mediated communication (CMC):** Communication between individuals that is conducted via computer channels such as e-mail, chat, and instant messaging.
9. **Content message:** A message that communicates information about the subject being discussed.
10. **Control (conversational and decision):** Messages in which the sender tries to impose some sort of outcome on the receiver, usually resulting in a defensive reaction.
11. **Decoding:** The process in which a receiver attaches meaning to a message. Synonymous with Interpretation.
12. **Dyad:** Two individuals communicating. The interaction may or may not be interpersonal in nature.
13. **Encoding:** The process of putting thoughts into symbols, most commonly words.
14. **Environment:** The field of experiences that leads a person to make sense of another's behavior. Environments consist of physical characteristics, personal experiences, relational history, and cultural background.
15. **Feedback:** The discernible response of a receiver to a sender's message.
16. **Impersonal interaction:** Behavior that treats others as objects rather than individuals.
17. **Instrumental goals:** Goals aimed at getting others to behave in desired ways.
18. **Interpersonal communication:** In a quantitative sense, communication (usually face-to-face) between two individuals. In a qualitative sense, communication in which the parties consider one another as unique individuals rather than objects. It is characterized by minimal use of stereotyped labels, unique, idiosyncratic rules, and a high degree of information exchange.
19. **Linear communication model:** A characterization of communication as a one-way event in which a message flows from sender to receiver.
20. **Message:** Information sent from a sender to a receiver.
21. **Metacommunication:** Messages (usually relational) that refer to other messages: communication about communication.
22. **Noise:** External (factors outside the receiver), physiological (biological factors), and psychological distractions (forces within) that interfere with the accurate transmission and reception of a message.
23. **Parallel relationship:** One in which the balance of power shifts from one party to the other, according to the situation.
24. **Receiver:** One who notices and attends to a message.
25. **Relational message:** A message that expresses the social relationship between two or more individuals.
26. **Respect:** The social need to be held in esteem by others.
27. **Self-monitoring:** The process of attending to one's behavior and using these observations to shape the way one behaves.
28. **Sender:** The creator of a message.
29. **Symmetrical relationship:** A relationship in which the partners seek an equal amount of control.

30. **Transactional communication model:** A characterization of communication as the simultaneous sending and receiving of messages in an ongoing, irreversible process.

SELF CONCEPT

1. **Cognitive conservatism:** The tendency to seek and attend to information that conforms to an existing self-concept.
2. **Face:** The socially approved identity that a communicator tries to present. See also Impression management.
3. **Identity (Presenting self):** The image a person presents to others. It may be identical with or different from the perceived and ideal self.
4. **Identity management:** The communication strategies people use to influence how others view them.
5. **Perceived self:** The person we believe ourselves to be in moments of candor. It may be identical with or different from the presenting and ideal self.
6. **Presenting self:** The image a person presents to others. It may be identical with or different from the perceived and ideal self.
7. **Reference groups:** Groups against which we compare ourselves, thereby influencing our self-concept and self-esteem.
8. **Reflected appraisal:** The theory that a person's self-concept matches the way the person believes others regard him or her.
9. **Self-concept:** The relatively stable set of perceptions each individual holds of himself or herself.
10. **Self-esteem:** The part of the self-concept that involves an individual's evaluations of his or her self-worth.
11. **Self-fulfilling prophecy:** A prediction or expectation of an event that makes the outcome more likely to occur than would otherwise have been the case.
12. **Significant other:** A person whose opinion is important enough to affect one's self-concept strongly.
13. **Social comparison:** Evaluation of oneself in terms of or by comparison to others.

PERCEPTION

1. **Androgynous:** Possessing both masculine and feminine traits.
2. **Attribution:** The process of attaching meaning to behavior.
3. **Empathy:** The ability to project oneself into another person's point of view, so as to experience the other's thoughts and feelings.
4. **Gender role:** Social and psychological dimensions of male and female behavior.
5. **Interpretation:** The process of attaching meaning to sense data; synonymous with decode.
6. **Narrative:** A perception of the world shared by a collection of people. Narratives can be described in terms of a dramatic theme.
7. **Organization:** The stage in the perception process that involves arranging data in a meaningful way.
8. **Perception checking:** A three-part method for verifying the accuracy of interpretations, including a description of the sense data, two possible interpretations, and a request for confirmation of the interpretations.
9. **Pillow method:** A method for understanding an issue from several perspectives rather than with an egocentric "I'm right and you're wrong" attitude.
10. **Punctuation:** The process of determining the causal order of events.
11. **Selection:** The first stage in the perception process in which some data are chosen to attend to and others to ignore.
12. **Self-serving bias:** The tendency to interpret and explain information in a way that casts the perceiver in the most favorable manner.
13. **Stereotyping:** Categorizing individuals according to a set of characteristics assumed to belong to all members of a group.

14. **Sympathy:** Compassion for another's situation.

EMOTIONS

1. **Debilitative emotions:** Emotions that prevent a person from functioning effectively.
2. **Emotional contagion:** The process by which emotions are transferred from one person to another.
3. **Facilitative emotions:** Emotions that contribute to effective functioning.
4. **Fallacy of approval:** The irrational belief that it is vital to win the approval of virtually every person a communicator deals with.
5. **Fallacy of catastrophic expectations:** The irrational belief that the worst possible outcome will probably occur.
6. **Fallacy of causation:** The irrational belief that emotions are caused by others and not by the person who has them.
7. **Fallacy of helplessness:** The irrational belief that satisfaction in life is determined by forces beyond one's control.
8. **Fallacy of overgeneralization:** Irrational beliefs in which (1) conclusions (usually negative) are based on limited evidence or (2) communicators exaggerate their shortcomings.
9. **Fallacy of perfection:** The irrational belief that a worthwhile communicator should be able to handle every situation with complete confidence and skill.
10. **Fallacy of shoulds:** The irrational belief that people should behave in the most desirable way.
11. **Mixed emotions:** Emotions that are combinations of primary emotions. Some mixed emotions can be expressed in single words (that is, awe, remorse), whereas others require more than one term (that is embarrassed and angry, relieved and grateful).
12. **Primary emotions:** Basic emotions. Some researchers have identified eight primary emotions: joy, acceptance, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation.
13. **Self-talk:** The nonvocal process of thinking. On some level, self-talk occurs as a person interprets another's behavior.

LANGUAGE

1. **Abstract language:** Language that is vague in nature.
2. **Abstraction ladder:** A range of more to less abstract terms describing an event or object.
3. **Behavioral language:** Specific things that you or the other person says or does.
4. **"But" statement:** Statements in which the word "but" cancels out the expression that preceded it.
5. **Convergence:** The process of adapting one's speech style to match that of others with whom the communicator wants to identify.
6. **Divergence:** Speaking mannerisms that emphasize a communicator's difference from others.
7. **Emotive language:** Language that conveys the sender's attitude rather than simply offers an objective description.
8. **Equivocal language:** Ambiguous language that has two or more equally plausible meanings.
9. **High-context cultures:** Cultures that avoid direct use of language, relying on the context of a message to convey meaning.
10. **"I" language:** A statement that describes the speaker's reaction to another person's behavior without making judgments about its worth.
11. **"It" statements:** Statements that replace the personal pronoun "I" with the less immediate word "it," often reducing the speaker's acceptance of responsibility for the statement.
12. **Linguistic relativism:** A more moderate form of linguistic determinism which argues that language exerts a strong influence on the perceptions of the people who speak it.
13. **Low-context cultures:** Cultures that use language primarily to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas as clearly and logically as possible.
14. **Powerless speech mannerisms:** Ways of speaking that may reduce perceptions of a communicator's power.

15. **Pragmatic rules:** Linguistic rules that help communicators understand how messages may be used and interpreted in a given context.
16. **Relative words:** Words that gain their meaning by comparison.
17. **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:** Theory of linguistic determinism in which language is determined by a culture's perceived reality.
18. **Semantic rules:** Rules that govern the meaning of language, as opposed to its structure.
19. **Sex roles:** The social orientation that governs behavior, rather than the biological gender.
20. **Static evaluation:** The tendency to view people or relationships as unchanging.
21. **Syntactic rules:** Rules that govern the ways symbols can be arranged, as opposed to the meanings of those symbols.
22. **"We" statements:** Statement that implies that the issue is the concern and responsibility of both the speaker and receiver of a message.
23. **"You" statements:** A statement that expresses or implies a judgment of the other person.

NONVERBAL

1. **Accenting:** Nonverbal behaviors that emphasize part of a verbal message.
2. **Adaptors:** Self-touching behaviors, sometimes called manipulators.
3. **Body orientation:** Type of nonverbal communication characterized by the degree to which we face toward or away from someone.
4. **Chronemics:** The study of how humans use and structure time.
5. **Complementing:** Nonverbal behavior that reinforces a verbal message.
6. **Contradicting:** Nonverbal behavior that is inconsistent with a verbal message.
7. **Deceiving:** Double message. See also leakage.
8. **Disfluencies:** A nonlinguistic verbalization, for example, "um," "er," "ah."
9. **Emblems:** Deliberate nonverbal behaviors with precise meanings, known to virtually all members of a cultural group.
10. **Gestures:** Motions of the body, usually hands or arms, that have communicative value.
11. **Illustrators:** Nonverbal behaviors that accompany and support verbal messages.
12. **Intimate distance:** One of Hall's four distance zones, ranging from skin contact to 18 inches.
13. **Kinesics:** The study of body position and motion.
14. **Leakage:** Nonverbal behaviors that reveal information a communicator does not disclose verbally.
15. **Microexpression:** Brief facial expressions.
16. **Mixed message:** When people simultaneously express different and even contradictory messages in their verbal and nonverbal behaviors.
17. **Nonverbal communication:** Messages expressed by other than linguistic means.
18. **Paralanguage:** Nonlinguistic means of vocal expression: rate, pitch, tone, and so on.
19. **Personal distance:** One of Hall's four distance zones, ranging from 18 inches to 4 feet.
20. **Posture:** The way in which individuals carry themselves – erect, slumping, etc.
21. **Proxemics:** The study of how people and animals use space.
22. **Public distance:** One of Hall's four distance zones, extending outward from 12 feet.
23. **Regulating:** One function of nonverbal communication, in which nonverbal cues control the flow of verbal communication among individuals.
24. **Repeating:** Nonverbal behaviors that duplicate the content of a verbal message.
25. **Social distance:** One of Hall's distance zones, ranging from 4 to 12 feet.
26. **Substituting:** Nonverbal behavior that takes the place of a verbal message.
27. **Territory:** A stationary area claimed by an individual.

LISTENING

1. **Active listening:** Restating a speaker's thoughts and feelings in the listener's own words.
2. **Advising response:** A helping response in which the receiver offers suggestions about how the speaker should deal with a problem.

3. **Ambushing:** A style in which the receiver listens carefully in order to gather information to use in an attack on the speaker.
4. **Analyzing statement (response):** A helping style in which the listener offers an interpretation of a speaker's message.
5. **Attending:** The process of filtering out some messages and focusing on others.
6. **Counterfeit questions:** Questions that disguise the speaker's true motives, which do not include a genuine desire to understand the other person.
7. **Defensive listening:** A response style in which the receiver perceives a speaker's comments as an attack.
8. **Hearing:** The physiological dimension of listening.
9. **Insensitive listening:** Failure to recognize the thoughts or feelings that are not directly expressed by a speaker; instead, accepting the speaker's words at face value.
10. **Insulated listening:** A style in which the receiver ignores undesirable information.
11. **Judging response:** A reaction in which the receiver evaluates the sender's message either favorably or unfavorably.
12. **Listening:** Process that consists of hearing, attending, understanding, responding, and remembering an aural message.
13. **Paraphrasing:** Restating a speaker's thoughts and/or feelings in the listener's own words.
14. **Prompting:** Using silences and brief statements of encouragement to draw out a speaker.
15. **Pseudolistening:** An imitation of true listening in which the receiver's mind is elsewhere.
16. **Questioning response:** A style of helping in which the receiver seeks additional information from the sender. Some questioning responses are really disguised advice.
17. **Remembering:** Ability to recall information.
18. **Responding:** Giving observable feedback to the speaker.
19. **Selective listening:** A listening style in which the receiver responds only to messages that interest him or her.
20. **Sincere questions:** Questions that are aimed at soliciting information that enable the asker to understand the other person.
21. **Stage-hogging:** A listening style in which the receiver is more concerned with making his or her own point than in understanding the speaker.
22. **Supporting response:** Responses that demonstrate solidarity with a speaker's situation.
23. **Understanding:** Occurs when sense is made of a message.

RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

1. **Avoiding:** A stage of relational development immediately prior to terminating in which the parties minimize contact with one another.
2. **Bonding:** A stage of relational development in which the parties make symbolic public gestures to show that their relationship exists.
3. **Breadth:** First dimension of self-disclosure involving the range of subjects being discussed.
4. **Circumscribing:** A stage of relational development in which partners begin to reduce the scope of their contact and commitment to one another.
5. **Cliches:** A ritualized, stock statement delivered in response to a social situation.
6. **Connection-autonomy dialectic:** The conflicting desires for connection and autonomy.
7. **Depth:** A dimension of self-disclosure involving a shift from relatively nonrevealing messages to more personal ones.
8. **Dialectical tension:** Inherent conflicts that arise when two opposing or incompatible forces exist simultaneously.
9. **Differentiating:** A stage of relational development in which the parties reestablish their individual identities after having bonded together.
10. **Equivocal language:** Ambiguous language that has two or more equally plausible meanings.
11. **Experimenting:** An early stage in relational development, consisting of a search for common ground. If the experimentation is successful, the relationship will progress to intensifying. If not, it may go no further.

12. **Initiating:** The first stage in relational development, in which the parties express interest in one another.
13. **Integrating:** A stage of relational development in which the parties begin to take on a single identity.
14. **Intensifying:** A stage of relational development preceding integrating, in which the parties move toward integration by increasing the amount of contact and the breadth and depth of self-disclosure.
15. **Intimacy:** A state of personal sharing arising from physical, intellectual, and/or emotional contact.
16. **Johari Window:** A model that describes the relationship between self-disclosure and self-awareness.
17. **Openness-privacy dialectic:** The dialectical tension between a desire for open communication and the need for privacy in a relationship.
18. **Predictability-novelty dialectic:** The dialectical tension between a desire for stability and the need for novelty in a relationship.
19. **Relational maintenance:** Communication aimed at keeping relationships operating smoothly and satisfactorily.
20. **Self-disclosure:** The process of deliberately revealing information about oneself that is significant and that would not normally be known by others.
21. **Social penetration:** A model that describes relationships in terms of their breadth and depth.
22. **Stagnating:** A stage of relational development characterized by declining enthusiasm and standardized forms of behavior.
23. **Terminating:** The concluding stage of relational development, characterized by the acknowledgment of one or both parties that the relationship is over.
24. **"White lie":** A lie defined by the teller as unmalicious, or even helpful to the person to whom it is told.

COMMUNICATION CLIMATE

1. **Ambiguous response:** A disconfirming response with more than one meaning, leaving the other party unsure of the responder's position.
2. **Apathy:** A defense mechanism in which a person avoids admitting emotional pain by pretending not to care about an event.
3. **Certainty:** Attitude behind messages that dogmatically imply that the speaker's position is correct and that the other person's ideas are not.
4. **Cognitive dissonance:** An inconsistency between two conflicting pieces of information, attitudes, or behaviors. Communicators strive to reduce dissonance, often through defense mechanisms that maintain an idealized presenting image.
5. **Communication climate:** The emotional tone of a relationship between two or more individuals.
6. **Compensation:** A defense mechanism in which a person stresses a strength in one area to camouflage a shortcoming in some other area.
7. **Complaining:** A disconfirming response that implicitly or explicitly attributes responsibility for the speaker's displeasure to another party.
8. **Confirming communication (response):** A message that expresses caring or respect for another person.
9. **Controlling communication:** Messages in which the sender tries to impose some sort of outcome on the receiver, usually resulting in a defensive reaction.
10. **De-escalatory conflict spiral:** A communication spiral in which the parties slowly lessen their dependence on one another, withdraw, and become less invested in the relationship.
11. **Defense mechanism:** A psychological device used to maintain a presenting self-image that an individual believes is threatened.
12. **Defensiveness:** The attempt to protect a presenting image a person believes is being attacked.
13. **Descriptive communication:** Messages that describe the speaker's position without evaluating others. Synonymous with "I" language.

14. **Disconfirming communication:** A message that expresses a lack of caring or respect for another person.
15. **Displacement:** A defense mechanism in which a person vents hostile or aggressive feelings on a target that cannot strike back, instead of on the true target.
16. **Empathy:** The ability to project oneself into another person's point of view, so as to experience the other's thoughts and feelings.
17. **Equality:** A type of supportive communication described by Gibb, suggesting that the sender regards the receiver as worthy of respect.
18. **Escalatory conflict spiral:** A communication spiral in which one attack leads to another until the initial skirmish escalates into a full-fledged battle.
19. **Evaluative communication:** Messages in which the sender judges the receiver in some way, usually resulting in a defensive response.
20. **Face-threatening act:** Behavior by another that is perceived as attacking an individual's presenting image, or face.
21. **Gibb categories / Defense-producing behaviors:** Six sets of contrasting styles of verbal and nonverbal behavior. Each set describes a communication style that is likely to arouse defensiveness and a contrasting style that is likely to prevent or reduce it. Developed by Jack Gibb.
22. **Impersonal response:** A disconfirming response that is superficial or trite.
23. **Impervious response:** A disconfirming response that ignores another person's attempt to communicate.
24. **Incongruous response:** A disconfirming response in which two messages, one of which is usually nonverbal, contradict one another.
25. **Interrupting response:** A disconfirming response in which one communicator interrupts another.
26. **Irrelevant response:** A disconfirming response in which one communicator's comments bear no relationship to the previous speaker's ideas.
27. **Neutrality:** A defense-arousing behavior described by Gibb in which the sender expresses indifference toward a receiver.
28. **Physical avoidance:** A defense mechanism whereby the person steers clear of people who attack a presenting self to avoid dissonance.
29. **Problem orientation:** A supportive style of communication described by Gibb in which the communicators focus on working together to solve their problems instead of trying to impose their own solutions on one another.
30. **Provisionalism:** A supportive style of communication described by Gibb in which the sender expresses a willingness to consider the other person's position.
31. **Rationalization:** A defense mechanism in which logical but untrue explanations maintain an unrealistic desired or presenting self-image.
32. **Regression:** A defense mechanism in which a person avoids assuming responsibility by pretending that he or she is unable to do something instead of admitting to being simply unwilling.
33. **Repression:** A defense mechanism in which a person avoids facing an unpleasant situation or fact by denying its existence.
34. **Sarcasm:** A potential defensive reaction in which an individual redirects a perceived threat to his or her presenting self by attacking the critic with contemptuous, often ironical remarks.
35. **Spiral:** A reciprocal communication pattern in which each person's message reinforces the other's.
36. **Spontaneity:** A supportive communication behavior described by Gibb in which the sender expresses a message without any attempt to manipulate the receiver.
37. **Strategy:** A defense-arousing style of communication described by Gibb in which the sender tries to manipulate, trick or deceive a receiver.
38. **Superiority:** A defense-arousing style of communication described by Gibb in which the sender states or implies that the receiver is not worthy of respect.
39. **Tangential response:** A disconfirming response that uses the speaker's remark as a starting point for a shift to a new topic.
40. **Verbal abuse:** A disconfirming response intended to cause psychological pain to another.

41. **Verbal aggression:** A defense mechanism in which a person avoids facing unpleasant information by verbally attacking the confronting source.

CONFLICT

1. **Accommodation:** A nonassertive response style in which the communicator submits to a situation rather than attempt to have his or her needs met.
2. **Assertion:** A direct expression of the sender's needs, thoughts, or feelings, delivered in a way that does not attack the receiver's dignity.
3. **Avoidance:** A nonassertive response style in which the communicator is unwilling to confront a situation in which his or her needs are not being met.
4. **Behavioral description:** An account that refers only to observable phenomena.
5. **Complementary conflict style:** A relational conflict style in which partners use different but mutually reinforcing behaviors.
6. **Compromise:** An approach to conflict resolution in which both parties attain at least part of what they wanted through self-sacrifice.
7. **Conflict:** An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals.
8. **Conflict ritual:** An unacknowledged repeating pattern of interlocking behavior used by participants in a conflict.
9. **Consequence statement:** An explanation of the results that follow either from the behavior of the person to whom the message is addressed or from the speaker's interpretation of the addressee's behavior. Consequence statements can describe what happens to the speaker, the addressee, or others.
10. **Crazymaking / Passive aggression:** An indirect expression of aggression, delivered in a way that allows the sender to maintain a façade of kindness.
11. **Direct aggression:** A criticism or demand that threatens the face of the person at whom it is directed.
12. **Indirect communication:** An oblique way of expressing wants or needs in order to save face for the recipient.
13. **Intention statement:** A description of where the speaker stands on an issue, what he or she wants, or how he or she plans to act in the future.
14. **Lose-lose problem solving:** An approach to conflict resolution in which neither side achieves its goals. Sometimes lose-lose outcomes result from both parties seeking a win-lose victory over one another. In other cases, the parties settle for a lose-lose outcome (for example, compromise) because they cannot find any better alternative.
15. **Nonassertion:** The inability to express one's thoughts or feelings when necessary. Nonassertion may be due to a lack of confidence or communication skill or both.
16. **Parallel conflict style:** A relational conflict style in which the approach of the partners varies from one situation to another.
17. **Passive aggression:** An indirect expression of aggression, delivered in a way that allows the sender to maintain a façade of kindness.
18. **Relational conflict style:** A pattern of managing disagreements that repeats itself over time in a relationship.
19. **Symmetrical conflict-style:** A relational conflict style in which both partners use the same tactics.
20. **Win-lose problem solving:** An approach to conflict resolution in which one party reaches its goal at the expense of the other.
21. **Win-win problem solving:** An approach to conflict resolution in which the parties work together to satisfy all their goals.

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