**Interpretation, Teenagers, and Full-Frontal Snogging**

Using Basic Communication Studies in the Regular English Classroom

Friday 2:15-3:15 Green Acres

Edmodo Group Code: t9ngq9

***Overview***: How do we get middle and high school students to start looking deeper into literature, film, the world? One way is to start with what they already know and love: social interaction. In this session I will share activities and assignments that use some basic communication theory to get students to see how finding the hidden pattern in how you ask that girl out to the homecoming dance is a lot like finding the hidden meaning in a text like *Romeo and Juliet*.

1. **What am I Teaching**?
   1. **Purpose**:
      1. Motivational research shows that people need to feel like what they are doing has purpose. Evidence/Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>
      2. Teaching English by connecting it to people and relationships helps our students to see the purpose of English education, which leads to greater motivation.
      3. Also, although I’m not proposing we teach social skills in the classroom, we all know is what makes most people successful is being able to form relationships. Therefore, at the very least I think it is our duty to let students know that social skills are just that- skills and they follow clear patterns and they can be improved just like any other skill.
   2. **English Skills**:
      1. *Speaking and Listening & Writing*(a little)
         1. Evaluating a Speaker 11.SL.3
         2. Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 11.SL.4
         3. Writing Arguments (Refutation) 11.W.1
      2. *Reading Literature*: There are hidden, unwritten rules & patterns of communication, just like there are hidden, unwritten rules & patterns of texts.
         1. Reading Strategies: Reading, like being social, isn’t something you are just born with, it is a skill that can be learned and improved by recognizing the patterns.
         2. Literary Terms/Key Concepts
            1. Plot: 99% of stories follow the same pattern just like human interaction and understanding this makes them easier to analyze.
            2. Indirect Characterization:

How authors tell us about characters, is much like how we hint to each verbally and non-verbally in real life.

Hinting and The 90/10 Kiss as metaphors for understanding Indirect Characterization (action, reaction of others, dialogue, appearance).

* + - * 1. Internal Conflict: Just like when people physically fight there is usually something deeper that is the real problem, in stories the external conflict is masking what the story is really about which is the internal conflict.
        2. Theme: In order to interpret people, we do the exact same process as if we were interpreting texts (short stories, novel, films, etc.).Theme Strategy:

With People: We collect evidence, make a judgment/inference.

With Literature: We collect evidence, come up with a 1-2 word abstract concept, and then make a guess as to what the author is saying.

1. **Things I say often in a regular English class that relate to Communication Studies**:
   1. 90/10 kiss and hinting (from the film “Hitch”): Too much and assault, too little and we don’t even know what you want. It is our job to read the signals and come that final 10 percent of the way (reader response theory- making a poem as we read)
   2. There is a pattern to literature, just like there are patterns to our behaviors.
   3. One piece of evidence isn’t enough. If she fixes her hair, maybe she isn’t interested in you; maybe she is just a neat person. But if she fixes her hair, touches your arm, leans in, and laughs at a joke that isn’t funny- then she most likely is interested. This is like analyzing/writing about literature. One piece of evidence isn’t enough; you need a lot of evidence that backs it up. Also, if she did all of those things that indicate romantic interest, but did so in front of her fiancé and her father, that would seem to negate all of that evidence. When you write/analyze literature you should look for those pieces of evidence that disprove what you think the author might be saying.
   4. It is even easier in studying texts because unlike with people, good authors will never pack your bag with anything you don’t need to get up the mountain (*A Walk in the Woods* example, Chekhov’s gun example).
   5. They are all “texts”: stories, films, commercials, people- they can all be understood better by looking for these patterns, collecting evidence, and testing your hypothesis (really the scientific method)
2. **Communication Activities & Assignments to Use in Your Classroom**
   1. Reading Strategies
      1. There are patterns in our personal interactions just like there are patterns in texts:
         1. In the Chair
         2. Interpersonal Communication (“Friends and *Friends*” Notes)
            1. “A Totally Scientific Guide to Seduction” (Mystery on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42MZ9qb-PC8> )
            2. Body Language Skits
         3. Communication Experiment
      2. Interpreting Patterns:
         1. Shoe-In Interpretation
         2. SCAR stories
         3. Lie to Me: (lie detection in life and in stories)
            1. “How to Become a Human Lie Detector” (*Lie to Me* examples on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHraznv4pHQ&feature=fvwrel> )
            2. Two Truths and a Lie Game
      3. Interpreting Literature:
         1. Poetry: Haiku (Have teachers write a Haiku quickly)
         2. Short Story
            1. Internal vs. External Conflict (Improv interior monologue)
            2. Perspective and Literary Theory (Create your own Culture Activity)
   2. Writing: Refutation in Essay Writing: Devil’s Advocacy (Avoiding Group Think)
   3. Other
      1. Interpersonal Relationships (how and why men and women get together)
      2. Group Dynamics:
         1. Survivor and Rank and File (types of people in groups and how to manage them)
         2. Dewey’s Problem Solving Toy Making Activity
      3. Gender Conversation Observation (Gender notes and Observation Assignment)

**In the Chair**

Directions:

1. Pick a student and have them sit in a chair in front of the class.
2. Instruct them not to communicate anything for 60 seconds.
3. Instruct the class to watch the person and write down anything they communicate.
4. Start the 60 seconds
5. Write down what they communicate some examples may include:
   1. Arms crossed or legs crossed = I’m closed off to you
   2. Eyes wandering = bored; eyes looking at friends = help; eyes looking at teacher= help; eyes looking at floor = embarrassed.
   3. Leg shaking = nervous
   4. Smiling = socially awkward, but okay
   5. Leaning back = removing self from this situation or superiority
   6. Their appearance: Clothing = athletic, etc.; Hair style = traditional/conservative girl; etc.
   7. Etc.
6. At the end of 60 seconds, ask the class what they saw communicated then share what you saw.
7. Discuss how we are always communicating:
   1. Are you aware of your non-verbal communication?
   2. Have you ever wondered why someone dislikes your ideas before you even get a chance to say them? Could it have something to do with what you were saying non-verbally?
   3. How does this tie into the study of literature?
   4. Etc.

**Body Language Skits**

**Anticipatory Set:** Pre-Quiz

1. Man standing with women or without them? Which is better?
2. With women: he’s their friend OR he is a high status guy who women like to hang out with.
3. With other men: Appear uncomfortable, boring, and even intimidating. If they are scanning the room for women to talk to = low status.
4. Man sitting between 2 girls or man sitting beside two girls? Which is better?
   1. Sitting between may make you feel like “the man”, but you have to turn your head to talk and therefore lose the attention of one.
   2. Should sit beside them both (closest to the one interested in) and keep them both engaged (slightly disinterested in the one you like).
5. Man approaching 2 seated women: should you kneel, sit down, or keep standing?
   1. Kneel = weakness. Standing = awkward.
   2. Say “I can actually only stay for a minute” and sit down.
6. If a woman places her purse next to you this means:
   1. She trusts you and has interest in you (it’s a personal item)
   2. She is trying to keep you away from her (it is blocking the way)
7. You are speaking to a girl, but it is too noisy to hear. Should you:
   1. Lean in?
   2. Tell her to speak up? (Leaning in makes you look weak)

**Activity**: Give students these prompts, have them act it out, and see if the other students can guess their emotions. (Groups of 2)

***Directions***: Create a skit in which you present the non-verbal communication examples that your group was given. You may come up with any scenario (on a first date, 4th of July picnic, on the practice field, etc.) and any necessary dialogue, but you must clearly highlight the non-verbal communication examples (you may want to exaggerate these or even do it multiple times).

Group A:

1. Social Gaze: A Triangle gaze from eye to eye to lips and back = listening.
2. Intimate Gaze: A Triangle gaze from eyes down to body and back = Personal interest.
3. Power Gaze: A Triangle gaze from eyes to “third eye” (middle of forehead) = Intimidating. If someone is threatening you, doing this can often make them give up and walk away.

Group B:

1. Look Up Left: 70% chance they are creating an image in their head; they are lying (Western)
2. Look Up Right: 70% chance they are remembering an image. (In West)

Group C:

1. Hand Shakes:
   1. Facing Down= Dominant
   2. Facing Up= Submissive
   3. Vertical = Two dominant people showing respect

Group D:

1. Palms
   1. Open Palms = Truthful, honest, submissive
   2. Palms facing Downward= Restraint, holding back, disdain.
2. Clenched Hands= negative attitude, closed off, protecting themselves, frustration. (The higher, the more frustrated).

Group E:

1. Sweeping (excessive) Hand Gestures: Studies show that EXCESSIVE hand gesturing is correlated with nervousness and low social status.
2. Pointing
   1. With Finger = aggressive/offensive
   2. With thumb & index = less offensive

Group F:

1. Using an object for a Barrier (arms folded, bottle/cup) = Need for security or protection
2. Thumbs & Pockets
   1. Thumbs protruding from back pockets = An attempt to conceal a dominant attitude.
   2. Thumbs protruding from front pockets = an attempt to communicate strength and dominance.

Group G:

1. Hands near Mouth
   1. Both hands over mouth (children lying)
   2. Hand partially over mouth with fingers brushing cheek (teens lying)
   3. Index finger under nose, hand partially covering mouth (adults lying)
2. Hands behind back posture = confidence and authority (royalty & military stance b/c it shows fearlessness through opening up neck, stomach, and throat).

Group H:

1. Mirroring
   1. Copying another person’s body postures during a conversation.
   2. Shows that they are dominant/ you are in agreement with them.
2. Closed vs. Open
   1. Crossed arms &/or crossed legs = defensive posture and a closed attitude
   2. Uncrossed arms and palms up = openness and honesty

Group I:

1. Body Knows Where It Wants to Go
   1. Body pointed towards you (feet and torso) = engaged in conversation
   2. Body pointed away from you (feet or any other part) = not engaged in the conversation and eager to leave
2. Biting lip = holding something back/not sharing what they are thinking

Group J:

1. Touching Self
   1. Cocked head plus touching neck simultaneously = romantic interest
   2. Touching hair = preening (making yourself look better) = interest
2. Touch Another
   1. If it comes after the other person said something of note = strong interest
   2. If before the other person says or does anything to deserve it = an attempt to get validation (“you like me right?”) which is false interest
3. Grooming (moving hair, lint, etc.) = affection & interest

Group K:

1. Heads Up
   1. When someone verbally agrees (“yes, totally”) while subtly shaking head “no” = they disagree but are being polite
   2. When someone rests their chin on their hands (face platter) = high interest
2. Rubbing eyes = unconscious attempt to not have to look at the person to whom they are telling a lie.

Group L:

1. Hugs
   1. Hand pats back = not interested / ready for hug to be over (men do it to turn the other into a baby; they are burping them)
   2. Hand lingers during hug = interest

Group M:

1. Doubt
   1. Neck scratch (usually a series of five scratches) = doubt or uncertainty
   2. Touching nose
      1. When used by a speaker = deceitfulness/lies
      2. When used by a listener = distrust in what the speaker is saying.

**Holistic Listening Swing Dance and Breaking Unwritten Rules of Communication**

1. Hand position, loose frame, and gender roles
2. Teach basic steps
3. Add music, basic step
4. Show turn
5. Show spider move
6. Discussion:
7. How does learning how to swing dance pertain to listening? (directions, music)
8. Did you listen to the beat of the music to know when to step?
9. Did you listen to the space between you and your partner to know when to move?
10. Did you listen to how the other person looked? (confident, confused, frightened)

Lecture: We have talked about this before on the first day; communication is more than just what you hear. There is a name for listening to each of the senses. We will discuss these today. Just like in Spanish, English, Math, etc.- there is a set of terminology for speech (a jargon)- and we are going to learn some of it today.

**There are 6 types of holistic communication**:

1. We assign meaning to two types of information we receive from our EARS:
2. Semantics- denotative and connotative meanings of words.
3. Vocalics- how the words/sounds are said (loud, whisper, grumpy, angry, happy, pauses, etc.) “I said he kissed her”
4. EYES:
5. Proxemics- how objects are spaced: personal space, territory
6. Kinesics- body communication: relaxed and smiling = self-confidence; leaning forward = shows interest; (tattoos, facial expressions and eye movements and appearance)
7. TOUCH:

1. Haptics- touch communication; has various levels (barbers and doctors are different from friends touching or a handshake). Also, vocal touch through air and visual touch through light.

1. NOSE:
2. Olfactics: helps to identify things like Grandma’s cookies, gas leak, etc. Also it relates to attraction/repulsion- nice perfume, cigarette smoke

**Review Discussion**: How did we use each of these 6 types of holistic listening in the swing dance activity?

* + 1. How does learning how to swing dance pertain to listening? (directions, music)
    2. Did you listen to the beat of the music to know when to step?
    3. Did you listen to the space between you and your partner to know when to move?
    4. Did you listen to how the other person looked? (confident, confused, frightened)

**Assignment**: Communication Experiment

* 1. **Intentionally break one of the “unwritten rules” for holistic communication**. For example: Break the rule for Proxemics by speaking closer to someone’s face. Or break the rule for Kinesics by looking sad while saying something happy. Or break the rule for Vocalics by speaking softly all day long. Etc.
  2. Break one or more of the “unwritten rules” and note your subject’s reactions.
  3. **Be reasonable and Do no harm**. For example, don’t break the rule for Haptics by touching people inappropriately. In fact, the best results will come by bending a rule as opposed to breaking it.
  4. **Write down in 1/2-Page Summary**:
     1. BEFORE:
        1. The “unwritten rule” you are breaking.
        2. What type of holistic communication it applies to.
        3. How you plan to break it.
        4. Your hypothesis. (What you think will happen)
     2. AFTER:
        1. What actually happened.
        2. Any comment from your subjects.
        3. The conclusion you can draw from your experiment

**Shoe In Interpretation**

1. Have everyone form a circle in the middle of the room.
2. Have everyone take off their shoes and place them in the middle of the circle.
3. Instruct students to pick up a pair of shoes and to look at them closely and find 2-3 things about these shoes that stand-out the most
   1. For example, “The shoe laces are untied, they are neon, and they are brand new.”
   2. You may want to model this first for the students.
4. After they collect this evidence, have students make an interpretation about the person that wears the shoes.
   1. For example, “Brand new, neon shoes might mean that this person is outgoing. Untied laces might mean this person is laid-back.”
   2. Be sure to tell students to BE NICE and say things in appropriate ways because they are prone to say things like “dirty shoes means this person is poor”, instead of “well-worn shoes might mean this person hard-working”.
5. After they interpret, they ask whose shoes they are, give them back, and ask if they were right in their interpretation.
6. The person who just got their shoes back then picks a new pair and repeats the process.
7. Repeat process until everyone has gone.
8. Discuss:
   1. What types of interpretation were more interesting? Why?
      1. For example, “Athletic shoes means you are athletic” is not nearly as interesting of an interpretation as the student who said that” well-maintained, practical hiking boots might mean they are a boy scout” (He was right!)
      2. Interesting interpretations use all of the available evidence to make bold, but reasonable claims.
   2. How does this relate to reading stories? (Same process. Collect evidence, make guesses, and check to see if your guesses are right).

**Walk in their Shoes Variation**

1. With the help of the class, collect a wide variety of pairs of shoes.
2. Have students create a list of questions that might be answered by owners of

these shoes. (For example: In addition to the vital statistic information, why were the shoes purchased? What “hard times” have they seen? Where have they been? What secrets do they know? Where is the owner now?, etc.)

1. Have students select a pair that looks intriguing to them and create a profile of the owner by answering their questions.

**Scar Story Interpretation**

1. Model this for your students with your own scar story
2. Show a scar on your body (if appropriate)
3. Tell the story of how you got the scar in detail
   1. Be sure to instruct the students not to tell a summary of the story (“I fell down in 8th grade and cut my hand on the rocks” is a summary of a story).
   2. Be sure to instruct them to give a little exposition (age and place).
   3. You might need to ask reluctant story tellers to give a little more by asking “what happened after that?” and “how did they react?” etc.
4. Instruct the audience to listen to the story and be ready to tell us what stood out the most/what was the most important, surprising, or compelling things about what she said.
5. After the student tells the story, while they are still standing in front of the class, have the students list off evidence from the story (what stood out).
6. Then instruct the students to make a judgment about the person based on the story they were told.
   1. For example,
      1. You might say this person is confident because they told a story where they are the hero.
      2. You might say this person is moral because they told a story where they did something bad and paid the price.
   2. Push kids to think of 1-2 word abstract concepts such as “adventurous” or “proud” instead of saying things like “he likes sports”.
   3. Be sure to instruct kids to be nice.
7. Discuss:
   1. What types of interpretation were more interesting? Why? (Interesting interpretations use all of the available evidence to make bold, but reasonable claims.)
   2. How does this relate to reading stories? (Same process. Collect evidence, make guesses, and check to see if your guesses are right).

**Two Truths and a Lie Game**

1. Read “How to Become a Human Lie Detector”, watch examples from Lie to Me on YouTube, or tell students some common ways to spot lying.
2. Then have students tell 3 short stories.
   1. The first should be true so we can get a “baseline” of their non-verbal communication while telling the truth.
   2. One of the next two should be a lie (be sure to mix it up).
3. Instruct the students to watch closely and look for tell-tale signs of lying.
4. Optional: Allow students to ask 1-2 follow up questions for a story.
5. Optional: Model the activity. Or, use some of the lying signs on purpose during a true story in an attempt to fool the audience.
6. Discuss: How is analyzing someone’s non-verbal communication like analyzing short stories or film?

*Look for Suspicious Behaviors*

By themselves, each of these behaviors can just be signs of stress, or even a person's natural mannerisms. One can occur by chance, but when two or more of these behaviors suddenly appear at a moment when lying could be expedient, you should be skeptical.

Here's the top eight list of suspicious behaviors:

1. A change in the voice's pitch.
2. A change in the rate of speech.
3. A sudden increase in the number of "ums" and "ahs."
4. A change in eye contact. Normally, one makes eye contact one-quarter to one-half of the time. If suddenly, at the convenient moment to lie, he's staring at you or looking away, beware.
5. Turning his body away from you, even if just slightly.
6. Suddenly being able to see the white on the top and bottom of a person's eyes, not just the sides.
7. A hand reaching, even if momentarily, to cover part of the face, especially the mouth.
8. Nervous movement of feet or legs.

Of course, in order to notice a change, you need a baseline. So you must first watch the person when talking about innocuous issues.

*A Mixed Signal*

Also look for mixed signals. When someone's telling the truth, her words, her face and her body language are all congruent. For example, if a person is honestly saying that she likes you, her face is usually relaxed, offering a gentle smile and warm eyes. Her body is calm and open. But when she's lying, something is usually inconsistent. In the most obvious case, she may be saying she likes you, but she's not smiling. She may even have a clenched fist. Better liars can muster a smile, but it doesn't look natural. Even better liars can put on a convincing smile, but their eyes aren't smiling. Still better liars can control their entire face, but their bodies seem closed or cold. Look for mismatches between words and body language.

Poetry: Haiku

* + - * 1. Think of an actual event you have experienced such as love, death, or even smaller events such as seeing a weird bug on your shoe and being grossed out and curious.
        2. Write down the emotions you were experiencing
        3. Indirect Characterization (Hinting vs. Telling)

Do not hint at the object! Hint at the emotion. (Write down emotions, but never say them directly in the poem)

Why? Because it is more fun for the reader:

90/10 kiss metaphor

Homecoming Dance illustration with students (Reaction of others)

Indirect Characterization is a fancy way of saying author’s hint through:

Appearance: Facial expressions, gestures, clothing, hair, etc.

Actions & Reactions of Others: DO something!

Dialogue: SAY something!

Other Ways to Hint:

Description: Smell, taste, feel

Metaphor/Simile: This is like…

Internal vs. External Conflict **(Improv interior monologue)**

1. Give a group of 4 students an improvisation scene such as “Asking a girl to homecoming” or “First time in high heels”.
2. Two people in front will be “on-stage” and interacting. Two people behind them will be “off-stage” and revealing the inner thoughts of one of the on-stage characters.
3. The on-stage people should say a line that escalates the external conflict (rising action) such as “someone steals her purse and the first time in high heels girl must do something”.
4. For every on-stage line, the off-stage people should then say a line that represents their characters’ internal thoughts. These lines should reveal and escalate an internal conflict such as (the high heel girl doesn’t think she is pretty enough and therefore isn’t confident).

You may need to have students write down internal conflict ideas before the improvisation starts.

Instruct audience to watch and identify internal and external conflicts.