Lesson/Unit Title: Interpersonal Communication in Close Relationships

Content/Course Area: Interpersonal Communication

Dates of Implementation: April 17 – 21, 2012

Expected Student Outcomes:

Students will complete regular homework assignments, responding to journal prompts and case study questions based on class discussion, reading and in-class exercises.

As a culmination of their work, they will complete an out-of-class assignment, a Sociogram. Sociograms are visual representations of relationships among individuals. They are sometimes used as a literary analysis tool to explore relationships between characters in a literary work. They are also frequently used by educators to create a visual “map” of classroom interactions. Psychologists also use this tool to visually represent family, friend or workplace relationships and identify areas that may be challenging or problematic for clients.

Class members will evaluate their relationships within a chosen group with whom they have close relationships. This may be a family, friend or workplace group.
Contextual Factors

TWS Standard: The teacher uses information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment.

Task: Discuss relevant factors and how they may affect the teaching-learning process. Include any supports and challenges that affect instruction and student learning.

Prompt

Student characteristics. Address student characteristics you must consider as you design instruction and assess learning. Include factors such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, special needs, achievement/developmental levels, culture, language, interests, learning styles/modalities or students’ skill levels. In your narrative, make sure you address students’ skills and prior learning that may influence the development of your learning goals, instruction and assessment.

Instructional implications. Address how contextual characteristics of the community, classroom and students have implications for instructional planning and assessment. Include specific instructional implications for at least two characteristics and any other factors that will influence how you plan and implement your unit.

Suggested length: No less than 3 paragraphs but no more than 1 page.

The class I am working with meets at 2:30 in the afternoon, M/W/F at Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) in Ankeny. There are some generalizations that apply to DMACC students. For example, the school has open enrollment policies, so students may be people who never really thought of going to college to people who are taking classes at Iowa State and take a few courses at DMACC to fill some of their requirements. There is a broad range of academic ability and interest. This also means students vary widely in their study skills and their confidence level.

The Interpersonal Communication class is required for any student entering a medical field, including CRN, RN and medical aide majors. It is also required for those entering a photography field, and is an option for those students taking culinary arts classes – they can choose between public speaking and interpersonal communication.

These requirements mean the class is largely composed of students who are enrolled because the class is listed on their course outline, not because they have a particular interest in the subject.

The class is composed largely of students 22 years of age and younger, with three students between 22 and 30 (approximately). Two students have children, but one of those students has quit attending due to family challenges. The class includes students from various ethnic backgrounds, including Filipino, African, Russian, Arabic, Latino and American Caucasian. Given the nature of the class, these different cultures prompt varied discussion. We have personal examples of collectivist vs. individualistic cultures, for example.

There are 23 students enrolled in the class, but about 5 have stopped attending and 3 others attend on a sporadic basis. Presumably because it meets later in the afternoon, there are students who are absent regularly. I find this to be especially true on Friday afternoons. There are three “best friends” enrolled in the class. When they attend, they text, check Facebook on their smartphones, and talk to each other during class regardless of what else is going on. They stopped attending about 2 weeks before spring break.

Three of the students have official accommodations, including needing help with notes and extra time for tests. One of these students has a mild form of Asperger syndrome, and does not always pick up on social cues. He
speaks out of turn and says things that are sometimes a bit shocking or embarrassing to other students. For example, when the weather turned warm, he told a female classmate wearing shorts and a sleeveless blouse that she “looked nice,” but then added “I guess when it’s warm you don’t have to wear very much. You can wear almost nothing.” The class members generally handle these interruptions well and generally use patience in working with him in small group settings.

Class members are generally willing to respond to questions and participate in discussions. There are at least two introverted students who do not volunteer ideas or information, but participate well in small groups, so I use small group discussion and activities often. I try to vary the types of activities to keep the interest of the students. They have a good rapport with each other when participating in activities, and I often have to get them to stop talking during the activity debriefing because they have begun an interesting discussion either about the topic or something that relates in their lives.

I attempt to use current examples from pop culture or family life so that the younger students can relate to the examples. The room is furnished with moving tables and rolling chairs, making it easy to form groups in different configurations.

Because of these contextual factors, I am challenged to engage student’s interest and help them understand the relevance and importance of the course in their lives, more than just as a box to check off in their school plan. I am challenged to keep their interest and keep them awake in the late afternoon, and to create lessons and discussions that engage people of varying backgrounds.

Additionally, many of these students are young and have not yet had some of the particularly challenging relationship dilemmas which tend to arise through life, so they do not have as much experience to draw on.

Their maturity level in discussion things such as romantic relationships, sexual behavior and relationship abuse is also wanting on some occasions, so I need to manage any such discussions carefully and don’t open those topics up for much discussion.

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**Learning Goals**

TWS Standard: The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied and appropriate learning goals.

Task: Provide and justify the learning goals for the unit.

**Prompt**

**List the learning goals.** (not the activities) that will guide the planning, delivery and assessment of your unit. These goals should define what you expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit. The goals should be significant (reflect the big ideas or structure of the discipline) challenging, varied and appropriate. Number or code each learning goal so you can reference it later.

**Show how the goals are aligned with local, state, or national standards.** (Identify the source of the standards.)

Suggested length: No more than 3 goals—no more than 1 page
My learning goals for this unit are:

1) Students will understand and remember different styles of family and friend communication patterns.
2) Students will analyze their own relationships with family and friends, applying both new and previously learned concepts of interpersonal relationships to their own close relationships with family and friends.
3) Students will create a sociogram evaluating individual relationships in a particular close group. They will draw conclusions about the way communication concepts are used in and shape each relationship in the group. Students will also evaluate how the other people in the group perceive the relationships.

These goals are in line with DMACC competencies 3, 6 and 8 for SPC 126, as follows:

3. Analyze characteristics of communication in various levels of interpersonal relationships.
   3.1 Describe aspects of message content and structure of stages of relationships
   3.2 Discuss the role of self-disclosure and feedback in relationships.

The class instruction and work students will be completing during this unit specifically address relationships of different intensities, or levels, and the type of communication used in each of those types of relationships. We will relate information from previous chapters to family and friend relationships, including how to deal with disagreements and how to describe feelings. We’ll also discuss how message content and structure varies depending on the closeness of the relationship. We’ll discuss “friendship rules” and how they relate to self-disclosure and friendship maintenance and preservation.

Students will discuss these items in their oral and written activities and as they analyze relationships illustrated in their sociograms.

6. Explain methods of creating supportive communication climates.
   6.1 Define openness, descriptiveness, equality, and provisionality in the context of communication.
   6.2 Distinguish between the content and relational dimensions of messages.

Our study of family communication patterns and family characteristics lays the groundwork for describing the students’ family communication climates. Additionally, discussions about types of friendships, characteristics of friendships and navigating the space between friendships and family relationships will provide a background for analyzing the type of communication climate in friendships. I will also introduce the concepts of “frenemies” and maintaining ambivalent relationships. We’ll apply the previously-discussed concept that each message has relational as well as content elements to evaluating the messages in close relationships.

Students will evaluate these elements of supportiveness and defensiveness in communication climates to the relationships they explore in their sociograms.

8. Demonstrate active listening and response skills.

Each student will apply the information learned earlier in the semester about active listening, empathy, barriers to listening, and the stages of listening to the relationships examined in the sociogram. Students are to go to the family members or friends in the group being evaluated and ask them how they (the group members) feel about the relationship between themselves and the student doing the study. This kind of questioning requires active, empathetic listening.

Students will have a chance to improve their own listening effectiveness by both gathering the information and analyzing the implications of their findings in their sociogram.
These learning goals are appropriate for these particular students and the contextual factors that affect their learning and interest. Particularly since these are younger students, the process of describing and evaluating relationships is likely a new exercise for them. I find many students, including most younger students, have rarely thought about how their own behavior, feelings and attitudes affect their family relationships and their friend interactions.

I believe the insights gained from these discussions and activities will also serve to help students recognize the value of the class concepts and the relevance the course may have in their lives. The group activities will work well with the collaborative learning style of many of the class members and will hopefully pull out responses from the quieter students.

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**Assessment Plan**

TWS Standard: The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction.

Task: Design an assessment plan to monitor student progress toward learning goal(s). Use multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during, and after instruction. These assessments should authentically measure student learning and may include performance-based tasks, paper-and-pencil tasks, or personal communication. Describe why your assessments are appropriate for measuring learning.

**Prompt**

Describe the pre- and post-assessments that are aligned with your learning goals. Clearly explain how you will evaluate or score pre- and post-assessments, including criteria you will use to determine if the students’ performance meets the learning goals. Include copies of assessments, prompts, and/or student directions and criteria for judging student performance (e.g., scoring rubrics, observation checklist, rating scales, item weights, test blueprint, answer key).

Discuss your plan for formative assessment that will help you determine student progress during the unit. Describe the assessments you plan to use to check on student progress and comment on the importance of collecting that particular evidence. Although formative assessment may change as you are teaching the unit, your task here is to predict at what points in your teaching it will be important to assess students’ progress toward learning goals.

Suggested length: No more than 2 pages (copies of assessments may be submitted as an appendix).

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**Pre-Assessment:**

On Friday before the teaching period begins, I will review the assignment for the students. I will give examples of how to draw the sociogram and will present an overview of the discussion and the concepts we will cover. I will assess the effectiveness of this pre-assessment by seeing how well the students do on completing the sociogram.

**Mid-Assessment:** After explaining concepts, I’ll provide in-class exercises to verbally assess student understanding and clarify application of concepts as necessary.
Although I will award participation points based on making an effort to be involved in the exercises, I’ll look and listen particularly for students remembering the concepts we have just reviewed, including the terms and ideas, showing understanding of those ideas and terms by applying them correctly to their own family and friend situations. Therefore, these in-class group activities address the first three sections of Bloom’s Taxonomy and address students who learn best in groups and through interactions.

The mid-assessment activities are (See appendix for exact assignments and instructions):

- Conversation Orientation in Families
- Environmental Space and Family Communication
- Family Stories
- Friendship Rules

All are expected to be completed in class.

Post-Assessment:
Each student will complete a sociogram with an in-depth analysis of the student’s relationship to a group with at least five members. The student will analyze his or her perceived relationship with each other member of the group, as well as make an evaluation of each person’s feelings for him or her. They will analyze each relationship in terms of the class concepts from this and previous chapters in our text, including family communication patterns, listening steps, active listening, conflict, communication competence and self-disclosure. (See appendix)

I will determine learning based on the guidelines provided in the assignment and the grading rubric. Using the rubric as a guide, I’ll assign points out of 50 depending on how well students follow the guidelines.

The Sociogram and paper assessment addresses the last three sections of Blooms Taxonomy in addition to the first three. Students have the opportunity to build on their memory, understanding and application of the concepts by analyzing their personal interactions and relationships and evaluating their own and others’ behaviors, feelings and interactions. Finally, they will engage in creating a sociogram illustrating those interactions and relationships. I’ll assess their sociogram based on the rubric I’ve created for the purpose and how closely their product aligns with the stated goals.

Design for Instruction

TWS Standard: The teacher designs instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.

Task: Describe how you will design your unit instruction related to unit goals, students’ characteristics and needs, and the specific learning context.

Prompt

Provide a lesson plan. Describe at least two activities that reflect a variety of instructional strategies/techniques and explain why you are planning those specific activities. In your explanation for each activity, include:

- how the content relates to your instructional goal(s),
- how the activity stems from your pre-assessment information and contextual factors,
- what materials/technology you will need to implement the activity, and
- how you plan to assess student learning during and/or following the activity (i.e., formative assessment).

Technology. Describe how you will use technology in your planning and/or instruction. If you do not use any form of technology, provide your clear rationale for its omission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Students’ Needs</th>
<th>Materials Used</th>
<th>Instructional Strategies</th>
<th>Assessment of Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>Seeing and hearing examples of family/friend communication patterns</td>
<td>Visual learners, seeing the concepts portrayed, humor</td>
<td>Projector, computer</td>
<td>Ask discussion questions after viewing to reflect on assigned reading.</td>
<td>The answers to questions will be an assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture w/ Power Point and Discussion</td>
<td>Understanding – explaining and giving examples of different styles of family and friend communication patterns.</td>
<td>Engagement and critical thinking about concepts –</td>
<td>Projector, computer, voice</td>
<td>Add discussion questions into PowerPoint so I remember to use them. Use a 1-minute response after lecture to assess – “What was one thing you remember from today’s discussion?”</td>
<td>Reviewing the 1 minute responses and listening to answers in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities and Discussion</td>
<td>Students will analyze hypothetical relationships and their own relationships while working in small groups to complete activities and participate in role-plays. They will apply new and previously learned concepts of interpersonal relationships to their own close relationships.</td>
<td>Students in this class respond well to group activities. They often have difficulty applying information they learn to their own lives, so role playing and relationship analysis helps them apply concepts.</td>
<td>Pens, handouts</td>
<td>Debrief students after experiences in small groups and see if the responses make sense in relation to the material covered. Ask students to explain the reasons for their responses based on the instruction. Give ideas if the responses are not on target.</td>
<td>Listening to the answers during debriefing to see if students make relevant application of the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Homework</td>
<td>Students will create a sociogram evaluating individual relationships in a close group. They will draw conclusions about the way communication concepts are used in and shape their relationships in this group. They will evaluate how those group members perceive the relationships.</td>
<td>They have different skill levels in dealing with difficult relationships. Many of the students have troubled family and friend relationships. They often do not think deeply about these relationships or how they might be improved.</td>
<td>Computer, pen and paper.</td>
<td>Creating, analyzing – having students integrate and apply the information they’ve gained through the week in class.</td>
<td>I’ll analyze the student learning by using the rubric to compare desired outcomes with actual student outcome.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the first hour of class, I’ll use the videos to catch class attention and introduce the topic, then go through the necessary information in the PowerPoint and discussion questions. In the second hour of class, I’ll begin to encourage application of the concepts through written and spoken group interactions. After the activities are completed, I will explain the sociogram assignment again (I will introduce it the Friday before, so that students can begin thinking about it) and remind them of the requirements. During the third hour of class, I will complete some small-group activities and then debrief students on the sociogram assignment, which is due at the beginning of the 3rd hour of instruction.

**Instructional Decision-Making**

TWS Standard: The teacher uses on-going analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.

**Task:** Provide two examples of instructional decision-making based on students’ learning or responses.

**Prompt**

**Think of a where you needed to modify** your original design for instruction. Cite specific evidence to support your answers to the following:

- Describe the students’ learning or response that caused you to rethink your plans.
- Describe what you did next and explain why you thought this would improve student progress.

Suggested length: At least 4 paragraphs, but not more than 2 pages.

As I was developing this lesson plan, I realized that students may not get what I hope they will out of the sociogram assignment, based on my past experience with two written, take-home assignments. I have asked students to apply class concepts and terms to their personal experiences with a Johari Window/Self Reflection activity and with a Breaking Social Norms activity. With each of these previous assignments, the students overall failed to make the application to the class concepts in the paper as I had hoped they would.

I wanted to think of ways to correct this problem for the sociogram assignment. Therefore, as I was preparing, I created a more specific rubric that I handed out during my introduction and explanation of the assignment the Friday before the instructional week started. I also created a list of specific terms from the text that could apply to this assignment so that students would have specific ideas as to what kind of interpretations I was hoping to have them make. I hoped that these specifics would lead to more students following the directions completely and gaining more of the benefit that should result from the assignment as they fully analyze the relationships shown and apply class concepts to their own relationships. By doing this extra explanation and clarification, I hoped to help students reach the learning goal outlines in competency 3 (characteristics of communication) as well as competency 6 (creating supportive communication climates.)

During the discussion on Monday, we spent quite a bit of class time discussing friendship rules, how they are violated, and what unique friendship rules may develop in a relationship. Two of the students also gave personal examples of family circumstances and relationships that affect their family communication patterns. This was good discussion that helped class understanding, but I felt we needed more time to discuss remaining concepts fully. Therefore, I altered my lesson plan and continued the discussion during the second hour of class. This meant we weren’t able to complete all four in-class activities, so I sent the Family Stories activity home with students for them to complete. I also ran out of time and wasn’t able to have them complete the 1-minute
assessment (they are ready to leave promptly at the end of the class period), so I had to rely on their verbal responses for assessment. Family stories was a good activity to do at home because it allowed them an opportunity to think and analyze family relationships and the role of stories in those relationships, but was an easy-to-understand activity that didn’t necessarily need the group or instructor debriefing. Some students shared their family stories in class on Wednesday as well.

My ultimate goal as an instructor is for the students to improve their interpersonal relationships by applying class concepts to their own lives. It is my hope that this exercise provides one way that encourages them to make that kind of application. Participating in the thought and analysis required for applying concepts helps students meet learning goals as well. For example, a student may think about how his lack of interaction with siblings creates a defensive rather than supportive atmosphere in the home. Another student may recognize that while she gives her mother appropriate content messages, the relationship dimension indicates a lack of closeness because of her tone or time-oriented listening style.

These activities utilized different learning strategies such as brainstorming and discussion (Conversation Orientation), drawing and artwork, visuals (Environmental Space, Sociogram), humor and celebration, storytelling (Family Stories), problem-based instruction (Friendship Rules), technology (Sociogram), and writing and reflection (Sociogram, Family Stories).

Hopefully students all recognize the need to employ an empathetic listening style in order to improve family and friend relationships.

Analysis of Student Learning

TWS Standard: The teacher uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.

Task: Analyze your assessment data, including pre/post assessments and formative assessments to determine students’ progress related to the unit learning goals. Use visual representations and narrative to communicate the performance of the whole class, subgroups, and two individual students. Conclusions drawn from this analysis should be provided in the “Reflection and Self-Evaluation” section.

Prompt

Analyze data to explain progress and achievement toward learning goals demonstrated by your whole class, subgroups of students, and individual students.

Suggested length: Not more than 2 pages (supporting materials may be provided in the appendix.)

Pre-Assessment: The students who turned in Sociograms (100 percent of the students attending class on a regular basis – 17 out of 23 students enrolled in the course) all appeared to fully understand the specifics of creating the sociogram. They drew the figures appropriately and showed a ranking of the relationships. Six of the students made a small error of not listing the each of the people discussed in a list showing the ranking on the sociogram. Each student did each number the people in the figure they drew, as instructed. They were graded on the basis of the rubric created for this purpose. The drawing was worth about 10 points out of 50.
**Mid-Assessment:** Students responded to class discussion with good overall participation. Some students (four out of 17) did not participate fully, i.e.: they did not write anything on their handout sheets, and several of these same students did not contribute to the discussion.

When debriefing the activities, several students responded. They showed understanding and application of the following terms, among others:

- High and Low conversation orientation
- High and Low conformity orientation
- Family communication patterns and rules
- Friendship rules
- Betrayal
- Loyalty
- Jealousy and dealing with jealousy
- Openness, assurances, honesty

**Final Assessment:**

Out of 50 possible points on the sociogram, students earned the following grades:

- 50 points = 0 students (100 percent)
- 45-49 points = 3 students (90 – 99 percent)
- 40-44 points = 6 students (80 – 88 percent)
- 35-39 points = 8 students (70 – 78 percent)
- Below 35 = 0 students (69 or below percent)

Each student understood the basic concept and reflected in depth on close relationships in their lives.

Errors or omissions that lowered grades in order of frequency:

1. Failing to connect relationship analysis to specific class terms and concepts
2. Failing to analyze each relationship individually
3. Details of form such as failing to have an introduction and/or conclusion, failing to discuss perceptions, surprises or other

Learning at the bottom levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy did take place – students remembered, understood and applied the concepts of close relationships. All the class did well at creating the visual drawings in the in-class activity and in the sociogram that required writing. However, less than half the class seemed to implement the evaluation step in considering their own relationships and critiquing them based on the class terms and concepts as taught. Although the entire class did seem to know what those concepts were, about half of them either didn’t understand that part of the assignment was to apply those concepts specifically to their own relationships, or they didn’t understand how to do it.

**Reflection and Self-Evaluation**

TWS Standard: The teacher analyzes the relationship between his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.

Task: Reflect on your performance as a teacher and link your performance to student learning results. Evaluate your performance and identify future actions for improved practice and professional growth.

Prompt
Implications for professional development.

Select the learning goal where your students were most successful. Provide two or more possible reasons for this success. Consider your goals, instruction, and assessment along with student characteristics and other contextual factors under your control.

Or

Select the learning goal where your students were least successful. Provide two or more reasons for this lack of success. Consider your goals, instruction, and assessment along with student characteristics and other contextual factors under your control. Discuss what you could do differently or better in the future to improve your students’ performance.

And ….also include:

Reflect on possibilities for professional development. Describe at least two professional learning goals that emerged from your insights and experiences with the TWS.

Suggested length: At least three paragraphs, but not more than one page.

The results from the classroom discussion exercises were generally good. Students understood the close relationships in their lives as they related to book terms, and connected them verbally to class terms and discussions. (See appendix for copies of activities and some samples of responses). Many connected the concepts in their written work as well. We had good discussions about conversation orientation and expectations of conformity in families, for example. We also sketched places where the family gathers and took note of physical barriers to communication and other factors that encourage communication. We noted that families with low conversation orientation often have televisions or computers in the family gathering spaces, thus discouraging communication.

However, I believe incorporating role plays into the activities would help students do even better at internalizing concepts, so I’d like to rethink some of the group activities to include role playing. For example, after students sketch out their family gathering and communication locations, we could rearrange part of the classroom to simulate the environment, and have students act out communication experiences within that space to see if there were obstacles to communication or things that encouraged it. Perhaps role play would also help connect the concepts specifically to the student’s own lives and help them remember to or understand how to apply those concepts to their own relationships in the sociogram paper.

I was also disappointed to note that four students consistently did not fill out the papers or participate fully in group discussions. This behavior may have been taking place in previous discussions and I did not notice because there are many outspoken participants who keep the discussions lively. However, if individuals do not participate, they clearly won’t get the advantage of the reflection and participation. Following this activity, I started collecting papers from individuals after class activities, and for activities with no written component, I deliberately stand close to each group for at least a minute and encourage those who are not participating to do so by asking them specific questions or requesting feedback from them.

These students are likely not reaching learning goals 3 and 6 in the way I would hope, and they are not reaching learning goal 8. The in-class group interactions help students develop their active listening and response skills as much as any interaction in their own family or friend groups. When students deliberately withdraw from those interactions, they miss important opportunities for learning and growth.
When I graded the sociogram papers, I found that the majority of the students did analyze each relationship, and many did evaluate the behaviors, feelings and experiences that led to the current relationship state, but that half or more students did not use class and book terms as much as I would have liked, or they didn’t use them at all. Many did not complete another of the requirements of the assignment, which was reflecting on the relationship, clarifying it with the other person as needed or desired, then noting any surprises or insights gained through that process.

After some thought as to what I could do to remedy that result, I determined that the use of the rubric and list of suggested terms did help, but not enough. I decided that I can write a sample paragraph to illustrate the kind of analysis I’m looking for and share it with the students on Friday or Monday when I am reviewing how to draw a sociogram. The students universally did a great job constructing/drawing the sociograms. There were very few errors in drawing, and I did draw a sample for them using my own family as a model. Since that illustration seemed to help students visualize exactly what to do for the drawing, perhaps a similar sample will help for the writing portion of the assignment. A similar example could help with the reflection process. Another possibility is giving an in-class reflective writing sample.

As a result of my teaching and learning in this experience, I have would like to implement more detailed instruction and more detailed grading rubrics into my other assignments for this and other classes. I will also rethink some of the activities I do in this and other classes and try to alter and improve them based on my understanding of Blooms Taxonomy and the learning styles. I believe I can do a better job at helping students to not only remember, but create and apply concepts to their learning and their lives.

I would like to take a course or an instruction seminar on different assessment methods. I’d like to be able to develop a better pre-assessment that would give me better information on what students need to learn, and I’d like to be reminded of creative assessment methods I’ve learned in the past and learn new methods that I can implement to help students reach learning goals.

I appreciate the opportunity to evaluate a section of my teaching and look at ways I can improve and expand on my instruction to be a better teaching and help students internalize their learning more fully.
Appendix

1. Sociogram Assignment
2. Sociogram Rubric
3. Suggested Terms to Address
4. In class Activities:
   a. Friendship Rules
   b. Family Stories
   c. Environmental Space and Family Communication
   d. Conversation Orientation
Interpersonal Communication – Out of Class Assignment #2 – Perceptual Social Atom Sociogram

Assignment Objectives:
1. Focus your attention on your feelings of attraction, repulsion or indifference between you and others.
2. Identify your feelings for others.
3. Make perceptual guesses about their feelings for you.

Components of the Assignment:
1. Create a sociogram according to the directions below
2. Write a 2-3 page paper analyzing each relationship in your sociogram and explaining what you discovered about your relationships by completing this exercise.

Sociogram:
1. Identify a collective (or group) you want to explore. There should be at least 5 people in the group – more is better.
2. Make a list of names of the members of this group. If it is a large group, focus on the people with whom you have a significant relationship, including strained relationships or relationships with people who have passed away or who have left the group.
3. Rank each person in the group according to his or her significance to you. Place a number next to each person’s name. Several persons may have the same degree of significance.
4. Take a sheet of paper and place yourself in a circle at the center of the sheet. Using circles for females and triangles for males, place each person on the sheet according to where you perceive them to be in relation to you. (This does not mean where you want them to be, or where they may want to be, but your best guess of where they stand in relation to you.) Place the ranking number to the right of their name. (You may create this by hand or use a computer, if it is easy.)
5. Using the notational system that follows these instructions to indicate the feeling you have for each person here and now, draw a line using the code half-way between your circle and the symbol for the other person. Do this for each person in the collective.
6. Now make a perceptual guess about how each person in the collective may feel toward you here and now. In order to maximize the perceptual accuracy of the sociogram, it is necessary for you to role reverse with each person. Using the code draw a line from each person to meet the line drawn half-way from your place on the sociogram.
7. Review the relationship you have with each person and identify what the reasons are for your feelings for each person and for their feelings for you.
**Notational System:**

a. Mutual attraction/warmth _______ (solid line)
b. Mutual rejection _______ (dashed line)
c. Mutual indifference _______ (dotted line)
d. Attraction/warmth – Rejection _______ (solid line and dashed line)
e. Attraction/warmth - Indifference _______ (solid line and dotted line)
f. Rejection - Indifference _______ (dashed line and dotted line)

**Short Paper:**
- Paper is 1 ½ to 2 ½ pages long, 1” margins, 12 pt. font, your name and assignment name in upper right hand corner
- Paper should discuss your sociogram, the relationships it shows, and what you learned from the exercise. In the paper, discuss:
  - The group you are describing and their relationship to you.
  - Were there surprises?
  - Did you need to check your perceptions with others in the group?
  - What emotions did you observe that were not listed on the chart?
  - Were there emotions not seen at all?
- Relate your findings to concepts discussed in textbook and in class.

**General**
1. The assignment is worth 50 points.
2. Staple or lose 5 pts.
3. Attach your drawing to your written paper.
4. No folder necessary

**Grading**
- Did you complete the sociogram correctly?
- Did you list the members of the group and rank them?
- Did you express the relationships in terms of solid or dotted lines?
- Does your paper meet technical requirements?
- Does the paper answer the above questions listed?

This exercise is an edited version of an exercise by James Vander May, “A Perceptual Social Atom Sociogram”, *Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama* Vol. 28 (1975), p. 128-134. Edited by Ann E. Hale, M.A.
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<thead>
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<th>Perpetual Sociogram Rubric – Murdock</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociogram Details:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawn according to directions (circles, triangles, names, numbers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lines showing relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paper Details:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Length (1.5 to 2.5 + pp)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margins – 1”</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 pt font</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name/Assignment</td>
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<td>Stapled together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paper Content:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Each relationship described in at least one or more detailed paragraphs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions/Surprises:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you check your perceptions with other group members? Did you make note of any surprises or differences you found?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Text/Class Concepts:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you relate each relationship to class concepts as outlined on the handout and in the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing:</strong></td>
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<td>Is the writing clear and coherent?</td>
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Friendship Rules

Following is a list of the friendship rules discussed in the chapter.

a. Show support.
b. Seek support.
c. Respect privacy.
d. Keep confidences.
e. Defend your friends.
f. Avoid public criticism.
g. Make your friends happy.
h. Manage jealousy.
i. Share humor.
j. Maintain equity.

1. Are each of these rules equally important? In other words, is a friendship threatened when any of these rules are broken, or does breaking some of these rules affect the friendship more than others?

(Students initially said a relationship is threatened when any of the rules were broken. After some discussion it was clear that some were more important than others. For example, keeping confidences is much more important than sharing humor)

2. What kinds of experiences constitute breaking a rule? What experiences create an unstable or failed friendship?

(This question instigated a discussion about several incidents where friends were disloyal or betrayed other friends. Often respecting privacy, showing support, managing jealousy and keeping confidences were the rules that were broken that caused relationships to be threatened.)
Is there a family story that is told regularly in your family that you would be willing to share with a group? Think of a story. Take turns briefly telling these stories in your group. As a group, analyze the story. Can you place it in one of the family story categories (courtship, birth survival, other)? What purpose does this story play in your family relationships?

(Students shared some stories in class on Wednesday after thinking them over. A couple of students talked to families about this exercise. As a class, students decided that the book should add a third category --- humorous stories. Many family stories that are shared are humorous.)
Environmental Space and Family Communication Worksheet

Think of a place in your home where your family spends a lot of time. This could be an interior or exterior space. Sketch the floor plan in the space below. Include any relevant furnishings and decor. Also note the places that people usually sit.

Floor Plan Sketch

(Floor plans took a variety of shapes, but it was clear that low conversation families had other distractions in the rooms (such as televisions and computers) where high conversation families valued creating a conversation oriented room, and such items were in other rooms.

Now, consider how the location and its furnishings influence your communication. Would this setting be appropriate for a wide array of communication exchanges? For example, would this be an appropriate setting to talk about a serious decision that you have to make? Would this be a good place to spend time with a guest in your home? What does the use of space say about your family’s conversation orientation? Its conformity orientation?
Conversation Orientation – High or Low Conversation Families

1. Brainstorm and write down some of the topics of conversation that your family discusses regularly when you are together. Be as specific as possible (ie: instead of saying “We talk about education issues,” say “We talk about politics and local schools.”)

List some of these topics here:

(These topics ranged widely. High conversation orientation families listed a dozen or more topics. It was interesting to the class to hear other people talk about how they interact with their families in ways so dissimilar to their own. High conversation oriented students found it hard to believe that low conversation families really talk about the weather and don’t share what is going on in their personal lives, and vice versa.

It was also interesting that members of each family type were generally satisfied with the conversation that existed in the family. For example, low conversation oriented family members thought it would be positively disruptive to have loud, bantering discussions and were satisfied with low levels of family interaction and being left alone. From an academic viewpoint, I expect families who have more introverted members are likely low conversation, and pretty satisfied with it.)

Conversation Orientation describes how much fluidity and breadth there is in the topics family members discuss.

High conversation orientation families communicate regularly, disclose deeply, and often debate ideas and viewpoints.

Low conversation orientation families communicate infrequently, have limited topics of discussion and disclosure, and refrain from debate with each other.

Compare your conversation topic list with those in your group – do you have a high or low conversation orientation in your family?