

Thursday morning, Oct. 23, 2014

Hi everyone,

I am grateful for yesterday's presentation by Mark, and for the class's participation. I look forward to what may come of it. I noticed my anxiety about seeing students on social media, and accepted my decision to not intervene. I contemplated if the use of the media is like an addiction that prevents one from being present, or if there was some real need (and I don't know how one would be able to objectively define what "real need" means) associated with it. However, it seemed that with the passing of about 15 minutes, most people had taken care of whatever it seemed they needed to take care of and attention was more directed at the talk.

There was considerable discord as a result of some feedback I gave groups this week, and I apologize for any hard feelings. Steph and I have communicated with the Natural Building and Natural Disasters groups, and there has been frustration expressed with respect to poor, inadequate and/or ambiguous guidance.

I thought the Natural Building presentation was excellent and really liked that they are engaged with something real going on in the area. I request that they add a facet addressing how this all relates to the developing world. I regret if my feedback was interpreted as indicating they haven't done a good job. I think that the discord resulted because the group felt blindsided because they had thought they were doing exactly what was expected. I went back and read the project description, and although there was reference to the work in Pakistan, the description was really focused on the Sustainable Living Research Initiative that the group is thoroughly addressing.

The natural topic of community wide French drains doesn't seem appropriate for the class because of lack of connection to a community, the technology does not seem accessible to the poor, and I have found no information supporting the idea that such a technology would protect a community from a Tsunami. While the group had researched the Tsunami, I saw little reference to research on a solution. The group is negotiating a solution.

In my opinion, we have learned lots in the process and the discord is part of the learning process. I see every reason to be pleased about the Natural Building group, as all the work they've done has been very productive and I hope will continue. At the same time, what I have learned is the importance of being on the same page with the student groups. I think that I will produce a document more concisely describing expectations for the projects.

South Pacific communication and Tanzania Aquaponics were fine. I apologize that I don't have more to offer.