

Tuesday morning, Oct. 14, 2014

Hi everyone,

I found yesterday's discussion interesting and provocative. I was surprised by Steph's observation that things had become negative, as I had not taken it that way. However, I may have been in the minority, as others had expressed concern about the discussion, so I'm glad for Steph as a partner in this class. The question I asked about what response I/we should have to "distractive use of media" in the class quickly turned to advice on how to change the class. I have two thoughts on the matter:

- 1) It seems people would rather talk about how their environment might change to better suit them or result in more comfort for them than how they might change in response to their environment.
- 2) Structure is comfortable for people. While it may be annoying, when it is taken away, it can be unsettling.

I also regret saying, "that's not going to happen" with respect to the request for more direction and structure – a request for a roadmap of where we are going. I don't know that we won't provide more structure... and to assert it won't happen would in fact be a structure, wouldn't it? I wish to be open to this possibility. I also received statements and advice with regard to how to solve "the problem" with the class structure and with respect to media use. I didn't know there was a problem. I thought my question was to ask students what they thought I should do when I encountered students not engaged in what we're doing. I think your response was clear – I can change the way things are discussed in the class if I want to engage students better, but students do not find it appropriate for us to have a policy restricting their behavior in the classroom. I'm willing to go with this for a while, but am curious how student presenters feel – is it a matter of respect to give your undivided attention to the presenters?

I am interested about the relative benefit of increased structure vs. increased flexibility. It is interesting to me that there were requests for increased structure, and also requests that students be able to respond to each other without constant comment from the instructors. I see great benefit in taking "instructors" out of the discussion loop as well, but recognize that letting go and reaping the associated benefits requires letting go of control of the direction and having a structured plan. It's been otherwise in the past. This is the 7th year that I've been responsible for this class. In the past there was more of a plan. I think the class goes better now. I recognize tension when the environment is something other than what people are used to. However, I don't regard this as a problem, nor do I regard it as a problem that some students may regard this tension as a problem. I see that an important part of the class to be how people adopt technologies and adjust to imposed environmental and societal changes. So, I find the discomfort and disagreement about what should be done to be very appropriate for "appropriate technology".

My evaluation of the talks – all receiving 10 points.

Haiti Deforestation. I thought this group to be exceptionally professional and well prepared in their research of present NGOs and comparison for instance to China's deforestation.

Polylanders: I liked this presentation. I have little to share about it. I think it's important to note that this group is largely business/finance students, so they will have a tendency to see things as an opportunity to finance. It maybe helpful to explore their fundamental goals (to reduce

malnutrition, for instance) and consider other ways to do it... if even as just an exercise to become aware of their own “structured” way of thinking.

Coffee in Haiti: I think this was also a good presentation. I think that there was way too much text on the slides. Please add only enough text to remind you, the presenter about what you plan to say, and maybe key words for the viewers to note.