

## EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS AND ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Language Foundations

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### Organization of the session

This is not a lecture session. The learning activities created for you are intended to be delivered via small group interaction as you talk, read, and think about the issues raised in the tasks. The PPT presentations sent to you (available via Weebly) are a vital resource.

Work in groups no larger than 3-4 persons. Perform the tasks identified as 'Act 1', 'Act 2', 'Act 3'.

#### Act 1

**FOCUS:** Negative or positive affect produced by speech acts: (illocutionary intention; perlocutionary effect; Politeness theory; speech act theory)

- A. Write a 1 parag speech from the perspective of a very frustrated teacher, who is upset with a class because they are not working as they should. In the speech, use as many "you" messages as you can to belittle and berate the class; make sure you communicate your low opinion of them and how dimly you view their future prospects.
- B. Write a 1 parag speech from the perspective of a very frustrated teacher, who is upset with a class because they are not working as they should. In the speech, use as many "we" messages as you can to motivate and support the class; make sure you communicate your high opinion of them and how positively you view their future prospects.
- C. After each person has read their speech, the other members are to express how the speech they heard made them feel; then the person who made the speech has to explain what was his/her purpose in saying what they did.
- D. Discuss: what did this exercise reinforce for you about the power of words?

**RECAP:** View the slide show on Speech Act Theory, which was emailed to you (and is available on the Weebly).

## Act 2

“Blackhead chicken narrative”

The following excerpts are taken from actual interviews I conducted with students at two secondary schools in Trinidad. Suppose that we claim that each excerpt deals generally with the theme of caring, can you identify what the teacher/s in each extract say that communicates this? In other words, how do students know that the teacher/s care/do not care about them?

### **The Rock High School**

Responding to question about whether there are teachers who ‘like’ them.

Ray: Yeah.

Ray: I don’t know she name nah...(trailing off)

Ray: She, um, is ah nice lady. Does teach social studies or somet’ing.

Ray: Nah, I not in she class.

Ray: Is the way she does move, yuh understand. She’s talk to me an’ t’ing.

Ray: (long pause). She does put she hand on meh shoulder an’ ask meh how t’ings going, an’ if ah eat anyt’ing yet, an’ if ah say no she does buy somet’ing in the canteen for meh. And she’s ask meh if I doin’ meh work an’ to take care ah mehself an’ not get in bad company. She does look out for meh, yuh know?

Ray: Because she like meh. She care, an’ she doh want to see meh go wrong.

Ray: Like a pokemon.

Ray: You does feel wanted. You does believe in yourself and all kinda t’ing.

### **Moorville High School**

S 1: Only teacher like we, really like we, is Mr. Wang, the English teacher.

S1: Because he does tell we dat. He like the whole class. He does say so...that it have

Some teachers does say this is the worst class, but I believe in all yuh. He like we.  
S2: He does say real t'ing. Real good t'ing about we.  
S2: Because he want we not to do no bad t'ings in the future. He want we to come out Good.  
S1 and 2: Good.  
S2: Yeah  
S2: I does t'ink about myself in the nex' 4 years. I want to be a fireman.  
S1: the music teacher does talk to we real good.  
S2: The rest ah teachers does say all yuh is the worse.  
S1: It have a teacher, Ms G, who does say, "all yuh black head chicken, all yuh nigger. She's say real nasty t'ings. That's we form teacher. She say Indian prospering More than nigger.  
S1: They suppose to talk like we is dey chirren.  
S2: Dem eh care 'bout we and we eh care 'bout dem.

Group discussion: the group will discuss what it is about the language the students used, which indicate that the students felt the teachers were caring/uncaring.

If you have viewed the slideshow on speech act theory, what speech acts did each teacher use, which communicated these feelings to students?

Make a guess about what kinds of Big D discourse/s each teacher is tapping into via their speech.

### Act 3

You will have brought to this session the biography of some exemplary person whom you admire because they overcame many odds/ were resilient in the face of adversity and ultimately tasted success.

**Work in groups of THREE. Please sit with persons who belong to a different pedagogy group.**

Share with your group the story of the person whom you chose. Discuss the characteristics of the person and what it is about them that is remarkable and worthy of emulation.

Using your knowledge of Discourse (Big D) collaborate with members of your group to construct a speech which AFFIRMS the qualities and characteristics that you identified as remarkable and worthy of emulation in the exemplary persons you discussed above. That is, create a Discourse. It could be a Discourse of hope and optimism; a Discourse of persistence and 'believing in one's self' ; a Discourse of 'never giving up'. Your audience is a whole school assembly. The event could be a Speech Day, or a weekly assembly, or a Prize Giving function, etc.

After you have constructed this speech, engage in a brief group discussion about how your Discourse ties in to any idea/concept that you learnt about in the sociology or philosophy plenary today.

**RECAP:** [View the slideshow about discourse that is on Weebly](#)