Examples of Decontextualized and Contextualized Course Assignments

Example 1: Organizational Communication Assignment (no context)

Each student will select an organization to observe in weekly 1-2 hour sessions. Students will keep a journal of their observations of the organization. Students will share their observational experiences in weekly reports to the class. Students will write three short papers and one longer paper based on their research experience. Papers should be written to the specified lengths using APA style. Information needed to complete the assignments is located in the course readings.

Organizational Structure Paper (3 pages): Students will construct an organizational chart of the organization which they are observing and analyze the type of structure that characterizes this organization.

Network Analysis Paper (3 pages): Students will administer a sociometric survey of their organization and analyze the communication flow within the organization.

Diversity Paper (3 pages): Students will analyze the organization’s diversity, applying concepts from the reading.

Final Research Paper (5 pages): Students will write a paper summarizing their research experience and applying concepts from the reading.

Example 2: Organizational Communication Group Project (contextualized)

As a Communication Studies graduate, you’re employed by a small consulting company, ComConsult, Inc., that specializes in analyzing and recommending improvements in organizational communication for for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Your CEO has received several requests for the company’s services and has assigned them to the company’s consultant teams. Within the next two months, your team is to learn about the type of organization you’ve been assigned and specific communication issues within that type of organization, create and
carry out a plan for observational research of the organization and its communication, and write and present a report of your findings to the organization’s leadership. Follow-up to the report, in which the organization’s feedback on the report should be addressed, is due in three months.