Breakfast Club Essay, Research Paper

Body of Essay :

Evaluation of the Communication in the Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club film contained a wide variety of communication. Within this essay, the

various types of communication and behaviors within the film will be discussed. Key terms will be

pointed out and highlighted, as well as described in relation to the examples extracted from the

film. To begin with the film started out with a communicationclimate that was both tense and

without verbal communication. This was mainly due to the variance in membership constructs of

the characters involved. The character’s included the brain Brian,Andrew the athlete , the

criminal Bender, the princess Claire, and the basket case Allison. There was a great deal of

interesting non verbal communication taking place between these people. Theirreactions and

responses to each other demonstrated perceptual errors, which would be shown as the story

progressed. The genderconflict styles also played a role. The girls both tended tolisten, rather

than hold the attention of the others. This wasespecially true in Allison’s case, who never spoke.

Allison was introduced in the movie as the basket?case. Allison showed that she was obviously

insecure, seating herself facing away from the rest of the room (avoidance). She would

notspeak out. She was non?assertive, when asked what she wanted shewould not respond

(impervious response). She would only sit and smile to herself. You could categorize her in to

the passive aggressive label perfectly. She didn’t like herself (low selfesteem), or others. She

was both futile and helpless. The onlyway she displayed her anger was by giving a whimper. She

obviouslyhad a lot of pent up feeling, for she reveals a lot later in the movie through self

disclosure. Allison obviously lacked therespect of others, for she had no friends whatsoever

prior to hertime spent in this detention. She also used manipulators she chewed her nails, and

played with her hair. Brian was another case of insecurity. The influence of selfconcept was

strong with Brian Johnson for he had no sense of self. He could not meet the standards of his

desired self and wastherefore unhappy with himself as a person. He quivered at the non verbal

communication projected by Benders’ glare. Brian used passive aggression and was non

assertive. An example of these iswhere Bender starts acting up. Brian said weakly ” I think

weshould just do our papers.” Any suggestion Brian made throughoutthe movie was met by

disconfirming responses such as verbal abuse,impervious responses, or interruptions. Clair

was the “Prom Princess”, she had a high self esteem, andwas assertive. As well she was highly

emotional throughout thefilm. An example of her emotional language was her straightforward

statement to Bender “I hate you” This was after he hadbroken a promise not to laugh at her. Clair

also had the habit ofusing the defense mechanism of compensation. She made up for her lack

of general skills and abilities by turning the discussion to how popular and rich she was. Andrew

was the jock. He was an athlete who was assertive,confident, and had high self esteem. His

problem was that hecouldn’t think for himself, and was in that way passive. He showed

aggressive behavior when Bender acted as if he was goingto urinate on the floor. Andrew turned

and said “you whip it out your dead before the first drop hits, the floor. Two hits, mehitting you,

you hitting the floor.” He again demonstrated direct aggression later on in the movie during

another conflict with bender. He said “if we weren’t in school I’d waste you.” Andrew had made a

perception error. He saw bender as a “bum”. He said tobender “only weed burners smoke dope”,

which classified Bender asa drug using bum. Andrew was ignorant to the fact that Bender

hadany feelings, as if drug users didn’t have any. Later on Andrewrevealed his ability to be

empathetic. He showed empathy when he put himself in the place of the nerd he taped. Andrew

had taped upsome guys but. Afterward he thought about it. He put himself inthat kids place, and

looked at the humiliation that the kid musthave had to face. Again Andrew showed his

compassionate side withAllison. He asked her what was the matter with her. He used empathetic

listening. She then revealed through self disclosure that her problem at home was that her

parents ignored her. He could then relate to what she was going through.

Richard Vernon was in a constant communication and behavioral conflict with the students. This

was especially true in the competitive relationship with Bender. Bender showed no respect for

anyone, including this authoritative symbol, the principle. Theprinciple felt he had to raise his

voice and show his power. Therewas a lose lose situation here with Bender. He used the power

oflanguage with direct blunt statements such as ” you will not, we are going to, describe to me

who you think you are”. A great example of his powerful language is “Don’t mess with the

bull,you’ll get the horns”. He had low self esteem, he didn’t think thekids really respected him,

and he felt that they had changed, to revolt against him. He revealed this when he talked to

himself inthe mirror and also in his chat with the janitor. He made a perception error here by

saying that the kids had changed and were all “pricks”. Bender obviously had a bad self image.

Bender would just hackanyone down with his active aggressive behavior and verbal abuse. This

included statements such as calling Brian a “neomaxyzonedweeby”. He was obviously a

defensive listener and an ambusher. He was also effective at using emblems such as his middle

finger. He used a lot of evaluative language. His perception of Claire demonstrated this. “Such a

pristine girl, I’ll bet you’ve neverbeen laid.” He was always on her for being the spoiled princess.

He had constant conflict in a win lose situation with Andrew. There was a struggle for control

through both verbal and physicalaggression. Bender did however, show he was a leader. The

othersseemed to have a hidden respect for him throughout the movie. They followed and did

whatever he did. This led to smoking some pot. Here a great deal of tension, and the barriers of

their membershipconstructs were forgotten. In turn this led to a great deal of self disclosure

They had a group think. They all said that their lives athome were unsatisfactory, and this was

obviously creating debilitative emotions. Andrew revealed that he was a winner because his

father wanted him to be, not because he wanted to be. With help from Allison the fact that he

couldn’t think for himselfwas revealed. Bender described his life at home with his father. He told

of how he got a cigar burn on his arm for spilling paint in the garage. He also told about his

“banner” christmas, where he received a carton of cigarettes and was told to “smoke up son”.

Brian told about how his parents had such high expectations. Hesaid that he considered suicide

because he simply could not deal with a failing grade. Allison said she was a nympho, she did

this to trick Claire into admitting she was a virgin. Allison then saidthat she was just a compulsive

liar. Claire gave a lot of non?verbal cues, that she was not comfortable revealing that she was

avirgin. She gave disconfirming messages such as “can’t you just leave me alone?” Another

scene of disconfirmation was when Allisonasked if Brian and Andrew wanted to see what was in

her bag. She was going disclose some of her secrets to them and they both quickly answered

no. The interpersonal relationships developed steadily through the movie, although there was

the occasional backward step. Thecharacters affinity increased. This was demonstrated

through the confirming behavior. This included Claire putting her earring in Benders’ hand, and

giving him a kiss. Allison being kissed byAndrew was an example of relationship’s development

through the experimenting stage and of coming together.