Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM)

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CMM: Social Reality construction

- Rules theory & practical theory that looks at how people construct their own reality or meaning in conversations
- Rules are enmeshed into a conversation in which meaning is constantly being coordinated.
Some Readings on CMM

- Pearce, W. B., & Pearce, K. A. (2000b). Extending the theory of coordinated management of meaning (CMM) through a community dialogue process. *Communication Theory, 10*, 405-423
CMM Influenced by

- American pragmatists William James, John Dewey
- Symbolic Interaction- George Herbert Mead
- Gregory Bateson- pragmatism & systems theory
CMM view of self

- Self is created in stories and that these stories are guidelines (scripts) for actions.
- Self emerge from our culture
- Our selves are part of the process by which we make our social worlds. Patterns of conversations with our parents, brothers and sisters, teachers and classmates, and government officials produce the “self” that we know ourselves to be”. (Pearce, 1994, p. 251)
- CMM can help people enrich the scripts about the self to allow more possible actions.
Multiple contextuality (the hierarchy model): all actions and stories exist in fluid, malleable relationships.

Tension between stories lived (interactions) and stories told (narratives).

Emotions are actions.
The Hierarchy of Organized Meaning:
Six levels of meaning

- Cultural Patterns
- Life Scripts (the Self)
- Relationship
- Episodes
- Speech act
- Content
Culture

- the dominating context that persons bring into a relationship
- “the context of the contexts in which we find ourselves and into which we act; it is the usually taken-for-granted background, or frame, of our actions” (Pearce, 1994 p.302).
- Individualism or Collectivism (Martin & Nakayama, 2005)
Life Scripts

- Autobiographies
- Co-created
“the meaning of a particular relationship is determined by just those conversations that occur in it” (Pearce, 1994 p. 208).

Enmeshment - extent to which people identify themselves as part of the relationship
Episodes “function as frames that define some things as ‘inside and during’ the episode and others as ‘outside and before or after’ the episode” (Pearce, 1994 p.154).

“Episodes are made by a process called *punctuation*, in which conversants impose a set of distinctions on the ongoing stream of events” (Pearce, 1994, p. 154).
Speech acts

- *Speech acts* are defined as “actions that we perform by speaking”
- Questions, promises, threats, and insults (Pearce, 1994 p. 104).
Coordination of Meaning

- Coordination is said to exist when two people come together and attempt to make sense out of the sequencing of messages in their conversation.

- Coordination has individuals concerned with a higher moral order (honor, dignity, and character).

- Moral order is an opportunity for individuals to have an ethical stance in a conversation.
Rules

- Constitutive rules- how behavior should be interpreted
- Regulative rules- what should come next in the conversation
Unwanted repetitive patterns (URPs)

- Unwanted repetitive patterns are sequential and recurring conflictual episodes that are viewed as undesirable