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Risk Communication
Journal #2
September 8th, 2015

In class on Monday 8/31 we went around the room and each student read their journal entry. Most read the entire entry, while some picked out paragraphs they felt were important. This exercise caused me some anxiety, because it is not easy to read aloud your work. Ultimately, I found that it was an incredibly helpful thing to do in class for many reasons. The biggest value I see in reading our journal entries out loud is that it gives us time to listen to each other. I wanted to take notes, and really use what other people thought about the previous week’s readings, but in the end I found that listening to everyone speak was more helpful to me than taking notes. I didn’t want to be distracted. The act of writing the journal entry is also incredibly beneficial. I have to really focus on what we did the previous week, and despite the fact that we don’t have exams in this class it’s still very important to remember specifics about what we’ve done. As the semester rolls on it’s important to reflect on not only what we’ve read and discussed, but how the concepts of each reading build on each other.

The Beck reading for last week wasn’t particularly difficult to get through, but I find myself still having confusion over the concept of risk society. I understand that Beck views risk as a “mediating issue in terms of the division of labor between science, politics, and the economy in highly innovative societies (p.6).” but I’m not sure how that relates to risk as a consequence of the success of modernization. Does he mean that because of decisions related to growth as dictated by modernization and, possibly urbanization, new or different risks are encountered that previous societies did not encounter?

In week 1 I stumbled about with the concept of risk in risk communication. In a previous journal entry I stated that I could better identify examples of risk communication than I could define it. After reading Beck I have a much better understanding of risk. “Risks concern the possibility of future occurrences and developments,” so risk is anticipation. It seems there is an inherent tension when discussing risk, which is either due to the heightened attention to the word risk, or simply the potential for an event that will have a big impact. Risk is a possibility, and events that may or may not occur, but because of their potential impact communication and awareness about the potential for risk is vital.

I particularly enjoyed the chapters being divided amongst pairs of students. It helped me to understand the chapters better, but it also kept me from feeling like I have to talk about each chapter in class. I think the group that had Chapter 2 did a great job at explaining the power and importance of definition. The power that comes with defining something will impact how it is communicated and thought of moving forward.