The Relationship of Professor/Student Rapport with Undergraduate Students’ Change in Motivation and Engagement
Introduction

- Undergraduate student motivation and engagement have been pervasive problems in higher education (Pintrich & Zusho, 2007)
- National Research Council (2009) recommended providing more active, engaging instructional interventions
- However, one component overlooked in recommendations has been interpersonal relationships between students and instructors
Motivational research has suggested that interpersonal relationships between instructors and students can help improve motivation.

Velez (2008) suggested that instructors enter into relationships with students when they teach.

Therefore, an examination of students’ perceptions of rapport with instructors is warranted.
Theoretical Framework

- Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)
  - Triadic Reciprocity – Learning occurs as a result of bidirectional interactions between environment, personal factors, and behavior
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between professor/student rapport and change in motivation and engagement.
Methods
Population

- Undergraduate students enrolled in large CALS classes at UF

- Convenience cluster sample \((n = 306)\) participating students in 10 large CALS classes

  - Chi-square tests revealed no significant differences between the sample and population on demographic variables of interest
Instrumentation

- **Professor/Student Rapport Scale** (Wilson, Ryan, & Pugh, 2010)
  - 34 Likert-type items measuring rapport

- **Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire** (Pintrich et al., 1991)
  - 81 Likert-type items measuring motivation and engagement constructs
    - Constructs of interest for this study – student expectancy for success, values/goals, cognitive/metacognitive strategy use, and resource management strategy use
  - Post then pre design (Rockwell & Kohn, 1989)

- Post-hoc reliabilities ranged from .77 to .96
Data Analysis

- Data analyzed using SPSS v. 19
- Paired samples t-tests compared pre and post motivation and engagement
- Pearson product moment correlations used to examine relationships between rapport and change in motivation and engagement
Results
## Comparing Pre and Post Motivation & Engagement

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Resource Management Strategy Use</td>
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<td>305</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.07</td>
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## Relationships among Variables

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rapport</th>
<th>Change in SE</th>
<th>Change in V/G</th>
<th>Change in CMSU</th>
<th>Change in RMSU</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>.22</td>
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<td>Change in RMSU</td>
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Conclusions

- Significant differences in pre and post motivation and engagement
  - However, very small effect sizes
  - Small positive changes in motivation and engagement

- Low, positive relationships between rapport and change in motivation and engagement
  - Stronger relationships with motivational variables
  - Prior research has shown rapport to be positively related to motivational variables

- Students’ change in expectancy for success is highly related to their change in values/goals
  - Change in motivation has low to moderate positive relationships with change in engagement
Conclusions

- Change in cognitive strategy use has a very strong positive relationship with change in resource management strategy use
  - Students who are cognitively/metacognitively aware are using more learning strategies
Implications/Recommendations

- Slight positive change in motivation and engagement
  - Longer durations needed to adequately measure change in variables
  - Pre then post measures needed

- Instructors’ rapport with students might help students’ motivation and engagement
  - Approachability, fairness, friendliness, caring, respect
  - Teacher immediacy behaviors help build rapport
    - Verbal and nonverbal
Implications/Recommendations

- Increase in motivational variables varies with increases in engagement
  - Instructors should:
    - develop an understanding of student motivation and factors contributing to motivation
    - Teach students how to use cognitive/metacognitive strategies
    - Encourage students to utilize resources such as instructor, peers, tutors, online help,
  - Path analyses should be conducted to determine which variables mediate in the conceptual model
  - The assumption was made that higher motivation and engagement leads to higher achievement – achievement should be investigated as well
Thank you!

- Questions?