

# A COMPARISON OF STUDENT AND PROFESSOR PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER IMMEDIACY BEHAVIOR USE IN THE CLASSROOM



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# Immediacy in the Classroom

- Behaviors that bring about a perceived physical/psychological closeness.

## Verbal

Calling student by name  
Using humor  
Encouraging discussion  
Allowing for small talk

## Nonverbal

Smiling  
Gesturing  
Eye contact  
Relaxed body language  
Moves around the  
classroom

# Positive Effects of Immediacy

- **Increased willingness to talk in class** (Menzel & Carrell, 1999)
- **Less anxiety** (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001; Williams, 2010)
- **Increased class attendance** (Rocca, 2004)
- **Increased out-of-class contact** (Jaasma & Koper, 1999)
- **Higher student evaluations** (Moore et al., 1996)

# Immediacy and Student Learning

- **Meaningful relationship between overall teacher immediacy and overall student learning** (Witt, Wheelless, and Allen, 2004)
- **May be due to increases in:**
  - ▣ **attention** (Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Comstock et al., 1995)
  - ▣ **student motivation** (Christophel, 1990; Richmond, 1990)
  - ▣ **affect** (Rodriguez et al., 1996)

# Student vs Teacher Perceptions of Immediacy

- Strong relationship between student and teacher perceptions of immediacy. (Gorham and Zakahi, 1990)
  - ▣ Teachers have an accurate impression of how they present themselves to their students
- Significant difference between student and teacher perceptions of immediacy (Martin, 1994)

# Rationale and Significance:

## Current Study

- Purpose:
  - ▣ To compare student versus professor perceptions of teacher immediacy behaviors in large college of agriculture classrooms.
- Immediacy studies not previously performed in a College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
- Professors can utilize results to improve immediacy behaviors.

# Participant Description

- Professors and students in large classes (50-100 students) in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at UF
- Class sections:  $n = 10$
- Students:  $n = 555$

# Instrumentation

- Immediacy Behavior Scale
  - ▣ Measures perceived frequency of verbal and nonverbal immediacy behavior use.
  - ▣ Likert-type Scale: 1=Never to 5=Very often
  - ▣ Completed by students and professors during the fall 2011 semester.
  - ▣ Professors completed a modified version of the instrument
- Student means were calculated for each item and compared to professor responses.



# Data Analysis

- Student and professor responses were compared using the Borich Needs Assessment Model
  - ▣ Mean Weighted Discrepancy Scores were calculated using the following formula:
    - $$\frac{(\sum(\text{Professor Response} - \text{Student Mean})) * \text{MPR}}{N}$$
  - ▣ MPR = Mean of Professor Responses
  - ▣ N = Total Cases (10)

# High Discrepancy Items

- Discrepancy scores ranged from 4.52 to -2.32.

Item	Student Mean	Instructor Mean	Discrepancy Score
Provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc.	3.12	4.20	4.52
Will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole.	2.54	3.70	4.30
Moves around the classroom while teaching.	3.86	4.60	3.41
Gestures while talking to the class.	4.13	4.80	3.20
Smiles at individual students in the class.	3.59	4.30	3.06
Asks questions to solicit viewpoints or opinions.	3.76	4.40	2.80
Touches students in the class.	1.48	2.50	2.56
Is addressed by his/her first name by the students.	2.04	2.90	2.50
Asks how students feel about an assignment, due date, or discussion topic.	3.42	4.00	2.31
Calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated they want to talk.*	3.56	2.70	-2.32

Note. \* Indicates non-immediate behavior; Scores have been reversed. Scale: 1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = occasionally; 4 = often; 5 = very often.

# Low Discrepancy Items

Item	Student Mean	Instructor Mean	Discrepancy Score
Asks questions that have specific, correct answers.*	2.39	2.60	.54
Addresses me by name.	2.74	2.90	.47
Has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside class.	2.56	2.70	.39

Note. \* Indicates non-immediate behavior; Scores have been reversed. Scale: 1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = occasionally; 4 = often; 5 = very often.

# Conclusions

- Professors reported using certain immediacy behaviors more than students reported.
  - Giving feedback
  - Discussions unrelated to content
  - Moving around room while teaching
  - Gesturing while teaching
  - Smiling at students
- Professors and students agreed that professors are not:
  - Asking open-ended questions
  - Interacting with students outside of class time
- Students and professors reported that professors call students by name
  - However, students reported that professors do not call them by name specifically.

# How Can I Incorporate Immediacy Into My Classroom?

- Smile more!
- Talk about yourself.
- Include humor.
- Don't criticize your students.
- Don't use a dull/monotone voice while teaching.
- Learn your students' names!

### Student Information Sheet\*



Please attach a picture of yourself to this box. You will not get your picture back so make sure it's a copy.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Career Goals: \_\_\_\_\_

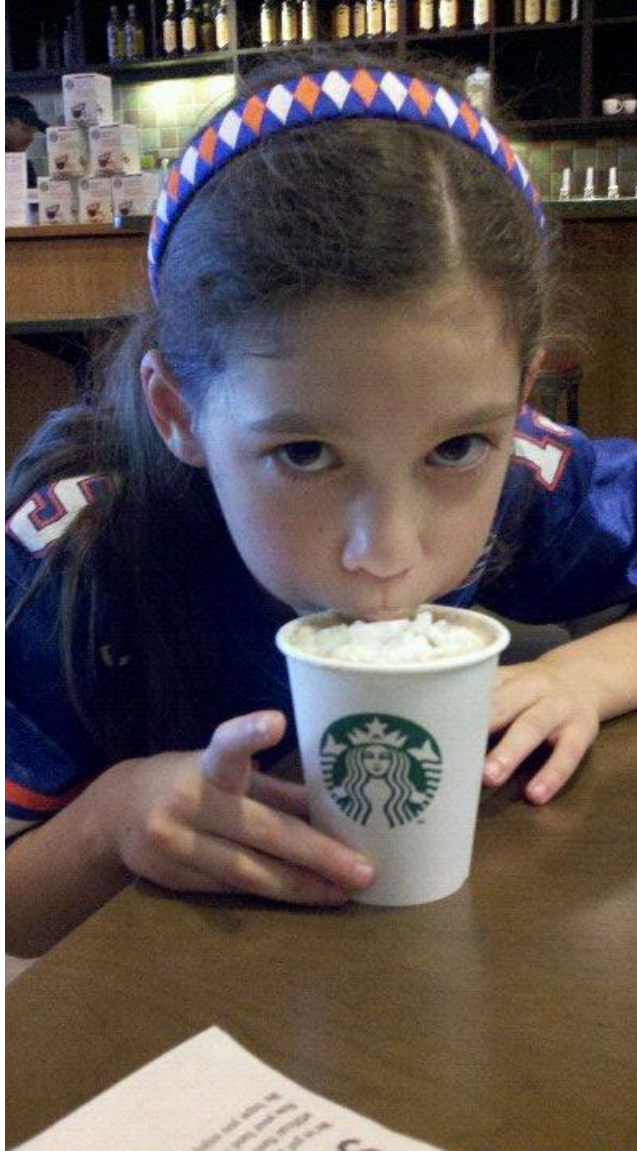
Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Song: \_\_\_\_\_

\*This information sheet is worth 1 bonus point if you hand it in during class and 3 bonus points if you hand it in during office hours by January 27, 2012.

# Questions?



Mommy, they'd  
rather be at  
Starbucks!