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

Karla P. Shelnutt, Christopher M. Estepp, & T. Grady Roberts
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

(Mehrabian, 1971; Andersen, 1979; Christophel, 1990)
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, Wheeless, 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.

Christophel, 1990
Data Analysis

- Student and professor responses were compared using the Borich Needs Assessment Model
  - Mean Weighted Discrepancy Scores were calculated using the following formula:
    \[ \frac{\left( \Sigma (\text{Professor Response} - \text{Student Mean}) \right) \times \text{MPR}}{\text{N}} \]
    - \text{MPR} = \text{Mean of Professor Responses}
    - \text{N} = \text{Total Cases (10)}
High Discrepancy Items

- Discrepancy scores ranged from 4.52 to -2.32.

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

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

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asks questions that have specific, correct answers.*</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses me by name.</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside class.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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!