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Title of Dissertation: _A Qualitative Study Of Teacher Immediacy And Its Effect Upon Student_

Motivation

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TEACHER IMMEDIACY

AND ITS EFFECT UPON STUDENT MOTIVATION

Doctoral Dissertation Research

Submitted to the
Faculty of Argosy University, Sarasota Campus

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

by

Jeffrey Brian Daughtry

August 2014

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George Spagnola, EdD, Program Chair, College of Education   Date

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by

Jeffrey Daughtry

Argosy University

August 2014

Doctoral Dissertation Research Chair: George Spagnola, EdD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study is to analyze and interpret the effect of teacher immediacy upon student motivation in the public charter school educational environment. Two aspects were investigated as an initial framework to the study: (a) immediacy encounters and (b) teacher dispositions of the relationship between propinquity and student motivation. The theoretical underpinnings outlining the study suggest that teacher immediacy may directly influence student motivation in the public educational environment. As found in the literature evaluated, paramount to motivational outcomes were gender, subject matter, demographics, educator disposition, and educational experiences. The teacher immediacy and student motivation relationship appeared to work collaboratively in ensuring academic success for children. Through the study and the synthesis of findings, educators will be able to further comprehend the essential working relationship between teacher immediacy and student motivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to my dedicated and devotedly supportive wife, Krissie, and to our exceedingly energetic children, Jackson and Kassidy.

DEDICATION

In honor and remembrance of my father, Dennis Michael Daughtry, the veteran departing our ranks, who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country, to attain peace throughout the world.

May 26, 1946 – March 9, 2014

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

—Carl Jung

 "The linear combination of instructor immediacy and presence is a statistically significant predictor of student affective learning, cognition, and, ultimately, motivation" (Baker, 2010, p. 2). The collaborative working relationship between an educator and his or her students is as much a part of the teaching and learning environment as the physical classroom environment itself.

Background of the Problem

Teacher propinquity refers to teacher immediacy in the classroom. The effect of teacher propinquity on student motivation in education remains unanswered; therefore, further investigation is warranted and paramount (Wlodkowski, 1978). "One aspect of motivation that makes this theory difficult to understand, as well as to apply, is the misleading beliefs related to this concept held by many" (Wlodkowski, 1978). Conflicting results from multiple distinguished scholars from Brophy to Wittrock continue to materialize annually from studies analyzing perceptual versus performance data. Teacher training and professional development should be kept up to date with current research and trends that are continuously evolving regarding teacher propinquity and its relationship upon student motivation. Motivated students frequently engage in classroom tasks, find the learning tasks significant, and demonstrate academic competencies at a far greater conceptual level than that of their counterparts.

Problem Statement

Comparable to any successful alliance, meaningful and effective communication is a vital component of the unique teacher-student relationship. The collaborative working relationship between an educator and his or her students is as much as a component of the learning environment as the educational institution itself. In the absence of previously established rapport, students fail to demonstrate the proper motivation inherent to their social and academic success. Previous research conducted by Ames in 1986 has neglected inadvertently to fully explore the unique dynamics inherent to this relationship and its effect upon student motivation in the often challenging and continuously evolving public educational setting.

Theoretical Framework

Mehrabian (1969) formally articulated the concept of immediacy as those behaviors that enhance closeness and nonverbal interaction with another person. Andersen (1979) further analyzed and interpreted the role of immediacy in post education and further proposed a universal definition: "Teacher immediacy is conceptualized as those nonverbal behaviors that reduce physical and/or psychological distance between teachers and students" (p. 544). Gorham (1988) provided supplementary clarity on the matter through the inclusion of verbal interaction that increased psychological closeness between teachers and students. In traditional classrooms, researchers found that teachers' immediacy behaviors can lessen the psychological distance between themselves and their students, leading to more effective learning and increased motivation (Kelley & Gorham 1988; Gorham, 1988; Christophel, 1990; Myers et al., 1998; Menzel & Carrel, 1999).

Critical research derived immediately thereafter identified teacher immediacy behaviors as distinguished between verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviors (Kucek, 2009).

As the complexities of education have continued to rapidly evolve, the issue of teacher immediacy has been the subject of extensive debate in research (King & Witt, 2009, p. 110). The research also found that the linear combination of instructor immediacy and presence is a statistically significant predictor of student affective learning, cognition, and motivation (Baker, 2010, p. 2). Previous studies consistently concluded that empowerment is primarily influenced by teacher behavior; however, this is not always consistent with contemporary research on achievement motivation (Frymier & Houser, 2009, p. 35). One descriptive correlational study, examining the relationship between teacher immediacy and student motivation, found that (a) the measures of verbal and nonverbal immediacy showed a substantial positive correlation with each other and (b) nonverbal immediacy and expectancy-value showed a moderate association. In addition, this approach showed a moderate positive correlation with avoidance (Cano & Velez, 2008, p. 76). A meta-analysis conducted by Witt, Wheeless, and Allen (2004) suggested that teacher immediacy, in general, facilitated student learning. Allen, Witt, and Wheeless's (2006) subsequent meta-analysis found that teacher immediacy first influenced students' affective learning, then their cognitive learning.

Research Questions

RQ1: Determine the value high school educators place on the efficacy of applied immediacy principles affecting students' performance and motivation.

RQ2: Determine the top five priorities high school educators select given a list of

common principles of verbal and non-verbal immediacy related to student performance

and motivation.

Table 1

High School Teacher Recommendations for Educator Immediacy Behaviors

Verbal	Non-Verbal
Uses personal examples	Uses gestures for emphasis
Encourages discussion	Leans toward student when talking to him or her
Uses appropriate humor	Looks at total class when giving information/directions
Addresses students by first name	Looks at specific individual when asking a specific question
Uses conversational tone rather than lecture	Smiles (when appropriate)
Refers to classes as "our class"	Uses physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact
Does not single out a student when there is a "group"	Provides praise across class, not to a selected few
Asks for "feeling" information or perceptions	Moves around class-not stuck behind the desk

Definitions of Terms

Immediacy: Teacher immediacy includes the behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, that help increase the perceived physical and psychological closeness between two people (Christophel, 1990). Such behaviors enhance affinity and closeness in communication (see McCroskey & Richmond, 1992).

Nonverbal Immediacy: ''The use of movement and gestures, time, eye contact, facial expression, touch, environment, vocal expressiveness, and dress'' (Thomas-Maddox, 2003, p. 3).

Propinquity: This refers to the act of producing strong interpersonal connections (Reagans, 2010).

Rapport: This means the actual relationships that are built between teachers and students (Wilson, Ryan & Pugh, 2010).

Verbal Teacher Immediacy: Velez (2008) says that it "Refers directly to stylistic verbal expressions used by teachers to develop within students a degree of like or dislike towards the teacher" (p. 42).

Limitations: Method

The study contains many applicable limitations not limited to but including the selection criteria of participants and the multitude of variations of teacher immediacy by student gender, grade level, and subject matter content area. The subjective results, however, are restricted solely to the individual interpretation of teachers regarding specifically which components constitute motivation and its impact upon engagement. The limited research inquiries posed via a collaborative survey instrument evaluated immediacy and engagement characteristics as identified by professionally certified

educators in the state of Florida. Perhaps one may feel compelled to inadvertently skew data in his or her favor merely to demonstrate better results. Often teachers are their own harshest critics as to specifically what constitutes high quality instruction. Therefore, it is possible they fear that a public display of weakness might ultimately land them in the office of the school or state administration on a summative evaluation. The results are limited to teachers to whom the survey was disseminated. All participants in the survey also elected to actively partake in collaborative discussion. The researcher was able to acquire data only from a limited timeframe; therefore, no comparisons to previous studies are readily available. Restrictions of time as well as sample size serve as limiting factors in this study.

Delimitations: Generalizability

A pertinent delimitation of this study is its sole reliance upon data acquired from a single educational institution of learning as opposed to a multitude of comparable facilities throughout neighboring adjacent communities. The results may not appropriately generalize data obtained beyond one facility of learning. A number of factors may vary considerably from school to school: demographics; academic performance; teacher perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral interactions.

This study analyzed and interpreted multiple factors correlated with teacher propinquity and motivation of students. Because the attitudes and relationships inevitably evolve over time, the study is delimited to the timeframe in which the data were acquired as opposed to an extended period of further evaluation. The study is delimited to a specific sample population consisting only of teachers assigned to the researcher's instructional institution.

Educational Significance

Interaction is both a catalyst for enhancing student motivation and an essential

ingredient for ensuring an environment conducive to student learning. Additional

research outlining the specific attributes of teacher immediacy may further enhance the

validity of instruction, thereby increasing students' mastery of fundamental academic

skills. The intent is to amalgamate results that will encourage educators to establish

meaningful relationships with students in lieu of merely maintaining strict adherence to

separation, thereby requiring teachers to distance themselves entirely. It is paramount

that educators first engage in a form of self-assessment to determine if they are merely

subject matter experts (SMEs)—content area facilitators of learning—or if they are

willing and capable of being the palpable, physical presence necessary to make a

difference in the lives of children.

> It is imperative to note that younger children as opposed to their counterparts have
> consistently reported feeling close or distant because of perceived physical or
> temporal proximity, because they felt good when they were with them, because
> they engaged in enjoyable activities together, and because they perceived their
> teacher to be watching over them (Davis & Wingfield, 2011).

Overview of the Study

The quantitative study strategically employed an association design to analyze

current perceptions of teachers willingly assigned to an inner city school located on the

outskirts of the pristine beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. The target population participants

offered their responses to a series of professional development vignettes during

collaborative discussions of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Because of

their schedule, only those teachers with 1st period planning were able to participate,

thereby inadvertently excluding educators who did not have a break from students during 1st period.

The evaluative instrument was administered to all participants in March 2014. Results obtained indicate the relationships between

- teacher immediacy and student engagement in the instructional workplace;

- the disposition of teacher immediacy and student motivation in the educational setting; and

- the variation of teacher immediacy by student gender, grade level, or subject matter content area.

The study evaluated correlations in responses derived from teacher perceptions regarding teacher immediacy and student motivation.

Summary

Chapter One briefly addressed an overview coupled with an introduction to the research, encompassing the background, problem statement, research inquiries, definitions of unique terms, applicable limitations and delimitations, and the probable significance of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit.

—John Steinbeck

Foundational Research

A lengthy body of extensively documented literature, produced over decades, overwhelmingly supports the assertion that nonverbal immediacy plays an essential and pivotal role in effective communication (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000). Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCinto, and Turner (2004) stated, "There is a recognized need for studies that provide rich details from the classroom to help expand our understanding of the relationships between student motivation, how such motivation is articulated or expressed, and effective instructional practices" (p. 98). Immediacy has often been linked to the motivational trait of approach-avoidance in that, "People approach what they like and simply avoid what they don't like" (Mehrabian, 1981, p. 22). Such approach-avoidance serves as an essential component of the behavioral drive/reinforcement theory; it has been used to describe immediacy as the manner in which students either seek out and feel comfortable interacting with a teacher or avoid and are apprehensive of the instructor (Richmond et al., 1987).

Further investigation regarding the distinct correlation between teacher immediacy and student motivation serves as a vital component in strengthening the quality of education throughout institutions of learning across America. Velez and Cano (2008) observed, "In teacher education, it is imperative professors continue to examine ways to identify important teacher traits and effectively prepare future teachers" (p. 76). Current research suggests that, "Teachers who personalize their teaching with a personal

degree of humor, stories, enthusiasm, and self-disclosure are perceived by their students to be effective in explaining course content (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2009). Hofer (2006) stated that, "Knowing more about how students are motivated and what you can do to structure a class that positively affects student motivation can make a significant difference in student engagement and learning" (pp. 140–141). Qualities of ideal professors include (a) being highly accessible and personable, (b) creating comfortable learning environments, (c) offering variety in the course curriculum, and (d) receiving as well as incorporating student feedback in course design and planning (Epting, Zinn, Buskist, & Buskist, 2004).

"The linear combination of instructor immediacy and presence is a statistically significant predictor of student affective learning, cognition, and motivation" (Baker, 2010, p. 2). Student motivation has been identified as a critical component of student success (Brophy, 2004). Research has indicated that when students are motivated to learn, they tend to produce positive behavioral and emotional engagement (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). An examination of the relationship between instructor immediacy (verbal and nonverbal) and student motivation directly supports learning priority four of the National Research Agenda (Doerfert, 2011). Priority four of the National Research Agenda seeks to focus on "meaningful, engaged learning in all environments" (Doerfert, 2011, p. 21). Students beginning the semester with either low or moderate stated motivation to study were found to have increased levels of motivation later in the semester when exposed to a teacher with immediacy behaviors. Students beginning the semester with high motivation maintained high motivation regardless of the level of immediacy they reported their teacher having (Frymier, 2009).

Communication and Empowerment

Positive teacher-student relationships—as evidenced by teachers' reports of low or reduced conflict, a high degree of closeness and support, and little dependency—have been shown to (a) support students' adjustment to school, (b) contribute to their social skills, (c) promote academic performance, and (d) foster students' resiliency in academic performance (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Teachers who consistently display positive communication behaviors and use challenging questioning followed by positive responses create pathways to potentially powerful relationships. These relationships between teachers and students can lead to increased student motivation and academic achievement in the classroom (Littlejohn, 2012).

Professors who are willing to offer further assistance to students out of class, beyond instructional time, have a meaningful impact on their students' desire and motivation to succeed academically (Shimotsu, Munsson, & Myers, 2012). Perhaps students interpret this increased availability as a collaborative team effort as opposed to a traditional superior-subordinate relationship. When students feel empowered, they report an increase in effective learning and learning indicators (Houser & Frymier, 2009). If teachers are able to increase student value in the course, students will be more apt to consciously and consistently work to master course concepts (Hofer, 2006). Kearney et al. (1988) found that teacher immediacy was, without reservation, the utmost powerful predictor of students' reported willingness to comply with teacher requests. Quality instruction includes the ability to induce intellectual excitement and establish positive rapport (Lowman, 1995).

Motivation and Immediacy

Schrodt and Finn (2012) argued that students' perceived understanding may operate as a theoretical mechanism linking student perceptions of instructor behaviors to student and classroom outcomes; prior research has provided some support for their contention. Building excellent rapport or establishing a positive relationship with students goes well beyond immediacy in predicting positive course and instructor ratings as well as degree of student motivation and learning (Wilson, Ryan, & Pugh, 2010). The components of teacher immediacy are based predominately upon a series of theoretical methods regarding motivation. The effect of such motivational conflict is often displayed in skipped classes and increased dropout rates (Brophy, 2004). Effective teaching is positively associated with students giving greater value to a course, motivating students to do their best, and creating a comfortable learning atmosphere (Young & Shaw, 1999).

Immediacy has its internal roots in the approach-avoidance theory, which basically theorizes that people will draw closer to what they like and avoid what they do not like (Mehrabian, 1981). When asked what it means to feel close to a teacher, another child responded, "It means that we like the teacher so much that we don't want her to leave. But sometimes, when she leaves, we think that she won't come back." (Mantzicopoulous, 2005).

In 1990, Christophel suggested that student approach-avoidance could be minimized by merely establishing a comfortable, engaging, familiar, and secure instructional environment that is conducive to learning. Martin, Myers, and Mottet (1999) discovered that students tend to avoid interacting with instructors they perceived to be uninterested or uncaring, particularly if repeated attempts to solicit help had gone

unheeded or had elicited disparaging responses. It is not uncommon for one at any age to react negatively to a less than pleasant situation or scenario.

Similarly, as we knowingly establish and nourish relationships with individuals who share common interests, students naturally gravitate toward educators they like. Wilson et al., (2010) reported that teacher immediacy deals specifically with behaviors that teachers can use in the classroom to increase the closeness between teacher and student; it does not encompass all of the details involved in interpersonal relationships.

Ainley (2006) noted that students' engagement with learning was triggered by their learning motivation and influenced by affective states. In describing an ideal teacher, students differ in the importance they assign to various instructor traits and behaviors. Some students report a greater preference for teachers who excel in teaching techniques, whereas others favor teachers who are caring and approachable (Buskist, 2002; Keeley, Smith, & Buskist, 2006). Verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors have been united under the construct of immediacy (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004). Ainley's (2006) study noted that, ''the behavior that follows, whether it involves disengagement or engagement with the task content, derives from the specific affective-cognitive organizations that are salient'' (p. 398). Prior research has found that students who feel understood by their instructors have higher levels of motivation, respect for the instructor, and classroom satisfaction (Myers & Bryant, 2002). Establishing a working alliance with students seems to contribute to an environment that is conducive for learning, promoting a sense of trust, and repairing relationships when conflict occurs (Meyers, 2008). Teachers perceived as both close and influential were also seen as

special or unique compared with the other teachers students had interacted with in the past.

Likewise, student immediacy has a mutual effect on teacher motivation (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000). Teachers who experience close relationships with students reported that their students were less likely to avoid school and appeared more self-directed, more cooperative, and more engaged in learning (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Klem & Connell, 2004).

Implications of Immediacy Theory on Teacher Performance

Immediacy communicates psychological availability and warmth (Locker & Wilson, 2008). In a profession blanketed with opportunities for one to initiate legal action upon interpretation of even the mere perception of inappropriate behavior, it is reasonable that educators will maintain acceptable distances between themselves and the children whom they are tasked to instruct. It is natural to assume that the more intimate and nurturing the learning environment is, the greater the perception of teacher performance and effectiveness. Teachers who by nature may be inclined to communicate within closer proximity may be reluctant to do so in the classroom because of the possible consequences of legal ramifications.

Rogers and Webb (1991) claimed that an ethic of caring is an essential part in defining an effective teacher. Empirical fundamental research suggests that immediacy is defined as psychological availability (Mehrabian, 1969), a useful component of the classroom milieu (Andersen, 1979). Immediacy may also be subject to the interpretation of the student, which may lend validity to their perception of teacher effectiveness. A variety of traditional measurable nonverbal means of immediacy may include certain

gestures and general facial expressions employed while viewing the class in its entirety. The results may vary dependent on the point of time in the course of study that the research is conducted. As time progresses over the duration of a course(s), it is inevitable that the relationship between teacher and students will mature with regard to constructive criticism, specific commentary geared toward ensuring individual student success, and a mutual understanding of underlying boundaries. Further, if immediacy and instructor effectiveness are indeed different constructs, nonverbal immediacy items should not correlate strongly with instructor effectiveness (Locker & Wilson, 2008). Robinson and Richmond (1995) argued that although verbal items do not always measure immediacy, they measure instructor effectiveness.

Teacher Perspectives

Teacher perceptions regarding immediacy may differ from student perceptions. Whereas a teacher may operate under the assumption that merely maintaining close proximity is an invaluable asset to ensure student learning, the student may feel uncomfortable or "hovered over," thus inadvertently impeding the ability of the student to maintain success. Researchers have documented common perceptions in the profession, across the curriculum and respective grade levels, about how teachers effectively demonstrate immediacy:

- maintaining open and effective lines of communication,

- presenting engaging classroom instructional activities,

- offering equal opportunities and access to student learning, and

- serving as a positive role model.

Additionally, student engagement plays a significant role during classroom learning, which is defined as an active commitment or an emotional attraction toward on-task behavior (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Current research suggests that teachers consistently reported an avid increase in conflict coupled with child dependency, and less closeness in teacher-child relationships when interacting with students who exhibited either a high level of external or a high level of internal problem behavior. In contrast, teachers reported less conflict and more closeness in teacher-child relationships when interacting with students who exhibit high levels of motivation and engagement as compared to other children (Nurmi, 2012).

Differentiation

Successful teachers understand the necessity to differentiate their physical proximity of students subject to multiple factors not limited to but to include age, gender, predisposition to abuse, etc. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure a safe and orderly educational environment conducive to student learning; however, at times this may be at odds with student and parental expectations. An increasing rate of alarming concerns has surfaced regarding the inability of the public education system to properly prepare our children for the global demands they will face significantly sooner than they realize. In the forefront of concerns is the common practice of enabling and coddling students in lieu of providing a structured and disciplined environment for them. David L. Goetsh suggests, "Teachers in today's politically-correct education environment are expected to be sympathetic, supportive, and encouraging at all times, even when students do shoddy work and put forth little or no effort." He believes that mediocrity is acceptable to today's standards and that, upon graduation, students are physically

incapable of accepting constructive criticism and consistently maintaining high standards. Goetsh spreads the responsibility across the ranks, insinuating that administrators at all levels of management need to stand strong in the presence of parents and the legal community.

John Rosemond concurs with this assessment indicating, "The touchy-feelies are more well-liked, mind you, but their students don't give them their best. They slack off, because they intuitively know that touchy-feely teachers are touchy-feely when they hand out grades." Perhaps one of the more newsworthy quotes in TIME Magazine was articulated by Michelle Rhee in 2008 upon assuming command as Chancellor of troubled Washington, D.C. area schools:

> The thing that kills me about education is that it's so touchy-feely . . . People say, 'Well, you know, test scores don't take into account creativity and the love of learning.' . . . But if the children don't know how to read, I don't care how creative you are. You're not doing your job.

Conflicting views exist regarding what constitutes a nurturing educational environment conducive to student learning. Diedrich (2011) suggests, "Instead of trying to shame teachers into higher test scores, we would do better to focus on cultivating a professional mindset of continually improving effectiveness for all teachers." Provided the right environment, even substandard learners are likely to attain greater levels of success. Kylac (2014) maintains that the touchy-feely approach is an essential educational tool and that, when used appropriately, it can bridge the gap between concrete and abstract concepts:

> With five fingers on a hand and five sentences in a paragraph, a child has something visual that he/she can look at and manipulate. Using this concrete device the child will eventually be able to draw the connection between the idea of a paragraph or essay and the written, concrete version of that idea.

Over the course of an interview, another teacher described her personality as "touchy-feely" and said that creating a warm environment for her students "came naturally." She therefore stayed away from the gimmicks that other teachers used, such as points and cards (Gatimu, M. & Reynolds, 2012)

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.

—Plato

Methodology

The qualitative design for this study centered predominantly on the effect of teacher propinquity on student motivation in public education. A qualitative approach was selected to investigate and analyze the various educators' perspectives of immediacy regarding student motivation. An advantage of using a qualitative design is that students, whose viewpoints are usually ignored, had the opportunity to be heard. The study aimed to determine whether a collaborative working relationship between an educator and his or her students is as much as a part of the learning environment as the instructional setting itself. This study is an investigation into the phenomen governing teacher immediacy and its effect upon student motivation. The purpose of this study is to analyze and interpret the effect of teacher immediacy upon student motivation in the traditional public charter school educational environment. Employing a qualitative approach, the final objective was to unearth a significant relationship between teacher propinquity and student motivation.

Research Questions

RQ1: Determine the value high school educators place on the efficacy

of applied immediacy principles affecting students' performance and motivation.

RQ2: Determine the top five priorities high school educators select given a list of

common principles of verbal and non-verbal immediacy related to student

performance and motivation.

Research Design

The research method used in this study is articulated in this chapter. It is

subdivided into: Population and Sample Description, Instrumentation, Data Collection,

and Data Analysis.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Methodology

Population

The population for this study comprised 40 Florida State-certified teachers,

equally divided into eight small cluster groups of five members each. At the time of the

study, the school had an enrollment of 1010 cadets.

Sample

The sample was 40 teachers: 19 male and 21 female. The demographic

characteristic of educator participants in the sample accurately replicated the overall

student population of the institute: about 10% more women than men. Twenty-seven of

the selected participants possess undergraduate degrees as their highest academic

degrees; the remaining 13 participants have advanced graduate degrees. The median

level of experience is 16 years in the traditional public educational setting.

Sampling Methodology

The sample population was derived from the institution's educator population; it

was primarily purposive, also commonly referred to as convenience sampling. As

implied in the title, the sampling population contained participants readily accessible at the time of the study. Babbie (2001), however, believes that relying on available subjects is extremely risky. For example, this method does not allow the researcher to have any control over the representativeness of the sample. The subjects are selected just because they are the easiest to recruit for the study, not because the researcher considered them representative of the entire faculty population (Castillo, 2009). Despite its recognized limitations, convenience sampling is the best method for obtaining a sample population when time and conditions prohibit random sampling (Neuman, 2009).

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

Data Collection

Qualitative research generally employs a series of approaches regarding collection of data involving direct interaction on an individual yet more intimate level. In certain cases, it may be advantageous to facilitate a group interview to harness results on a larger scale. Because qualitative research methods of acquiring data are rather time consuming, it is not always the most cost effective approach when employing assistants. The validity of the information derived, however, provides a more intense conceptual understanding of the subject matter being investigated. The primary sources of acquiring data are individuals coupled with questionnaires, group interviews, direct observation, focus groups, and action research.

Vignettes and Strategies

Vignettes are commonly employed in a variety of teacher certification programs as well as in further professional development and in-service trainings. The primary objective is (a) to improve knowledge and understanding, (b) to outline specific

expectations among scenarios one may encounter over the course of an academic school year, and (c) to provide researched-based solutions.

A commonly accepted approach to using vignettes is that teachers

1. read a vignette,

2. comment in groups on generic issues raised in the vignette, and

3. discuss as a class broad issues of application (e.g., Tippins, Nichols, & Dana, 1999).

Another method requires a multitude of pre-service and in-service teachers to thoroughly read the material independently and formulate an educated opinion overnight, which also promotes collaboration among professionals in the field. Another commonly accepted approach regarding vignettes is collaboratively establishing thematic and cross-curricular unit and lesson plans designed specifically around the content provided. One of the advantages to this approach is that teachers realize the pedagogical and content aspects of the vignettes. A fourth method involves the reading of the vignette at the beginning and end of a semester, reflecting on the vignette each time, and then analyzing the reflections by comparing them. This procedure allows teachers to monitor and see change in their perceptions over time (Veal, 2002). Collaboration on each respective vignette may include a series of multidimensional education facets not limited to but including unstructured, semi-structured, and structured. The formality of each session is generally implied via the aforementioned title. It is the responsibility of the researcher to establish the appropriate criteria with regard to the audience and the sensitivity of the subject matter at hand. It is imperative that the subjects being evaluated partake in open discussion as opposed to traditional responses to predetermined inquiries. Extensive

planning, preparation, and organization are paramount in ensuring responses conducive to successful research.

In the interest of maintaining the highest degree of integrity of the study along with the desire to avoid the exceedingly high probability of cliques blatantly collaborating in an effort to sway popular opinion, small groups were predetermined and categorized alphabetically. Four unique vignettes were disseminated among the eight groups to encourage professional collaboration and commentary. Inevitably, group members assumed their traditional roles in society, ranging from the self-proclaimed to an actual leader, whereas people-pleasing followers and pessimistic naysayers surfaced, ultimately providing the perspectives synonymous with the attitudes and perceptions of the local populace. The group dynamics accurately reflected the cultures and values inherent to the educational institution. While variations of viewpoints are foreseeable, the collaboration and sharing of ideas is essential for a deeper conceptual understanding of the subject matter at hand. Individual responses were shared via email to maintain confidentiality, ensure validity in statements, and uphold the integrity of viewpoints. Information was recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Strategies for Application

Initially, a general synopsis articulating the essential components regarding the overarching theory of immediacy took place. Immediately thereafter, the researcher facilitated a discussion as it pertains to immediacy in the classroom. It is imperative to derive preliminary knowledge from all participants, as appropriate, to offer validity to the discussion coupled with an appreciation for applicable concepts presently exercised in the classroom environment. Unique situations of comparable inquiries were postponed to the

end of the session to maintain compliance within the allotted timeframe. The 40

participants dispersed into eight previously assembled clusters. The researcher or his

designee disseminated a single vignette to each group and made sure that every other

group received the same material. Group progress was properly monitored to ensure

productivity. Over the course of a 20-minute discussion on teacher-student immediacy,

each group collaboratively addressed the research questions.

Vignette One

A young and inexperienced—yet highly influential—educator, armed solely with

the perceptions of educational theorists as outlined in her collegiate studies, has

successfully concluded her inaugural month of service in the educational setting.

Maintaining allegiance to her undergraduate studies, Ms. Luttrell continuously remains

fully abreast of the traditional politically correct textbook remedies for successfully

managing the classroom environment and of the applicable studies in support thereof.

Given the increased media interest regarding inappropriate student-teacher relations as

well as the legal ramifications of such, she is strategically legal-minded. Therefore,

Luttrell has maintained an exceptionally safe distance from her students; she has

conscientiously refrained from physical embracement of any kind.

Vignette Two

Mrs. Murphy has successfully concluded her fifth year of employment, albeit in

her fourth school. She consistently demonstrates immense pride in her chosen profession

and possesses a growing confidence in her subject matter core content area. Armed with

horrific tales of teachers who participated in the mass exodus of the profession within this

timeframe, she feels she has reached a comfort zone and **yet is** far from complacency.

Although chronically fatigued with her duties and responsibilities as a young mother, she is consistently nurturing in the classroom and understands that each child in her room represents someone's entire world. Mrs. Murphy is generally kind and proactive in handling the majority of unique academic cases brought before her. She greets each of her students with either a handshake or a hug, depending on the level of immediacy the child reciprocates at the time. Murphy firmly believes that, because she is a mother, society understands her willingness to embrace children; in certain unfortunate scenarios, it may constitute the only physical attention they receive. One unremarkable Tuesday afternoon in late December, a child appears particularly discouraged, unmotivated, and withdrawn. As a mother and as a committed professional, Mrs. Murphy believes that comforting this child is a necessary component inherent to her duties and responsibilities as a teacher.

Vignette Three

Ms. Axelson, commonly referred to by her students as well as their parents, who preceded them in her instructional quarters, as a firm and consistent instructor, has invested countless decades in the profession. She is convinced that with every generation passing through her door, the gene pool requires further cleansing and in many cases simply to be drained entirely. Because of the sluggish economy coupled with the insurmountable expenses her grown children continue to accumulate, retirement is not even remotely an option. Axelson loathes everything this "unappreciative generation" symbolizes. Their unprecedented sense of entitlement supersedes selfless service and the other attributes synonymous with character development deeply embedded in her personality. The slightest inkling of personal human contact with a child is promptly

saturated in sanitizer, instantaneously erased, comparable to an indiscernible miscalculation on the aging and obsolete chalkboard. She believes in hard work and discipline. Repeat often to obtain best results. Failure is an option for those who adopt substandard characteristics; Ms. Axelson believes it is the sole responsibility of the child to adopt a deep-seated passion and motivation for the content, without any persuasion at her behest.

Vignette Four

Introducing Ms. Diane Dietz. Once upon a time, she was an upscale corporate lawyer who, without warning, found herself lying in front of the proverbial bus, her dream home foreclosed upon, her luxury convertible repossessed, and her priceless collection of fine art reduced to a single line ad on Craigslist. She had handled high profile cases, cases she would inevitably revisit in the post-911 world containing countless historic textbook revisions she now assigned to special-needs freshman students. Her teaching income, or lack thereof, is less than 1/8 of her previous earnings, yet the internal fulfillment of job satisfaction was beyond compensation. Granted she struggles with supervising 32 children, juggling limited restroom breaks, and having to gulp down her lunch in less than 20 minutes—she is happy. She motivates and inspires the children; she encourages and celebrates their successes no matter how small.

Focus Groups

A quantitative researcher may elect to engage in focus groups when it is more appropriate to obtain information from a group rather than an individual. The limited or inability of acquiring resources as a direct result of restrictions on time, personnel, and funding may lend validity to partaking in a focus group setting. Phenomena gathered is a

culmination of collaborative discussion, social interactions, and opinions disseminated over the course of the meeting. Because the average size of a social group ranges from five to ten participants, individuals may inadvertently be neglected at times. The researcher is not enabled to interact with all participants; therefore, certain perspectives remain unacknowledged. Best practices often suggest at least three separate focus groups, allowing the researcher to compare and contrast results respectively. It is paramount that the researcher maintains the unique dynamics of each group when interpreting data. The researcher needs to be an exceptional facilitator, as it is not uncommon for one or more participants to engage in multiple attempts at monopolizing the discussion and, therefore, purposely swaying perception in their favor.

Observation

Observation in qualitative research enables a unique opportunity of descriptive notes ensuring the breadth and depth of the situation is evaluated accordingly. Concerns may exist, however, regarding that the subject purposely may alter his methods simply because he is aware of the presence of the researcher, thereby jeopardizing the validity of what is physically taking place. In addition, while the researcher is actively documenting data, he may inadvertently neglect to acquire a poignant and pivotal moment of applicable research. The information obtained is also subjective to any biases the researcher may possess. Observation allows for real-world application as opposed to theoretical rhetoric, providing a solid basis of support for related information obtained.

Multiple methods of quantitative research data collection may be rendered as a result of embarking upon observations. Tangible evidence not limited to applicable artifacts and evidence from the scene are irrefutable. Pieces of relevant documentation

are administrative policies and procedures, governing rules and regulations, and information disseminated in support of a particular given objective.

Data Analysis

All applicable data obtained were categorized and processed accordingly to ensure a seamless transition from acquiring to interpreting. The overarching objective was to unearth the phenomena and determine the relationship to the data obtained. A predetermined method of coding, deciphering, and categorizing aided in organization. Transcripts were evaluated with specific attention to applicable notes in the margin, highlighted, underlined, or otherwise annotated as pertinent. Information had to be categorized into major and minor subsections subject to the relevance to the study. Recurring themes and similar findings ultimately dictated the location where artifacts and evidence were placed. Certain categories were inevitably merged with those closely related to avoid duplicating efforts. A series of continuous checks and balances ensured that information was being processed accurately and categorized according to relevance.

<div align="center">

Limitations and Delimitations

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Limitations

The study contains multiple limitations regarding the participants and applicable variables. The research closely examined, analyzed, and interpreted the effect of teacher immediacy upon student motivation in the school educational environment. The results were limited to criteria outlined in the research questions and respective vignettes disseminated.

The traditional paper instrument survey would be insufficient for evaluating teacher propinquity and its relationship to student motivation. A standard pencil-and-

paper survey lacks the flexibility to fully explore the details of personal feelings that participants may have toward vignettes. The sample was limited solely to teachers employed at the public charter school in the 2013-14 academic school year; all survey responses are self reported.

Delimitations

A critical delimitation of the research study was its primary dependence upon data acquired from an isolated institutional context; therefore, results may not accurately communicate findings beyond the confines of the respective facility. The study analyzed and interpreted factors correlated with propinquity and motivation at one public charter school yet neglected to expand beyond the traditional brick-and-mortar confines of a single institution. An additional delimitation was the short timeframe in which the data were acquired, because it is possible that participants' perceptions may vary later or earlier in the year. The study was predominantly delimited to a restricted sample population at the researcher's institution of employment. In an effort to effectively mitigate this delimitation, an in-depth description of the institutional context was supplied to readers to assist in transferring findings to an alternative facility of learning.

<center>**Summary**</center>

The population for this study was college-educated professional certified educators. The study comprised 40 educators actively employed at their respective place of employment. The sample population was derived from the institution's population; it was primarily purposive, also commonly referred to as convenience sampling.

Qualitative research generally employs a series of approaches regarding collection of data involving direct interaction on an individual yet more intimate level. Vignettes

provide a consistent series of scenarios disseminated to a vast population for analysis and evaluation. In *Data Collection in Context* (1981), Ackroyd and Hughes identify three types of assessment: factual, attitude, and explanatory. Qualitative research interviews are conducted in three formats: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured. A qualitative researcher may elect to engage in focus groups when it is more appropriate to obtain information from a group rather than an individual.

Collaborative analysis of vignettes regarding immediacy provided a unique opportunity to acquire an understanding of varying perceptions in the professional educator community. All applicable data obtained were categorized and processed accordingly to ensure a seamless transition from acquiring to interpreting. The overarching objective was to unearth the phenomena and determine precisely what it means in relation to the data obtained. The study closely examined, analyzed, and interpreted the effect of teacher immediacy upon student motivation in the nontraditional public charter school educational environment. The results were limited to criteria outlined in the research questions and vignettes. A critical delimitation of the research study was its primary dependence upon data acquired from an isolated institutional context; therefore, results may not accurately communicate findings beyond the confines of the respective facility. The study analyzed and interpreted factors correlated with propinquity and motivation at one public charter school, yet the study neglected to expand beyond the traditional brick-and-mortar confines of a single institution.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

–Henry Adams

Introduction

Research Question One Findings

Forty teacher participants were asked to assign a category measuring their belief regarding the value of applied immediacy principles. This question is an anchor question that establishes the respondent's position relative to the concept being considered. Assigning value to the Likert scale (e.g., *very high* = 5, *high* = 4, *medium* = 3), eight persons selected *very high* thus yielding 40 as the total score for the first category. When combining *very high* with *high* (*n* of 19), the total value was (40 + 44) = 84 (see Table 2). If we combine the scores for the three remaining lower value scores our total is 41, which is significantly lower than the scores of those who value immediacy as a viable teacher strategy.

Table 2

How Educators Ranked Immediacy Behaviors

Likert Scale	*N*	Value
Very High	8	40
High	11	44
Medium	8	24
Low	4	8
Not at all	9	9

Rankings of Immediacy Behaviors

Table 3 shows how the 40 teachers in the sample population assessed the various verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviors. The totals at the bottom of the table show relatively low values in the areas of using personal examples, encouraging discussion, using appropriate behavior, and inquiries regarding perceptions. High values were obtained in addressing students by first name, using conversational tone as opposed to lecture, and not singling out students when a group exists.

Research Question Two Findings

Table 3

Verbal Immediacy Scores

Behavior	Score
a. Uses conversational tone rather than lecture	109
b. Does not single out a student when there is a group	89
c. Refers to class as "our class"	85
d. Addresses students by first name	84
e. Encourages discussion	66
f. Uses appropriate humor	64
g. Uses personal examples	34
h. Asks for "feeling" information (perceptions)	39
	Mean 71.25

Table 4

Non-Verbal Immediacy Behavior Rankings

Behavior	Score
a. Provides praise across class, not to a select few	99
b. Uses physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact	97
c. Smiles (when appropriate)	95
d. Looks at specific individual when asking a specific question	90
e. Looks at total class when giving information/directions	75
f. Leans toward student when talking to him or her	57
g. Moves around class, not stuck behind the desk.	36
h. Uses gestures for emphasis	32
	Mean 72.63

Table 4 shows how the respondents assessed the educators' non-verbal immediacy behaviors. The scores show relatively low values in the areas of using gestures for emphasis, leaning toward students when speaking, and moving around rather than being stuck behind a desk. High values were obtained in looking at the entire class when delivering instruction, looking directly at specific individuals during inquiries, smiling when appropriate, physical proximity when interacting, and whole class praise.

Table 5

40 Respondents' Ratings 1-5 for Verbal Priorities

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
1		3		2	5	4	
	1	2	4	3		5	
5		2		4		2	1
4	2		3		1	5	
2	1		4		5	3	
	4	5		2	3	1	
1	3		2		4		5
2		3		1	5	4	
4	2		1	5		3	
5	3		4	2			1
3	1	2		5		4	
	5		1	2	3		4
		5	3		1	4	
		5	2	3	1	4	4
	2	1	3	5		4	
	4	3		5	1	2	
	3	1	4	5		2	
1		5	3	4	2		

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

40 Respondents' Ratings 1-5 for Verbal Priorities

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
		5	1	3	4	2	
		2	3	1	4	5	
			4	1	2	3	5
			3	4	1	2	5
		5	1	2	3		
	1		5	4	3	2	
3			2	5	1	4	
	3		4		5	1	
		2	3	4	1	5	
2			5	3	4		1
	5		2	3	4		1
1	4	3	5	2			
	4	1	2	3	5		
			5	3	1	2	4
	2		1	3	5	4	
	3	2	4	1	5		
	2	1	3	4			5
	5		1	2	3	4	
		5	1	3	2	4	
	2	1	4	5		3	
	4	5		1		2	3
34	66	64	84	109	85	89	39

Table 6

40 Respondents Ratings 1-5 for Non-Verbal Priorities

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
	5		2		1	4	3
	1	2	4	5	3		
	2		1	4	3	5	
3		4	1	2	5		
	2		5	4	1	3	
3			1	2			5
	1		2	3	4	5	
			4	3	1	2	5
	3		2	5	1		4
3		5	1	4	1	2	
	4	2	1	3	5		
	1		5	2	4	3	
	1	2	5	3		4	
	1	3		2	4	5	
5	1	2			3	4	
			5	1	2	3	
3	2		1		4	5	
	2	3			1	4	5
	3		2	1	4	5	

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)
40 Respondents' Ratings 1-5 for Non-Verbal Priorities

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
		4	3	1	5	2	
		1	4	2	3	5	
	1		3	4	2	5	
	5	4	1	2			3
3	5		4	1	2		
	4	2	3	5	1		
	5	3	4	2	1		
	2	5	1	3	4		
		1	5	2	3		4
		5	1	4	3	2	
		3	2	1	4	5	
3		2		1	4	5	
	3		4	5	1		2
	1	4	3	2		5	
		2		1	4	3	5
	1	2	4	5	3		
		1	3	2	4	5	
	1	4	2	5		3	
5		3		1	2	4	
4			2	3	5	1	
32	57	75	90	95	97	99	36

Table 5 presents the respondents' ratings on a Likert scale of 1-5 for priorities of verbal behaviors. Table 6 represents how the 40 respondents rated the non-verbal behaviors from 1-5 on a Likert scale.

Recommendations for Vignettes

Vignette One. A young and inexperienced yet highly influential educator, armed solely with the perceptions of educational theorists as outlined in her collegiate studies, has successfully concluded her inaugural month of teaching. Maintaining allegiance to her undergraduate studies, Ms. Luttrell remains fully abreast of the traditional, politically correct textbook remedies for successfully managing the classroom environment. With an eye to the increased media interest regarding inappropriate student-teacher relations and the ensuing legal ramifications, Luttrell has maintained an exceptionally safe distance from her students, refraining from any physical embracement whatsoever.

Vignette One Collaborative Group Responses

GROUP 1:

> Increase emphasis on instruction and decrease concerns of acceptance. Your position is merely to provide quality instruction, not to be accepted into their social circles. Respect will take time and must be reciprocated consistently. You get what you give, which applies to most aspects of life.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Encourage discussion

- Use conversational tone rather than lecture

- Refer to classes as "our class"

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Lean toward students when talking to them

- Look at specific individual when asking a specific question

- Provide praise across class, not to a select few

GROUP 2:

> You are no longer in college. School is no longer in session for you as a student so wake up. What worked on your midterm, final examination, and/or graduate thesis may not always be the most practical approach in real-world application. Use these materials as a resource, not mandates. Make the material relevant in a context they can relate to, not something you found on page 14.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

- Use appropriate humor

- Use conversational tone rather than lecture

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Lean toward student when talking to him or her

- Smiles (when appropriate)

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

GROUP 3:

> Rule number one is an essential nonnegotiable. Be yourself under all circumstances. Do what you do naturally instead of being a cookie-cutter textbook clone. This profession will rob you of your personal identity and leave you in the dark. These resources are nothing more than templates and guides. Most of the educational philosophers you studied died out long before Google, right along with their prehistoric ideas and beliefs. If you cannot be yourself, you will not succeed in this profession and, more importantly, if who you are is not what the school or community wants—leave.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

- Uses appropriate humor

- Address students by first name

- Ask for "feeling" information or perspectives

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Lean toward student when talking to him or her

- Look at specific individual when asking a specific question

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

GROUP 4:

> Your students can sense and smell your fear. They will pounce like hounds and tear you to shreds if you do not get some backbone and put down those obsolete texts. Be your own person, not something you liked in a particular chapter. People make that mistake in this field all the time. They read something in college, it works for that particular individual way back when, and then they get all surprised when it does not work here. That is when the blame game ensues.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Address students by first name

- Encourage discussion

- Use personal examples

- Use appropriate humor

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Provide praise to the whole class, not to a select few

- Move around class—not stuck behind the desk

- Look at total class when giving information directions

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

GROUP 5:

> Congratulations on surviving the "honeymoon period," but your work hadn't started until after Christmas. It is all about consistency, and many people just cannot be consistent. They shift gears like a pendulum and follow the path of perceived least resistance. The angels you had the first semester are not what you are getting from under the Christmas tree. Stay strong and stay the course. They will be looking for vulnerabilities on return and any sense of you lifting the reigns and enabling chaos. It is innate and in their DNA.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Encourage discussion

- Use conversation tone rather than lecture

- Do not single out a student when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Look at total class when giving information or directions

- Look at specific individuals when asking a specific question

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

Vignette Two. Mrs. Murphy has successfully concluded her fifth year of employment, albeit in her fourth school. She consistently takes immense pride in her chosen profession and possesses a growing confidence in her subject matter core content area. Armed with horrific tales of teachers who participated in the mass exodus from the profession within this timeframe, she feels she has reached a comfort zone yet is far from complacency. Although chronically fatigued provided the duties and responsibilities as a young mother, she remains nurturing and understands that every child in her room represents someone's entire world.

Mrs. Murphy is generally kind and proactive in handling the majority of unique academic cases brought before her. She greets all of her students with either a handshake or a hug dependent upon the level of immediacy the child reciprocates at the time. Murphy firmly believes that society understands her willingness, as a mother, to embrace children; because in certain unfortunate scenarios, her embrace may be the only physical attention they receive. One unremarkable Tuesday afternoon in late December, a child appears particularly discouraged, unmotivated, and withdrawn. As a mother as well as a devoted professional, Mrs. Murphy believes that comforting this child is a necessary component inherent to her duties and responsibilities as a teacher.

Vignette Two Collaborative Group Responses

GROUP 1:

> Murphy is probably going to invest a great deal of her personal finances bailing her own children out of messes she could have resolved had she not attempted to save the world. A lot of teachers make this mistake and enter the profession thinking they are smarter than those who have invested their lives in their students. They are the ones who nod their heads in faculty meetings yet close their classroom doors and do exactly what they think will work best. You need to separate your personal and professional life, as they are never meant to intermingle, as the results would prove disastrous.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use conversational tone-rather than lecture

- Encourage discussion

- Do not single a student out when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Use gestures for emphasis

- Lean toward student when talking to him or her

- Look at total class when giving information or directions

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

- Move around class—not stuck behind desk

GROUP 2:

> Five years in, get out now. You can do more elsewhere and with a lot more money and respect. This is the "make it of break it" point of your career, and it is time to make a move for the door. Take it from someone who has been there. You are young, educated, experienced, and this profession will only break your heart. You are going to wake up one day and realize the mistake you made only when you are sharing this conversation with a rookie teacher. Take it from those who have been down the road you are walking on.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Encourage discussion

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Lean toward a student when talking to him or her

- Look at a specific individual when asking a specific question

GROUP 3:

> Be careful in trying to mother someone else's child. It is all fun and games until someone has a bad day and takes it to the top. Every day you are not reprimanded is another day you dig the hole that much deeper. What may be appreciated one day will later be misconstrued and be the end of your career. Seen it happen before, many times over the years. Exercise caution in changing the world, because a lot of people are content with the way it is, regardless of what you think you are hearing along the way.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Address students by first name

- Refer to classes as "our class"

- Do not single out a student when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Look at total class when giving information or directions

- Look at specific individual when asking a specific question

GROUP 4:

> You just cannot treat all kids the same. We have all tried but different strokes for different folks. Different people do things in different ways. It does not make them right or wrong, just different. They even have a technical term for it— 'differentiation.' Everyone plays favorites, whereas only few of us are willing to admit it. Kids see through these things, and parents absolutely know when their child is not the chosen one. While some will appreciate and depend on that daily hug, others will misunderstand. And at the same time, some people just don't want to be touched. So, do not touch them. They are not your children, so quit taking chances acting as if they are.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Do not single out a student when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Look at total class when giving information or directions

- Provide praise across class, not to a select few

GROUP 5:

> She is on the verge of personal and professional burnout and probably not yet even 30 years of age. The time for change is now. Trying to be everyone's mama takes a toll. Many people are guilty of this early and at the end of their career, but it never lasts forever. Inevitably, at some point we all get burned. No good deed shall go unpunished; it is simply a matter as to what degree one will be persecuted. You put yourself out there only to later be judged by people who neither understand nor appreciate your intent.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Refer to class as "our class"

- Do not single out a student when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Look at total class when giving information or directions

- Provide praise across the class, not to a select few

Vignette Three. Ms. Axelson, commonly referred to by her students as well as their parents who preceded them in her instructional quarters as a firm and consistent instructor, has invested many decades in the profession. She is convinced that with every generation that passes through her door, the gene pool requires further cleansing and in many cases, simply to be drained entirely. Given the sluggish economy coupled with insurmountable expenses, her grown children continue to accumulate; retirement is not an option. Axelson loathes everything this "unappreciative generation" symbolizes. Their unprecedented sense of entitlement supersedes selfless service and other attributes synonymous with character development deeply embedded in her personality since exiting the womb over six decades prior. The slightest inkling of personal human contact with a child is promptly saturated in sanitizer, instantaneously erased, comparable to an indiscernible miscalculation on the aging and obsolete chalkboard. She believes in hard work and discipline. Repeat often to obtain best results. Failure is an option for those who adopt substandard characteristics. Ms. Axelson believes it is the sole responsibility of the child to adopt a deep-seated passion and motivation for the content without any persuasion on her behalf.

Vignette Three Collaborative Group Responses

GROUP 1:

> This teacher is gradually deteriorating into retirement on autopilot, not because she is excelling in her profession but rather because she is unwilling to adapt to modern day society. I can promise you she is resistant to change and probably depends on announcements and memorandums to acquire information because she is not ever going to turn on a computer. They say change is inevitable and progress is optional, whereas she is symbolic of the latter. While we need people like this in administration or central office, there is no room for this type in the classroom since the 1950s.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use conversation tone rather than lecture

- Do not single out a student when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Smiles (when appropriate)

- Lean toward student when talking to him or her

GROUP 2:

> Axelson is clearly a waste product of the public education system. It is quite evident that she has felt the winds of change blow past her just long enough to change directions. She has seen administrators come and go and felt as if they have built their careers upon her back. Her expectations will never be met, and she will more than likely remain in the field until the day she dies. It is quite probable that students and their parents speak negatively about her, which ensures she will never receive any respect. We all know and have worked with someone like this, and it is less than a pleasant ordeal, to put it bluntly.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use appropriate humor

- Encourage discussion

- Use conversational tone rather than lecture

- Ask for "feeling" information or perception

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Smile (when appropriate)

- Provide praise across class, not to a select few

GROUP 3:

> We have all had this teacher and, to this day, know people just like her. I bet her first five years were all colorful bulletin boards and creativity, but she is institutionalized. Too many ungrateful children and unappreciative parents have hardened her soul. She has reached a point to where she is merely incorrigible,

resistant to change, and probably thinks she knows and can do everything in the profession better than anyone.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

- Encourage discussion

- Use appropriate humor

- Use conversational tone rather than lecture

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Use gestures for emphasis

- Smile (when appropriate)

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

GROUP 4:

> Her students will always appear to be the best disciplined, but they aren't learning. They are in fear. Learning to distrust authority figures and refusing to open up. Read, write, and regurgitate. Test scores are more than likely through the roof, which leads many to believe learning has occurred. It is all about rote memorization. Retention thereafter would be an interesting study to conduct on students who have reluctantly passed through her classroom doors. Straight rows, clean floors, quiet students, and minimal learning taking place is the daily routine.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

- Use appropriate humor

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Smile (when appropriate)

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

GROUP 5:

> We need more teachers like this. They create an environment conducive to learning and structure. With her level of experience, no one can tell her anything. She is at the top of her game, and no one can tell her anything different. This is a true veteran not being played by the games in education and struck upside the head with the educational pendulum. Our group has very few recommendations necessary for one executing her duties to standard.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Use gestures for emphasis

Vignette Four. Introducing Ms. Diane Dietz. Once upon a time, an upscale corporate lawyer who without warning found herself lying in front of the proverbial bus, her dream home foreclosed upon, her luxury convertible sedan repossessed, and her priceless collection of fine art simply reduced to a single line ad on Craigslist. She had handled high profile cases that she would inevitably revisit in the post-911 world containing countless historic textbook revisions she now assigned to special-needs freshman students. Her teaching income, or lack thereof, was not even remotely comparable to 1/8 of her previous earnings, yet the internal fulfillment of job satisfaction was beyond compensation. Although she struggled with having to supervise 32 children, juggle limited restroom breaks, and gulp down her lunch in less than 20 minutes, she was happy. She motivates and inspires children; she celebrates their every success no matter how small.

Vignette Four Collaborative Group Responses

GROUP 1:

> This is the kind of person who can truly make a difference in the lives of children. She has real-world experience and knowledge of the world outside of education. She has been at that next level and found where she fits most comfortably, which is with these kids. It is not about the money, it is about making a profound difference in the lives of children.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Does not single out a student when there is a group

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Provide praise across class, not to a select few

GROUP 2:

> These kids are her family. She takes it home with her at night. They are her world, and she makes it her mission to personally ensure they are in a comfortable learning environment. This is the type of person every parent prays their child will end up with.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- No recommendations

GROUP 3:

> She knew what the job paid when she entered the profession, so don't start telling us what you made before you taught. These people coming in from the outside trying to tell those of us in the trenches what we need to be doing has never worked. I wish I had a 20-minute lunch uninterrupted. She is going to later regret her career choices, at least from a financial standpoint. She needs to leave her ego and resume at the door.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

- Encourage discussion

- Use appropriate humor

- Use conversational rather than lecture tone

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Use gestures for emphasis

- Smile (when appropriate)

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

GROUP 4:

> This is the best type of teacher one could ever ask for. She knows what it takes to be successful in the real world and can share this knowledge with students who aspire to meet their dreams. We could all aspire to mirror her methods. There is nothing more she needs to do as she is already the complete package.

Elements of immediacy verbal recommendations:

- No recommendations

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- No recommendations

GROUP 5:

> Knowing what she knows now, it is not too late to get back into corporate America. Although she seems content now, it is temporary. She is one ungrateful parent away from walking away. We all are, but this one has a more promising life in her past to compare it to.

Elements of verbal recommendations:

- Use personal examples

- Encourage discussion

- Ask for "feeling" information or perceptions

Elements of immediacy nonverbal recommendations:

- Smile (when appropriate)

- Use physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or interact

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.

–Japanese proverb

For the first presentation, 40 teachers were asked to assign a category measuring their belief regarding the value of applied immediacy principles (see Table 2). This question is an anchor question that establishes the respondent's position relative to the concept being considered. Since one can assign values to the Likert scale (e.g., very high = 5, high = 4, medium = 3), the results show that eight participants selected *very high* thus yielding 40 as the total score for the first category. When combining *very high* with *high* ($n = 19$), the total value was (40 + 44) 84. If we combine the scores for the three remaining lower value scores our total is 41, which is significantly smaller than the scores of those who value immediacy as a viable teacher strategy.

Table 3 shows how the 40 teachers in the sample population assessed the various verbal immediacy behaviors. The totals at the bottom of the table show relatively low values in the areas of using personal examples, encouraging discussion, using appropriate behavior, and inquiries regarding perceptions. High values were obtained in addressing students by first name, using conversational tone as opposed to lecture, and not singling out students when a group exists.

Table 4 shows how the 40 professional educators in the sample assessed the various non-verbal immediacy behaviors. The totals at the bottom of the table show relatively low values in the areas of using gestures for emphasis, leaning toward students when speaking, and moving around as opposed to being stuck behind a desk. High values were obtained by looking at the entire class when delivering instruction, looking

directly at specific individuals during inquiries, smiling when appropriate, maintaining close physical proximity while interacting, and praising the whole class rather than a select few.

Five groups were tasked with analyzing and interpreting four unique vignettes, which portray teachers actively employed in the profession at a variety of points in their careers. It became increasingly evident that the more a group favored a particular educator's style, the fewer recommendations of immediacy were presented; however, the more critical they were of a particular individual, greater commentary occurred and recommendations increased exponentially.

Conclusions

There are hundreds of languages in the world, but a smile speaks them all.

–Unknown author

A lengthy body of extensively documented literature produced over decades overwhelmingly supports the assertion that nonverbal immediacy plays an essential and pivotal role in effective communication (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000). Each of the five groups actively engaged in analyzing and interpreting the scenarios outlined in each vignette demonstrated a shared and clear understanding as it pertains to the legitimacy of immediacy in instruction. Immediacy has often been linked to the motivational trait of approach-avoidance: "People approach what they like and simply avoid what they don't like" (Mehrabian, 1981, p. 22). Similarly to students in a related study, educators expressed favorable commendations toward individuals they perceived favorably in their respective vignettes and made fewer recommendations thereafter. Thus approach-avoidance serves as an essential component of the behavioral drive/reinforcement theory.

It has been used to describe immediacy as the manner in which students either seek out and feel comfortable interacting with a teacher, or avoid and are apprehensive of the instructor (Richmond et al., 1987). Velez and Cano (2008) reiterated the validity of this study: "In teacher education, it is imperative that professors continue to examine ways to identify important teacher traits and effectively prepare future teachers" (p. 76). Current research suggests that, "Teachers who personalize their teaching with a personal degree of humor, stories, enthusiasm, and self-disclosure are perceived by their students to be effective in explaining course content" (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2009). An overwhelming number of professional educators agreed that it is fundamentally essential for educators to be "highly accessible, personable, creating comfortable learning environments, offering variety in the course curriculum, and receiving as well as incorporating student feedback in course design and planning" (Epting, Zinn, Buskist, & Buskist, 2004).

Research has indicated that when students are motivated to learn, they tend to produce positive behavioral and emotional engagement (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). Throughout the study, an increased emphasis was placed upon nonverbal principles of immediacy, which many may inadvertently neglect. An examination of the relationship between instructor immediacy (verbal and nonverbal) and student motivation suggests that immediacy directly supports fostering "meaningful, engaged learning in all environments" (Doerfert, 2011, p. 21).

Effective communication played a rather pivotal role in ensuring that messages were disseminated and received in an acceptable manner conducive to student learning. Positive teacher-student relationships—as evidenced by teacher reports of low or reduced

conflict, a high degree of closeness and support, and little dependency—have been shown to (a) support students' adjustment to school, (b) contribute to their social skills, (c) promote academic performance, and (d) foster student resiliency in academic performance (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). These relationships between teachers and students can lead to increased student motivation and academic achievement in the classroom (Littlejohn, 2012). A teacher's level of approachability received exceptionally high regard from students, which implies that students may interpret this increased availability as a collaborative team effort as opposed to merely a restricted traditional employee versus supervisor relationship. When students feel empowered, they report an increase in effective learning and learning indicators (Houser & Frymier, 2009). If teachers are able to increase student value in the course, students will be more apt to consciously and consistently work to master course concepts (Hofer, 2006). The level of success a student is capable of demonstrating depends heavily upon the level of immediacy offered by a respective educator. Kearney et al. (1988) found that teacher immediacy was, without reservation, the utmost powerful predictor of students' reported willingness to comply with teacher requests.

Quality instruction includes the ability to induce intellectual excitement and establish positive rapport (Lowman, 1995). Establishing and, most importantly, maintaining an excellent rapport with students goes well beyond immediacy in predicting positive course and instructor ratings as well as the degree of student motivation and learning (Wilson, Ryan, & Pugh, 2010). Recommendations repeatedly made reference to the significance of immediacy in terms of relationships. Effective teaching is positively associated with (a) giving students the perception of greater value to a course, (b)

motivating students to do their best, and (c) creating a comfortable learning atmosphere (Young & Shaw, 1999). Immediacy has its internal roots in the approach-avoidance theory, which basically theorizes that people will draw closer to what they like, while they will avoid what they do not like (Mehrabian, 1981). It became increasingly evident that educators were far more critical and rendered a multitude of recommendations when displeased with the performance of an underperforming teacher as outlined in a vignette.

When asked what it means to feel close to a teacher, a child responded, "It means that we like the teacher so much that we don't want her to leave. But sometimes, when she leaves, we think that she won't come back" (Mantzicopoulous, 2005). Martin, Myers, and Mottet (1999) discovered that students tend to avoid interacting with instructors they perceive as uninterested or uncaring, particularly after repeated attempts to solicit help had produced disparaging results. It is not uncommon for one at any age to react negatively to a less than pleasant situation or scenario. As in relationships we knowingly establish and nourish with individuals who share common interests, students naturally gravitate toward educators they like. Wilson et al., (2010) reported that teacher immediacy deals strictly with behaviors that teachers can utilize in the classroom to increase the closeness between teacher and student, but it does not address all of the details involved in interpersonal relationships.

Group members often express challenges in describing an ideal teacher, and likewise, students differ in the importance they assign to various instructor traits and behaviors. Some students report a greater preference for teachers who excel in teaching techniques, whereas others favor teachers who are caring and approachable (Buskist, 2002; Keeley, Smith, & Buskist, 2006). Similarly, certain groups focused primarily on

instruction delivery techniques, whereas others focused greater attention on methods of communication. Verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors have been united under the construct of immediacy (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004). Ainley's (2006) study noted that, ''the behavior that follows, whether it involves disengagement or engagement with the task content, derives from the specific affective-cognitive organizations that are salient'' (p. 398). Establishing a working alliance with students seems to contribute to an environment that is conducive for (a) learning, (b) promoting a sense of trust, and (c) repairing relationships when conflicts occur (Meyers, 2008). Results obtained suggest that the more likeable and approachable a particular teacher appeared, the higher the marks for immediacy were granted and the fewer recommendations were made. Teachers perceived as both close and influential were also seen as special or unique compared to other teachers with whom students had interacted in the past. Likewise, student immediacy has a mutual effect on teacher motivation (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000). Previously conducted research suggests that teachers who experience close relationships with students reported that their students (a) were less likely to avoid school, (b) appeared more self-directed, (c) were more cooperative, and (d) were more engaged in learning (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Klem & Connell, 2004).

Immediacy communicates psychological availability and warmth (Locker & Wilson, 2008). In a profession blanketed with ample opportunity for one to initiate legal action upon interpretation of even the mere perception of inappropriate behavior, it is reasonable that educators would maintain acceptable distances between themselves and the children whom they are charged to instruct. Group members who detected inconsistencies, vulnerabilities, or character flaws in a vignette expressed the importance

of one simply being oneself on many occasions in this study. At the secondary level of education, it is natural to assume that the more intimate and nurturing the learning environment, the greater the perception of teacher performance or level of effectiveness. However, teachers who by nature may be inclined to communicate within close proximity may be reluctant to do so in the classroom because of possible legal ramifications thereafter. Rogers and Webb (1991) claimed that an ethic of caring is an essential part of defining an effective teacher. Immediacy may also be subject to the interpretation of students, which may lend validity to their perception of teacher effectiveness. A variety of traditional, measurable nonverbal traits of immediacy may include certain gestures and general facial expressions used in the classroom. As time progresses over the duration of a course(s), it is inevitable that a student-teacher relationship will mature to constructive criticism, specific commentary geared toward ensuring student success, and a mutual understanding of underlying boundaries.

Teacher perceptions regarding immediacy may differ from student perceptions and vice versa. Whereas a teacher may operate under the experienced assumption that maintaining close proximity is an invaluable asset to ensure student learning, the student may feel uncomfortable, or "hovered over," thus inadvertently hindering the ability of the student to achieve success. Common perceptions documented by educators in the profession across the curriculum and respective grade levels indicate that teachers effectively demonstrate immediacy by maintaining open and effective lines of communication, presenting engaging classroom instructional activities, offering equal opportunities and access to student learning, and serving as a positive role model. Additionally, student engagement plays a significant role during classroom learning and

is defined as an active commitment or an emotional attraction toward on-task behavior (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Comparable to information obtained throughout the course of this study, current research suggests that teachers consistently reported (a) an increase in conflict coupled with child dependency and (b) less closeness in teacher-child relationships when interacting with students who exhibited either a high level of external or internal problem behavior. In contrast, teachers reported less conflict and more closeness in teacher-child relationships when interacting with students exhibiting high levels of motivation and engagement as compared with other children (Nurmi, 2012).

All of the groups overwhelmingly agreed that successful teachers understand the necessity of differentiating their physical proximity of students with regard to age, gender, predisposition to abuse, etc. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure a safe and orderly educational environment conducive to student learning; however, at times this may be at odds with student and parental expectations. An increasingly alarming rate of reported concerns has surfaced regarding the inability of the public education system to properly prepare our children for the global demands of the world at large, which they will embark upon significantly sooner than they realize. A common practice of enabling students and coddling them in lieu of providing a structured and disciplined environment remains in the forefront of modern education. David L. Goetsh suggests, "Teachers in today's politically-correct education environment are expected to be sympathetic, supportive, and encouraging at all times, even when students do shoddy work and put forth little or no effort." He believes that mediocrity is considered an acceptable

standard; that upon graduation, students are incapable of accepting constructive criticism and maintaining high standards.

Interestingly enough, certain groups were exceedingly critical toward the overly helpful teachers, suggesting perhaps that, although in many cases well liked, such teachers serve as enablers. John Rosemond concurs, "The touchy-feelies are more well-liked, mind you, but their students don't give them their best. They slack off, because they intuitively know that touchy-feely teachers are touchy-feely when they hand out grades." Perhaps one of the more newsworthy quotes in TIME Magazine was articulated by Michelle Rhee in 2008, upon assuming command as Chancellor of troubled Washington D.C. area schools,

> "The thing that kills me about education is that it's so touchy-feely . . . People say, 'Well, you know, test scores don't take into account creativity and the love of learning.' . . . But if the children don't know how to read I don't care how creative you are. You're not doing your job.

Conflicting views exist regarding what makes a nurturing educational environment conducive to student learning. Diedrich (2011) suggests, "Instead of trying to shame teachers into higher test scores, we would do better to focus on cultivating a professional mindset of continually improving effectiveness for all teachers." All groups agreed that for a student to be successful, he or she needs to be learning in a conducive environment. Given such an environment, substandard students are more likely to achieve higher levels of success. Kylac (2014) believes the touchy-feely approach is an essential educational tool, which when utilized appropriately can bridge the gap between concrete and abstract concepts:

> With five fingers on a hand and five sentences in a paragraph, a child has something visual that he/she can look at and manipulate. Using this concrete

device the child will eventually be able to draw the connection between the idea of a paragraph or essay and the written, concrete version of that idea.

Recommendations that teachers simply be themselves often echoed throughout groups inadvertently attempting to create a cookie-cutter design educator. In a related study, over the course of an interview, another teacher described her personality as "touchy-feely" and suggested that creating a warm environment for her students "came naturally." Thus she stayed away from the gimmicks that other teachers used such as points and cards (Gatimu, M. & Reynolds, 2012).

Individuals charged with confidentially and discreetly evaluating the performance of people unbeknownst to them personally demonstrate a blunt and straightforward honesty; perhaps they are emboldened because of the added level of protection knowing their identity will never be disclosed. Under conditions of anonymity, honesty prevails. Colleagues who generally remain reserved in the presence of faculty and administrators were quite vocal, which serves as evidence that confidentiality breeds openness.

Recommendations for Research

This study may adequately serve as a catalyst for any future researchers interested in pursuing the impact of immediacy and its effect upon student motivation. Initially, a further exploration of the results subcategorized specifically by educators' demographics such as age, race, gender, education, and experience may have a significant impact upon results obtained. Next, conducting individual interviews as opposed to gathering highlights rendered by a group may provide additional insight into issues of immediacy. Furthermore, conducting the research with the same educators at multiple points during the school year(s) might have altered their viewpoints subject to where their personal and

professional lives were during a particular timeframe. Finally, presenting these vignettes before students may have rendered an alternate perspective inadvertently neglected.

It is imperative that teachers actively engage in verbal exchange regarding the specific elements encompassing immediacy theories. Using personal examples implies a sense of unity, understanding, and the innate ability to increase relevance of subject matter. Encouraging discussion increases levels of awareness and arouses a certain sense of interest and ownership followed by an increased probability of material retention. Using appropriate humor can often lighten the mental load, offering a less rigid route to understanding than the traditional methods of instruction. Addressing students by their first names not only enhances perceptions of self-worth, suggesting the educator cares enough to refer to one by his or her unique identity, but also reinstates awareness over the course of conversation. A conversational rather than a lecturing tone opens lines of communication and offers the opportunity for commentary, whereas lecture is generally reserved as a one-way method of communication. Referring to classes as "our class" instills unity and increases a sense of belonging, thereby aiding in establishing a nurturing educational environment conducive to student learning. Singling out a particular individual from a group incurs an unpleasant sense of alienation and detracts from learning. People want to belong; therefore, purposely isolating one from a group does not provide a sense of togetherness. Asking for "feeling" or perception is a phenomenal means by which one can effectively ensure a deeper sense of conceptual understanding.

It is equally essential that teachers actively engage themselves in the specific elements encompassing immediacy theories via a nonverbal capacity. Using specific gestures for emphasis tactfully advises a learner that a particular piece of information is

vital. Leaning toward a student when speaking with him or her demonstrates a personal

interest in one's level of comprehension and solicits further discussion. Looking at the

entire class when disseminating information or giving instructions purposely suggests

that the teacher is interested in the learning of all the children as opposed to a select few.

Furthermore, looking at a specific individual during an inquiry reiterates interest and

enhances the validity of concern to a response. Smiling during acceptable times implies

that this educator is a fellow human, capable of expressing emotion and demonstrating

appropriate humor. Using physical proximity when encouraging a student to discuss or

interact is yet another successful means to increasing self-worth and interest in

comprehension. Actively providing praise increases self-esteem and fosters a favorable

learning environment. Getting out from behind a desk demonstrates passion for one's

profession and interest in all students working to their full potential as opposed to the

select few within plain view.

Practical Recommendations—Application

It is imperative to consider real-world application as it pertains to the profession

regarding immediacy. First, decipher ways in which this research can benefit educators

immersed in scenarios comparable to the aforementioned vignettes. Perhaps establishing

professional development courses strategically aligned to address teacher needs at

multiple points across their career would serve as an efficient tool of differentiated

instruction for teachers. Second, teachers could serve in professional learning

communities composed of educators at the beginning, midrange, and conclusion of their

careers. Their varying viewpoints offer an invaluable opportunity to view applicable

scenarios through multiple lenses not readily available to one particular individual.

Finally, empowering students, who arguably serve as the most disenfranchised yet plentiful education resource in any given school system, would provide insight into a perspective that would contribute significantly to the effective immediacy application.

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