

**Exploring Higher Education Classroom Immediacy:
Effects of Gender and Teaching Experience**

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher immediacy behaviors in the college classroom and the effectiveness of verbal versus nonverbal behaviors in relation to gender and teaching experience. Three-hundred eleven students participated rating various teachers of graduate teaching assistants, instructors, and tenured or tenure-track professors' immediacy skills used in the college classroom. Results from a MANOVA showed that GTAs and instructors were rated as more nonverbally immediate, while tenured or tenure-track professors were rated are more verbally immediate. An ANOVA showed no correlation between gender and nonverbal immediacy, but resulted in a correlation between verbal immediacy and males. Drawing on impression management and facework theories, results indicate that GTAs might have to work harder to promote positive face and save face of students in class where as they likely might not have to work as hard to connect to students on a relational and emotional level.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
GTA	Graduate Teaching Assistant
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Chapter 1: Introduction and Review of Literature

Introduction

Student perceptions of instructors can impact their learning (Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner, 2005), and college students' perceptions of their college experience can be influenced by their teachers' behaviors. The image a graduate teaching assistant, instructor, or tenured or tenure-track professor presents can affect the credibility and likeability of how students perceive him or her (Patton, 1999). Teachers can use immediacy behaviors to increase affinity and affective learning which would then possibly result in an increase in credibility and likeability. Teacher immediacy is defined as verbal and nonverbal behaviors generating perceptions of psychological closeness with students (Andersen & Andersen, 1979). The academic success of students is one of the primary concerns to educators, and immediacy can increase academic success. Often times a minimally trained graduate assistant is the instructor for a college class with little or no training in immediacy and does not realize the importance of these verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

For the purpose of this research, graduate teaching assistants are defined as teachers who instruct classes independently and are graduate students who have little to no experience and/or formal instruction in teaching classes (Roach, 1991). Instructors are defined as teachers who teach at a university who have experience and/or degrees in teaching but do not have a doctoral degree in their subject and are not employed as full time professors at the university. Tenured and tenure-track professors are teachers who are full-time university employees who have a doctoral degree and have completed research in their field; they have experience and/or teaching degrees in their field of study.

This study examines the immediacy perceptions that students have of graduate teaching assistants, instructors, and tenured or tenure-track professors in the college classroom. It compares these different levels of teachers – GTA, instructor, and professor –to specifically investigate whether graduate teaching assistants are perceived as exhibiting lower or higher immediacy behaviors when compared to instructors and tenured/tenure-track professors. Gender of the teacher is also examined as a variable in this study as findings in previous research show that females and males display different immediacy behaviors, which can have an effect on learning (Demetriou, Wilson, & Winterbottom, 2009; Gorham, 1988; Patton, 1999; Santilli & Miller 2011). In addition, this research notes the importance of facework strategies involved in creating high immediacy perceptions and discusses facework and politeness theories using an impression management context.

The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher immediacy behaviors in the college classroom and the effectiveness of verbal versus nonverbal behaviors in relation to gender and teaching experience. Section one provides a theoretical backing for the purpose of the study with an overview of Impression Management focusing on facework strategies as well as politeness theory. In section two the concept of immediacy in the educational context is reviewed. The review addresses both the nonverbal and verbal factors, particularly the positive effects immediacy behaviors from a teacher may have on students, including affective learning, motivation, and cognitive learning. Section three considers gender of the teacher and its effects in the classroom, proposing the first two hypotheses of the study. Section four discusses the role of the graduate teaching assistant and previous research focusing on this subculture of teachers at the university level. This chapter also includes the final two hypotheses of the study, proposing a

relationship between teaching experience and credibility and relational aspects that come from immediacy behaviors.

Rationale

This research proposes that highly credible teachers will be perceived as being more immediate on a verbal scale, while GTAs, being closer in age to the students, will be perceived as being more nonverbally immediate on a relational level. This study examines the perceptions that exist between the relationship of immediacy and gender among graduate teaching assistants and instructors, comparing and contrasting the results to perceptions of immediacy among tenured and tenure-track professors. Drawing from impression management and previous studies on immediacy in the classroom, this study looks at a specific group of university instructors who are also university students, these being graduate teaching assistants, and compares these untrained instructors to tenured professors with multiple years of teaching experience. While professor may not have training in immediacy, they do have more experience teaching in the classroom. This study also examines the university instructor to discover if the instructor is similar to the GTA or the tenured/tenure-track professor when examining perceptions of verbal and non-verbal immediacy.

This research explores the communication concept called immediacy in relation to teaching experience at the university level. Pogue and AhYun (2006) explain that the two constructs that have been shown to impact student success are immediacy and credibility and these two constructs can be measured by student motivation and student affect. They note that few studies examine immediacy and credibility as variables working together in the classroom with an understanding of how teacher immediacy and credibility are related to one another, while numerous studies explore how teacher immediacy impacts perceived teacher credibility. Their

study concluded that students are more motivated and have higher affective learning from teachers who are perceived as more immediate and less credible compared to students that were exposed to a teacher who was less immediate and more credible. Higher levels of immediacy have a greater impact on learning outcomes than credibility; however, when immediacy and credibility levels of the teacher were found to be incongruent, there was no difference in student motivation between high-immediacy/low-credibility and the low-immediacy/high-credibility conditions. Yet the participants reported higher levels of affective learning from highly credible and less immediate teachers compared to affective learning from teachers who are highly immediate and less credible. Differing from Pogue and AhYun's study, this research will examine immediacy in the constructs of verbal and nonverbal immediacy wherein credibility is part of the verbal immediacy construct rather than measuring credibility as its own construct.

Immediacy has been extensively researched from both a teacher and receiver's perspective. Numerous communication scholars focus their attention on immediacy behaviors and effects on the receiver (Chesebro, 2003; King & Witt, 2009; Pogue & Ah Yun 2006; Rocca, 2004; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999). Immediacy enhances a teacher's ability to strategically employ verbal and nonverbal behaviors that can increase teacher influence and positively impact student learning outcomes (Mottet, Richmond & McCroskey, 2006). Studies show that knowing about immediacy can increase a teacher's success in the classroom and explain how immediacy accomplishes this (Andersen & Andersen, 1979; Sidelinger, 2010; Teven & Hanson, 2004). However, in the college setting, untrained instructors are put in charge of teaching classes and these amateur instructors are typically graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) (Branstetter & Handelsman, 2000; Grellhesl, Smith, & Punyanunt-Carter, 2011). Because many GTAs have minimal or no classroom experience and often inadequate training from their departmental

programs, it is important to consider how students perceive GTAs to understand perceptual differences between GTAs and trained professors (Muzaka, 2009).

There is a plethora of research on classroom immediacy in general, including studies on how immediacy affects: student attendance and involvement (Rocca, 2004; Sidelinger, 2010); student misbehaviors in the classroom (Burroughs, 2007; Goodboy & Meyers, 2009); teacher clarity (Chesebro, 2003; Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998; Finn & Schrod, 2012; Titsworth, 2004); teacher credibility (Meyers & Bryant, 2004; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Conversely, there is little research on how teacher gender affects students (Centra & Gaubatz, 2000; Basow, 1990; Boggs & Weimann, 1994; Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Patton, 1999; Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner, 2005). Of these studies, few are targeted towards teachers, and fewer focus specifically on graduate teaching assistants (Grellhesl, Smith, & Punyanunt-Cater, 2011; Muzaka, 2009; Punyanunt-Cater & Wagner, 2005).

Teaching at the college level traditionally requires content expertise and correct delivery on the part of the instructor; however, research shows that effective teaching could also require personal communication between teacher and student (Frymeier & Houser, 2000). According to a study by Kerssen-Griep, Trees, and Hess (2008), the facework that students experience during feedback from instructors has a significant impact in the classroom. To understand immediacy behaviors in this context, the next section explores impression management and closely related concept of facework and politeness theory.

Impression Management

Impression management states that individuals or organizations must establish and maintain impressions that are congruent with the perceptions they want to convey to their publics (Goffman, 1959). How students feel about their teachers and learning contexts influences how

thoroughly students are involved in classroom discussions and adhere to classroom guidelines (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2008). Frymier and Houser (2000) explain that to successfully facilitate learning, an instructor must learn to balance content and relational dimensions. This means that the teacher needs to be able to relay the information necessary to educate the student, but he or she also needs to be able to connect to students on a relational level. Research indicates that affinity, which is student attitude toward a course, content, or teacher (Bloom, 1976), and clarity, which is effectively transmitting the desired meaning of course content and processes in the minds of students (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998) can be competing actions. Increased clarity and directness by an instructor can undermine affinity if done without skill just as sole focus on affinity-building can lead to crucial issues remaining unaddressed (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2008).

Using humor in the classroom has been found to increase attention and retention, which leads to increased memory and cognitive learning; nonetheless, different types of humor and placement of humor can elicit different rates of retention depending on the individual receiving the message (Gorman & Christophel, 1990; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999). For instance, Gorham and Christophel (1990) found that female students preferred humor in the form of personal stories that relate to the topic of the class while males preferred tendentious comments. Their study also found that female learning outcomes are less influenced by humor than male students' learning outcomes. Finally, Gorham and Christophel (1990) found that self-disparaging humor and tendentious humor attempts that were directed at students were not perceived as humorous by students. Also, according to Frymier, Wanzer, and Wojtaszczyk (2008), students' individual differences, such as extroversion or introversion, may affect student perception of whether teacher humor is appropriate. A teacher could consider managing impressions that not only establishes him/ her as a competent and credible authority figure, yet can also be perceived as

approachable and welcoming. Both teachers and students have goals that they want to achieve and the success of the goals will depend on the negotiation and resolution of conflicts that arise.

This teacher-student relationship is different from friendship relationships because the power distribution is unequal and has different time constraints (Frymier & Houser, 2000). A psychological study by Hall, Coats, and LeBeau (2005) found that in an unequal power relationship, the superior used more nonverbal immediacy behaviors, such as facial expressions, more body openness, and smaller interpersonal distances than subordinates. Perceivers believed that the greater the power distance between two people, the more nonverbal immediacy would be present by behaviors that are used by the superior (Hall et al., 2005). The teacher-student relationship is an example of a superior-subordinate relationship in which nonverbal behaviors may be expected more of the teacher, because teachers are in the position of the superior. This can influence learning directly and indirectly (Frymier & Houser, 2000). If the teacher is viewed as incompetent, learning can be directly affected because when students do not understand the objectives, they are more likely to fail because they are uncertain which leads to less affinity and less recall of the information; whereas, if the teacher is unfriendly and intimidating, learning can be indirectly affected because the students may feel uncomfortable asking for clarification or help (Frymier & Houser, 2000).

Facework. Facework is a part of Impression Management. Developed by Goffman (1959), it suggests that every person has a desired self-image he or she wants to present and maintain when interacting with others, and this is the concept of face. However, whether a person interacting with another strategically presents this desired identity or not, the other person will form impressions and respond to those formed impressions (Goffman, 1959). Individuals cannot establish face for themselves; the conversational partners they are interacting with must

create it for them. Since each individual in the interaction will have a desired face, the interactants work together using facework strategies that work to present, maintain, or restore the preferred identity for each interactant. Teaching necessarily attends to negative face due to the evaluative measures teachers must employ in the classroom. Teacher feedback from interaction in the classroom can also contain potential face threats (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Kerssen-Griep et al. (2001) found that students communicating about their own original thinking or investment in the class are some examples of ways students felt their face needs were especially open to either challenge or support from the teacher. An example of this is a student offers an opinion or answer in class. Teacher evaluation of student work is another example of the complex type of facework that a teacher must engage in with the students. According to Trees, Kerssen-Griep, and Hess (2009), even when combined with supportive comments, suggestions for improvement inherently send a message to students that they could have done better. Feedback often identifies areas that students need to improve which may threaten the student's competence or be seen as disapproval from the teacher, impacting the relational aspect of the student-teacher relationship (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2008). This study by Kerssen-Griep et al. (2008) found that the facework students experience from the instructors has a significant impact on both the relational and environmental perceptions in a classroom, particularly when the instructor mitigated face threats.

Politeness theory. Politeness theory asserts that face includes two separate desires, those being positive and negative face. Preventative facework is developed in Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory and consists of positive and negative face. Positive face is the need to feel included, approved of, and appreciated, and negative face is remaining autonomous and unconstrained by others. Individuals are emotionally invested in their faces, and they attempt to

reduce incidents in which they could lose face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Socially competent people are able to resolve task and face goals in interaction, which preserves others' self-images, and leads them to receiving more face support from the interactant. Whether a person loses, maintains, or enhances face is dependent on others and only individuals relevant to particular goals can satisfy these wants. Brown and Levinson (1987) describe acts that are inherently threatening to the negative face wants of the respondent. Examples of this type of act include orders, requests, suggestions, reminders, threats and dares. Any act that requires the respondent to do something or puts pressure on the respondent to do something will harm negative face. For instance, in the classroom, a student's desire to appear intelligent cannot always be satisfied by other students. It is more likely that only the instructor can satisfy the student's positive face wants because the instructor is the one who is deemed the expert and who evaluates the students' work (Neary Dunleavy et al., 2008). Because image can affect the credibility of instructors and how their students perceive them, the image an instructor presents is important (Patton, 1999).

In the classroom, students and teachers continually negotiate social identities that, in turn, provide the conversational resource participants use to manage those identities (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2008). Students respond better to a teacher who they perceive as being skilled in facework strategies than to a teacher that is not skilled in these strategies. Their findings indicate that identity affirming classroom strategies play directly into perceptions of teacher-student relationship and that facework might be a key means that students use to interpret the relational implications of teachers' messages. Students can threaten the positive face of instructors by suggesting they are incompetent or uncaring of the students. Frymier and Houser (2000) note that in the classroom, both teachers and students have goals they want to achieve, and the relationship that develops between teachers and students can affect learning through both student

and teacher attitudes toward the content. While student attitude varies based on individuals, research by Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, and Sutton (2009) revealed that a teacher's enjoyment, observable through enthusiastic teaching behavior, has positive effects on student enjoyment in the classroom. Student enjoyment in the classroom, based on attitude and emotions, are important aspects of learning achievement in the classroom because emotionally positive classrooms allow teachers to best fulfill teaching responsibilities (Frenzel et al., 2009). In addition to this, attitude may be altered by the use of humor. Wanzer and Frymier (1999) note that using humor to present information may help students to pay more attention to the teacher, willingly attend class, and retain the content. They found communication between teachers and students is relational as well as content driven. The two skills students found most important were referential skills (i.e., explaining things clearly and enabling understanding) and ego (i.e., encouragement and confirmation).

Politeness and impression management theory tie into this study because knowing what creates positive and negative face can enhance student perceptions of teacher or GTA immediacy. According to Kerssen-Griep et al. (2008), facework may be a major contributor to the relational success of many classroom messages that impact student cognitive learning, and they found students who experience skilled face support during feedback from their instructor believe they are in a better learning environment and feel more mentored by their instructor than students who experience little face support during feedback from their instructor. Like impression management, immediacy affects content and relational aspects in the student-teacher relationship. The next section describes immediacy, explaining both verbal and nonverbal immediacy skills that a teacher/GTA may employ in an effort to produce affective and cognitive learning, as well as motivation, from students.

Immediacy

Immediacy was conceptualized by Mehrabian (1971) as behaviors that communicate approachability and a message of closeness and behaviors that enhance that sense of closeness between interactants (see also Mottet & Richmond, 1998). Mehrabian asserts, “People are drawn towards persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer” (p. 1). Immediacy behaviors are important for successful communication and creating positive interpersonal perceptions in instructional contexts (Andersen, 1979). Research by Goodboy, Weber, and Bolkan, (2009) that examines immediacy in the instructional context reveals three learning outcomes: (1) affective learning, (2) cognitive learning, and (3) student motivation.

The first of these outcomes, affective learning, involves student’s feelings, emotions, and attitudes toward the course, content, and instructor (Goodboy, Weber, & Bolkan, 2009). Pogue and Ah Yun (2006) note research studies that explore the connection between immediacy and affective learning consistently reveal a strong relationship between these two variables. In an early study about effective learning, Richmond, McCroskey, Plax, and Kearny (1986) point out that a teacher-learner relationship cannot be affect-free. This is because people are more likely to approach people or things they like and avoid people or things that they dislike (Merabian, 1971); so if a teacher likes a student, he/she will stand closer and have a more direct body orientation, make direct eye contact, have more face-to-face contact, or other immediate behaviors than if a teacher dislikes a student, which generates more positive affect feelings from the student.

Characteristics of cognitive learning, the second learning outcome (Goodboy et al., 2009), are a student’s ability to recall, conceptualize, and analyze information (Titsworth, 2001).

According to research by King and Witt (2009), perceived learning and nonverbal immediacy are significantly correlated, although it is undetermined whether perceived learning is an indication of cognitive learning, since participant recollections of the material might not represent cognitive learning of the material. Kelley and Gorham (1988) proposed that immediacy behaviors are arousing, which gains a student's attention, relating to memory and as a result, increases cognitive learning.

Student motivation is the third concept that can positively impact learning outcomes. Student motivation can be categorized as either a state or trait; with trait motivation being the student's disposition toward learning and state motivation being prompted by educational factors, such as influence from an instructor (Pogue & Ah Yun, 2006). Sidelinger (2010) found that positive student perceptions of instructors' nonverbal immediacy promoted student communication in class, which suggests that immediate instructors effectively motivate students toward positive learning outcomes.

In addition to this, research from Goodboy et al. (2009) indicates that students recall scores are higher when a speaker uses both verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors together. This research suggests that students' perceptions of immediacy are related to perceived cognitive and affective learning more so than the actual changes in learning. Enhancing a teacher's ability to employ different types of verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors can impact the teacher-student relationship and also increase positive student outcomes. Goodboy et al. (2009) note that since the goal of instructors is to foster learning, actual recall of information and exam performance can be significantly increased through a series of simple teaching behaviors. The immediacy construct yields two strains of research— nonverbal and verbal.

Nonverbal immediacy. Nonverbal behaviors include demonstrating a variety in vocal

pitch, loudness, and tempo, smiling, eye contact, leaning toward a person, face-to-face body position, decreasing physical barriers, gesturing, and overall relaxed body movements and positions (Mottet, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). When applied to teaching, immediacy is linked to many beneficial academic outcomes, such as increases in student learning and fondness of the subject (Pogue & Ah Yun, 2006). Nonverbal immediacy has been found to have a positive impact on students; specifically, nonverbal immediacy is associated with increases in affective learning, perceived cognitive learning, recall of information, and motivation (Mottet & Richmond, 1998). Nonverbal behaviors such as vocal expressiveness, smiling, having a relaxed body position, and increasing movements and gestures are meaningful behaviors that are related to increased affective and cognitive learning (Gorham, 1998). According to research by Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, and Richmond (1986) teachers who are trained in nonverbal immediacy cues generate more positive student perception of affect toward instruction.

Affective learning has been researched as both a correlate and outcome of teacher immediacy. This research has consistently shown a positive relationship between teacher immediacy and student affect toward the teacher and/or course (Goodboy & Myers, 2009). Goodboy and Myers' study examines immediacy and its effects on misbehaviors in the classroom, finding that increasing immediacy in classroom instruction can be used to enforce classroom management and control student misbehaviors. Their study determined that increased immediacy creates a more rewarding climate for students. They also found that the more immediate a teacher is, the more approachable he or she is, thus increasing affinity for the teacher. A better climate and increased affinity for the teacher leads to less challenging behaviors from students. Witt and Kerssen-Griep (2011) found that when instructors use facework strategies, student perceptions of caring were enhanced regardless of whether

immediacy tactics were used or not, however, using nonverbal immediacy behaviors along with facework strategies, student perceptions of caring were further enhanced.

Student attitudes and motivation can be influenced by the role immediacy plays in the classroom. Motivated students are more likely to be involved in the learning process, which increases student success. Pogue and Ah Yun (2006) found that a teacher's nonverbal immediacy and credibility have an impact on both student affective learning as well as student motivation. Chesebro (2003) adds that when a student has positive affect for a course, he or she is more likely to study it and pursue it outside of the classroom. Although King and Witt (2009) question if perceived learning is an indicator of cognitive learning confirmation, their findings maintain that there are positive correlations between student's perceptions of their own learning and teacher immediacy. In a study measuring clarity of teaching to note taking, Titsworth (2004) also explored connecting the links between immediacy behaviors to cognitive learning. This research found that with highly immediate teachers, students may become so involved with the teacher's delivery that they fail to attend to important concepts being discussed. Titsworth also found that student self-reporting of cognitive learning may not be a valid technique for assessing cognitive learning. Regardless, researchers have consistently found that students perceive higher cognitive learning with more immediate teachers. Pogue and Ah Yun (2006) note that instructors who are perceived as highly credible can increase student perceptions of their own cognitive learning.

There is also a relationship between student perceptions of how much the instructor cares and affective learning that is linked to nonverbal immediacy behaviors of teachers (Teven & Hanson, 2004). When teachers are nonverbally immediate, they are generally perceived as caring; however clarity, use of humor, narratives, and self-disclosure, and building positive

relationships are also immediacy behaviors that demonstrate caring, meaning that caring is likely to be both verbal and nonverbal (Teven & Hanson, 2004). According to Chesebro (2003), nonverbal immediacy enables clarity because it functions as a way to gain students' attention, which enables clear teaching behaviors to be more salient. Clear messages are of no use if students are not paying attention to them, and nonverbal immediacy behaviors help to facilitate selective attention to the message of the teacher, which enables the lectures to be processed by students (Chesebro, 2003). In addition to this, Sidelinger (2010) notes that positive perceptions of teacher nonverbal immediacy promoted communication in class. Student perceptions of caring, teacher credibility, and affective learning stem from teacher nonverbal immediacy cues. Reviewing research that examines both nonverbal and verbal immediacy, results suggest that nonverbal immediacy has more impact on learning and motivation than verbal immediacy. However, as Jensen (1994) points out, a focus on verbal behaviors is pragmatic for instructor training because language may be more easily controlled than nonverbal behaviors.

Verbal immediacy. Mehrabian characterizes verbal immediacy as the "degree of directness and intensity of interaction between communicator and referent in a communicator's linguistic message" (1966, p. 28). Verbal immediacy cues involve credibility, competency, clarity, using content relevance, using humor, and using disclosure. According to Pogue and Ah Yun (2006), credibility is the combination of intelligence, character, and goodwill, and in the educational setting, teachers have more influence in the creation of understanding, or cognitive learning, if he or she is perceived by the students as credible. According to research by Myers and Bryant (2004), instructor competence is conveyed through content expertise, affect for students, and verbal fluency. In other research, competence refers to the degree to which an instructor is perceived to be knowledgeable about a given subject matter (McCroskey, 1992).

Extroversion refers to the degree to which an instructor is perceived as outgoing, and character refers to the degree to which an instructor is trusted. He also defined composure as the degree of emotional control exhibited by an instructor, and sociability is the degree to which an instructor is considered to be friendly (McCroskey, 1992). Clear teaching is likely to facilitate the processing of messages by enabling students to effectively comprehend messages with relatively little struggle. If students perceive their teacher as credible, then the teacher will have more influence on their understanding of the subject matter (Pogue & AhYun, 2006).

The relationship between teacher enjoyment and student enjoyment can be mediated by teachers' displayed enthusiasm during teaching (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). Using verbal humor in the classroom may help the students remember content, thus helping them retain more information. Employing humor on a regular basis in the classroom may make students more willing to attend class and pay attention (Wanzer & Frymeier, 1999). Research by Wanzer and Frymeier (1999) finds that students view high humor oriented instructors reduced psychological distance and are viewed as more immediate. In addition, a study by Gorman & Christophel, (1990) investigated the relationship between student learning and teacher humor suggesting that it can be understood when humor is examined in conjunction with teacher verbal immediacy. Their study found that students reported a positive correlation between the total number of humorous incidents and the item 'uses humor in class' on the verbal immediacy scale. In this study, when humorous attempts were negatively directed at students or considered self-disparaging, humor was negatively correlated. According to Meyers and Knox (2001), in the classroom instructors self-disclose about topics such as their education, family and friends, experiences, leisure activities, beliefs and opinions, and personal problems. These topics

reveals information about the instructor that the students cannot get elsewhere and it can be used to promote discussion.

Verbal immediacy behaviors can include a longer list of behaviors, such as: using praise, humor, and personal pronouns, calling students by name, demonstrating a willingness to converse with students' before/after/outside of class, asking questions to acquire student viewpoint or opinions, and responding to student initiated topics (Jensen, 2002). Like nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy is linked to increased student motivation, retention (Kelley & Gorham, 1988), and affect; in addition, verbal immediacy results in an increase in students' willingness to participate in class (Menzel & Carrell, 1999), students' attendance (Rocca, 2004), and students' out-of-class communication with instructors as well as lowering communication apprehension (Jensen, 2002). Active students also perceived their instructors differently from their less active counterparts. Active participators regarded their professors as more positive, as more personalizing, as stimulating more discussion, and they had a more positive impression of their professors overall than did students who perceived themselves as less active (Crombie, Pyke, Silverthorn, Jones, & Piccinin, 2003). According to Jensen (2002), a verbally immediate classroom is an interactive classroom. In this study, there was an increase in verbal immediacy exhibited when the teacher presented class material using humor or an example and subsequently asked a question. In this experiment, the teacher also used students' names and thanked or praised students who participated which are examples of high verbal immediacy and can lead to a perception of a highly credible instructor.

Finally, using nonverbal and verbal immediacy in tandem increases students' perceptions of teacher credibility. Instructors must negotiate enough credibility to be able to provide useful feedback of students' work, as mentioned in chapter two; communicating feedback can

potentially create face-threatening interactions. Witt and Kerssen-Griep (2011) found that teacher nonverbal immediacy interacts with verbal instructional feedback to influence student perceptions of credibility. The participants in this study found instructors to be more credible when offering face-attentive communication and also using nonverbal immediacy cues. In relation to competence, instructors could reduce face threats through a combination of verbal immediacy cues such as tact, approbation, and solidarity tactics and correspondingly nonverbal immediacy cues such as eye contact, proximity, gestures, and vocal variety. Witt and Wheelless (2001) found that using verbal immediacy without nonverbal immediacy during a lecture had no effect on short-term recall of the content of the lecture. Credible teachers are perceived as engaging, and students report greater amounts of self-motivation, as well as affective and cognitive learning, when the instructors viewed as credible (Meyers & Bryant, 2004).

This section investigated the concept of immediacy in both the verbal and nonverbal strains as applied to classroom settings. Immediacy behaviors from the instructor in a classroom can have an effect on students in three important ways: affective learning, student motivation, and cognitive learning. Nonverbal immediacy behaviors of teachers are linked to student perceptions of caring, teacher credibility, and affective learning, which are relational aspects of the classroom environment. Verbal immediacy is linked to student perceptions of competence and credibility of the teacher. The next section considers the gender of the teacher and how female and male teacher behaviors are perceived by students.

Gender

Gender of the teacher can be a salient factor when discussing a teacher's immediacy in the classroom. Analysis of verbal and nonverbal immediacy uses in the classroom by Gorham (1988) indicated that female teachers were seen as more immediate overall than males. Hall

(1978) established that on several conceptually similar tasks of decoding nonverbal cues, females are reliably more accurate than males, meaning that women are generally more accurate at translating and using nonverbal cues than males. Females were seen as somewhat more likely to provide feedback, ask students how they felt about an assignment, due date, or discussion topic, and to give praise; in addition, females were substantially more likely than males to use nonverbal cues such as touching and smiling (Gorham, 1988). Research that examined teachers' interactions with students found that female teachers were more likely to employ emotional tactics, such as showing personal interest in students to re-engage them in learning (Demetriou, Wilson, & Winterbottom, 2009). This research suggested that female teachers are more likely to see students as individuals, whereas male teachers are more inclined to communicate the subject knowledge and hope this will enthruse the student enough to engage him or her. In instances of excessive use of immediacy, Rester and Edwards (2007) found that students are more likely to infer controlling messages from male teachers, and caring messages from female teachers. Santilli and Miller (2011) also note in their research that females recall nonverbal behaviors more than males, smile more, engage in more personal eye contact, and are overall more skilled at sending nonverbal messages than males. Due to females being perceived as more immediate than males, the following hypothesis was posited:

H1: Female teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors, will be perceived as having higher nonverbal immediacy skills than male teachers; while male teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors, will be seen as having higher verbal immediacy skills than female teachers.

Student evaluations have been shown to be mediated largely by changes in students' perceptions of their instructor's gender-linked traits (Basow, 1990). According to Patton (1999),

achieving credibility in the classroom is the instructor's goal because being perceived as a credible instructor produces positive outcomes, not only for the instructor but also for the student. The stereotypical female teaching qualities have been described as warm, concerned, passive, interested, caring, and non-dominant (Patton, 1999). The higher ratings of female instructors regarding sympathy support the gender stereotype that female instructors are empathetic, feminine, and emotionally supportive (Patton, 1999). Other research emphasized that female instructors, as well as female students, are more receptive to a teaching methodology that values connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate (Centra & Gaubatz, 2000). Female teachers tend to emphasize class discussions and groupwork, seeing their role as more of a facilitator than as a lecturer. This is in sharp contrast to the stereotypical male teaching qualities which have been described as independent, objective, logical, and aggressive (Patton, 1999). Expressive teachers who use gestures and vary their nonverbal cues tend to be rated more highly by students than teachers who are relatively nonexpressive, regardless of the content of their lectures (Basow, 1990). However, Basow's study found that expressive males and nonexpressive females are perceived as more feminine, whereas the nonexpressive male is perceived as masculine. As for affective learning, Basow's study did not find that expressiveness had much of an effect on student achievement. Female students with male instructors reported a significantly less favorable overall impression of their instructors than did females with female professors or males with either male or female professors. Female students with male instructors perceive less support and encouragement from their male instructors (Crombie, Pyke, Silverthorn, Jones, & Piccinin, 2003).

A study by Boggs and Weimann (1994) examined gender influences of student responses of graduate teaching assistant communication in the classroom and discovered that female graduate teaching assistants were less likely than male graduate teaching assistants to be perceived as effective by students such that a female graduate teaching assistant was less likely to be chosen as best graduate teaching assistant and significantly more likely to be chosen as a worst graduate teaching assistant than a male. This indicates they found female GTAs who were considered poor instructors were rated worse than males GTAs who were poor instructors. They also found that good graduate teaching assistants were rated higher in communicative competence than were poor graduate teaching assistants, which indicates good communication skills are related to effective teaching. Punyanunt-Carter and Wagner (2005) conducted research supporting the fact that women tend to be more concerned with the relational aspect of communication while men tend to be more focused on task-oriented communication. Their study indicates that female and male professors have similar levels of immediacy, but female and male GTAs display different immediacy behaviors; therefore, this study posits the hypothesis:

H2: Male teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors will be considered more competent in nonverbal immediacy than female teachers, while female teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors will be seen as more compassionate and relational than male teachers.

This section focused on gender of teachers and behaviors perceived by students in the classroom. Females' teaching qualities tend to focus on relational aspects while males' teaching qualities are more subject-focused (Patton, 1999; Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner, 2005). The next section will take a more in-depth look at graduate teaching assistants, a subculture of teachers on the university level.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

A graduate teaching assistant is in a unique position; stuck between the role of a student and an instructor. Using GTAs to teach basic undergraduate courses is common in higher education in the U.S.A., especially at larger institutions (Roach, 1991). While using GTAs as instructors is a valuable service to the institutions and a beneficial experience for GTAs, some concerns are noted in Roach's research. One concern that arises is that most graduate students have little to no experience and/or formal instruction in teaching classes (Roach, 1991). Another issue mentioned by Roach is the difficulty that GTAs have with perceived credibility and authority, since many GTAs enter graduate programs soon after completing their undergraduate degrees, resulting in only a small age and maturation difference between the GTA and the students they teach (Roach, 1991). Golish (1999) found that students perceived both professors and GTAs to be high in credibility, but professors were perceived as having more legitimate, coercive, and expert power than graduate teaching assistants. Another study collected survey results from GTAs and found a problematic situation that arose in GTA's classes was the feeling of a lack of authority (Muzaka, 2009). The GTAs surveyed commented that they did not feel like they have a real sense of power that is needed to manage a class (Muzaka, 2009).

Hendrix (1995) notes that GTAs feel that they have to work harder to establish credibility, and students will try to take advantage of them because they are not professors with the status of full-time faculty. This could be because typically GTAs receive little to no training upon entering the classroom as an instructor. Training is an area that is lacking for most student-teachers (Roach, 1991). Research from Golish (1999) notes that GTAs are given minimal preparation for their responsibilities as a teacher, being tasked with educating college students without a degree or experience in education. Hayton (2008) suggests the role of GTAs could be

more formalized, which would entail greater commitment by universities in the form of a structured training program, professional development, and mentoring. A GTA acts as an instructor, laboratory instructor, or serves as a course or laboratory aide or grader without being prepared for these responsibilities, or being fully aware of the influence s/he has over undergraduate learning (Nicklow, Marikunte, & Chevalier, 2007). Furthermore, Nicklow et al. (2007) note GTAs are entrenched in their own degree program and may be more concerned with self-survival issues—this is primarily a problem for new GTAs. This research explains that not only are GTAs untrained for such an immense responsibility, it also notes that since teaching is not their sole job, they may be more consumed with personal commitments to their own education. Another study points out that it takes years of experience in teaching for many instructors to begin to feel competent, the results of this study show that years of experience and job-related stress were related to teachers' self-efficacy, which in turn influences job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). As previously noted, the relationship between teacher enjoyment and student enjoyment can be mediated by teachers' displayed enthusiasm during teaching (Frenzel, et. al, 2009), suggesting that enthusiasm for teaching may not come about without years of experience.

Lack of both content expertise and the ability to instruct are not the only issues researchers have pointed out, but they are issues that students of GTAs have described. According to a study by Muzaka (2009), most students perceived a graduate teaching assistant's knowledge to be too specific and narrow when compared to academic staff; as some students describe 'GTAs' expertise is sometimes too specific and specialized' [student 4] and 'academic staff would know the subject better, since they are employed full-time to teach it' [student 18]. However, Punyanunt-Carter and Wagner (2005) note that often times teaching assistants are

similar in age to their students and can relate better than professors on several levels. Muzaka (2009) found that most students perceived GTAs to be more approachable and less intimidating because, due to their age and recent experience of undergraduate university life, GTAs can identify better and are more in touch with students and academic demands than are professors. Golish (1999) conducted a study based on persuasive scenarios where students had to ask their teacher or GTA for something, for example, changing their grade on a project. Graduate teaching assistants were often perceived as more approachable than professors with undergraduates feeling more comfortable voicing their concerns, conversely the students also felt like they could take advantage of GTAs, because GTAs were so close in age. Punyanunt-Carter and Wagner (2005) conducted research that examined student perceptions of their professor and teaching assistants' emotional support and immediacy behaviors and found that overall students did not recognize a difference between how professors and teaching assistants expressed support. However, they did find that there was a difference between immediacy behaviors of instructors and GTAs, but they do not note what the differences are (Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner, 2005). Grellhesl, Smith, and Punyanunt-Carter (2011) conducted research that reveals male and female students perceive same gender GTAs as having a higher nonverbal immediacy, assumingly because of the different communication patterns of males and females, which leads to hypothesis three:

H3: GTAs and instructors will be considered as being more compassionate and approachable than tenured and tenure-track professors, while tenured and tenure-track professors will be perceived as being more credible than GTAs and instructors.

Graduate teaching assistant training. At Auburn University, training varies depending upon the department. In the Communication and Journalism Department, the

handbook says, “GTAs are not co-teachers. As a first year GTA, your primary role is to study teaching methods for COMM 1000: Introduction to Public Speaking ... your primary role is to observe. In COMM 1000 you are typically required to lecture 2-3 times over the course of the semester. Evaluations of your presentation are conducted by the class instructor.” The Communication Department does not require any graduate level classes to train GTAs how to teach, but does require a year-long mentoring program where the student learns from observing various teachers. The Public Administration Department requires less formalized training than what is stated for the Communication and Journalism department. The Public Administration graduate student handbook says, “Most GTA-ships will involve assisting a full time faculty member who is the instructor of record for the course. However, experienced GTAs who have an appropriate number of graduate credit hours in the relevant field (no less than 18 semester hours) may sometimes be allowed to assume full responsibility as instructors of record for their own class ... The Department Chair awards GTA-ships to individual graduate students based primarily on the recommendations of the graduate directors for the MPA and PhD programs”.

This chapter examined the role of the graduate teaching assistant within the university setting. Although GTAs may receive little training (Golish, 1999; Roach, 1991) and are entrenched in their own graduate program, and therefore potentially not as committed to teaching (Nicklow et al., 2007), they may still have high immediacy because they are closer to the age of students in college (Muzaka, 2009). The next chapter of this paper will describe the methodology used in collecting data for used in analysis. The data collected is used to measure the three hypotheses previously stated.

Chapter 2: Method

The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher immediacy behaviors in the college classroom and the effectiveness of verbal versus nonverbal behaviors in relation to gender and teaching experience. It compares the different levels of teachers – GTA, instructor, and professor –to specifically investigate whether graduate teaching assistants exhibit lower or higher immediacy behaviors when compared to instructors and tenured/tenure-track professors. This chapter contains two sections. The first section describes the design of the study detailing the participants involved and the process of distributing surveys. The second section describes the scales used in the survey and its reliability.

Sample and Procedure. The relevant sample consisted of respondents, ages 19-22, who are undergraduate students enrolled in communication classes at a large Southern university. Qualtrics is web-based survey software that allows researchers to create and electronically distribute surveys, collect and store data, and produce reports. The university owns the license for Qualtrics and provides Qualtrics to researchers as needed. The Qualtrics report indicated that 402 responses to the survey were completed. However, after cleaning the data, 91 surveys were removed due to incompleteness, leaving 311 surveys to be analyzed as the data set. Of these, 100 (32.2%) of the participants were male and 211 (67.8%) were female. Of the respondents, 33 (10.6%) were freshmen, 86 (27.6%) sophomores, 115 (37%) juniors, and 77 (24.8%) seniors.

Undergraduates were chosen as the population for this study because they are the typical observers of daily classroom behaviors of GTAs and instructors. Upon securing IRB approval, the researcher asked department instructors to administer a link to a Qualtrics online survey to students enrolled in classes with graduate teaching assistants, instructors, and professors. The surveys were prefaced with an informed consent form, which briefly defined voluntary

disclosure, the purpose of the survey, and any mandatory information required. The university IRB process had been completed and approval was given for this study. The survey was voluntary and anonymous for the participants who had the choice to stop or contact the researcher and withdraw from the study later. Participation took place outside of the classroom and participants received no incentive or gift for taking the survey (e.g., class bonus points, money).

Measures. Pre-existing tested immediacy scales were used for the quantitative survey tool: The Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003) and Verbal Immediacy Behaviors (Gorham, 1988). In these scales, a 5-point Likert-type scale of 1= *never* to 5= *very often* was used to measure instructor immediacy behaviors with a total of 43 questions. The survey consisted of all twenty-six questions from the Nonverbal Immediacy scale, and all seventeen questions from the Verbal Immediacy Scale. Examples of the survey statements on the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (Richmond et al., 2003) include: (1) The instructor uses her/his hands and arms to gesture while talking to people; (2) The instructor touches others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them; (3) The instructor uses a monotone or dull voice while talking to people; (4) The instructor looks over or away from others while talking to them; and (5) The instructor moves away from others when they touch her/him while they are talking . Examples of questions on the Verbal Immediacy Behaviors (Gorham, 1988) include: (1) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class; (2) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk; (3) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be part of his/her lesson plan; (4) The instructor uses humor in class; and (5) The instructor addresses students by name.

The survey included a section of demographic questions to measure which department was surveyed, a course number to determine whether the instructor was a GTA or tenure/tenure-track professor, general age of professor, gender of the instructor and participant, and year in school of participant. Last, four credibility/likeability questions were asked to represent feelings the participant felt toward the instructor of the course. These were based on a 7-point scale where the participant circled where he/she fell on the scale. An example of the statement is:

Course instructor: 1) Fair 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unfair

The reliability for the Gorham verbal instrument (1988) is high, with alpha and split-half reliabilities for students' assessments ranging from .83 to .94. The alpha reliabilities for the Richmond et al., nonverbal scale instrument (2003) are at or above .90. The raw validity correlations range from .58 to .82. The disattenuated validity correlations ranged from .74 to .95. Validity for the Gorham instrument reveals that all 17 verbal immediacy items loaded on the same single factor.

This chapter presented the design of the study, including the demographics of the sample, the procedure for data collection, and the instrumentation. Data were collected in compliance with the research guidelines set by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. The subsequent section will present an analysis of the data gathered using SPSS.

Chapter 3: Results

This study examines teacher immediacy behaviors in the college classroom and the effectiveness of verbal versus nonverbal behaviors in relation to gender and teaching experience as measured by the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale and the Verbal Immediacy Behaviors scale. This chapter will include demographic results from the data, results from analysis of the three hypotheses presented, as well as a summary of the findings.

The sample population for this study included 311 students enrolled in a public university in the southeastern United States during the 2012 spring semester. The students were asked to answer demographic questions about the teacher whom they considered while taking the survey. Of the surveys completed and included in the analysis, 137 (44.1%) evaluated graduate teaching assistants, 98 (31.5%) evaluated instructors, and 76 (24.4%) assessed professors that are tenured or tenure-track. Of the teachers analyzed, 117 (37.6%) were male and 194 (62.4%) were female, with 14 (10.2%) of the GTAs being male and 123 (89.8%) being female; 81 (82.7%) instructors being male and 17 (17.3%) being female; and 22 (29%) professors being male and 54 (71%) being female. The students were asked to answer demographic questions about the teacher whom they considered while taking the survey. 298 (95.8%) of the surveys evaluated a teacher in the Communication department, four from English (.01%), and nine (.03%) from Public Administration. All of the male GTAs surveyed came from the Public Administration department.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was completed to investigate the relationship between gender and each immediacy scale. In addition, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the relationship between gender of the subject's power and the questions about verbal and nonverbal behavior. A MANOVA was completed to investigate

teaching level and both immediacy scales as well as the power relationships. SPSS software was used to conduct the ANOVAs and MANOVAs.

To answer hypotheses one and two, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the gender of the subjects and nonverbal immediacy. The independent variable is gender with two levels: male and female. The dependent variables are the questions about nonverbal behavior. In addition, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the gender of the subjects and verbal immediacy. The independent variable is gender with two levels: male and female. The dependent variables are the questions about verbal behavior. The first hypothesis states:

H1: Female teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors, will be perceived as having higher nonverbal immediacy skills than male teachers, while male teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors, will be seen as having higher verbal immediacy skills than female teachers.

The second hypothesis states:

H2: Male teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors will be considered more competent on the nonverbal immediacy scale than female teachers, while female teachers, whether GTAs, instructors, or professors will be seen as more compassionate and relational than male teachers.

Of the 26 variables on the nonverbal scale, six were found to be significant. These are:

(1) The instructor has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people, $F(1,309) = 11.03, p < .01, \eta^2 = .91$. (2) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people, $F(1,309) = 5.15, p < .05, \eta^2 = .62$. (3) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people, $F(1,309) = 8.30, p < .01, \eta^2 = .82$. (4) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with

them, $F(1,309) = 6.74, p < .01, \eta^2 = .74$. (5) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them, $F(1,309) = 8.23, p < .01, \eta^2 = .82$. (6) The instructor smiles when he/she talks to people, $F(1,309) = 6.12, p < .05, \eta^2 = .70$. The means and standard deviations for nonverbal immediacy by teacher gender are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Group Means and Standard Deviations for Nonverbal Immediacy by Teacher Gender

Nonverbal Measures	Female		Male	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Uses hands and arms to gesture	3.55	.84	3.61	.90
Touches on arm/shoulder while talking	1.46	.68	1.33	.76
Monotone or dull voice	1.99	.91	1.92	.85
Looks over/away while talking	1.67	.77	1.63	.75
Moves away when other are talking	1.76	.94	1.72	.92
Has a relaxed body position*	4.03	.88	4.34	.70
Frowns while talking to people	1.70	.84	1.56	.59
Avoids eye contact*	1.54	.76	1.35	.56
Has a tense body position*	1.76	.76	1.51	.68
Sits close or stands close*	2.76	.97	2.46	1.01
Voice is monotonous or dull	1.87	.89	1.81	1.00
Uses a variety of vocal expressions	3.62	.87	3.66	.95
Gestures when talking	3.64	.76	3.69	.94
Is animated when talking	3.61	.91	3.64	.98
Has a bland facial expression	2.03	.84	2.22	.83

Moves closer to people when talking*	2.78	.83	2.48	.95
Looks directly at people	4.32	.74	4.28	.71
Is stiff when talking to people	1.85	.75	1.74	.66
Has a lot of vocal variety	3.62	.96	3.53	1.00
Avoids gesturing	2.12	.78	2.11	.86
Leans toward people when talking	2.73	.86	2.68	.99
Maintains eye contact when talking	4.31	.68	4.26	.71
Tries to not sit/stand close	2.77	.91	2.87	1.00
Leans away when talking	1.93	.79	1.91	.80
Smiles when talking*	4.08	.84	3.84	.78
Avoids touching	3.56	1.05	3.76	1.09

Note: *Mean for females differs significantly from mean for males at $p < .05$. Total Respondents: 311

Of the significant variables, males were rated significantly higher than females for the variable: The instructor has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people. Females were rated significantly higher than males for the other five variables. Two of the five are scored inversely, meaning that females did not display higher nonverbal immediacy on the variables: (1) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people and (2) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people. However, for the other three variables, males rated significantly higher than females: (1) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with them, (2) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them; and (3) The instructor smiles when he/she talks to people.

Of the 17 variables on the verbal scale, nine were found to be significant: (1) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class, $F(1,309) = 28.70, p < .01, \eta^2 = 1.00$. (2) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to

talk, $F(1,309) = 4.78, p < .05, \eta^2 = .59$. (3) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan, $F(1,309) = 5.50, p < .05, \eta^2 = .65$. (4) The instructor uses humor in class, $F(1,309) = 19.78, p < .01, \eta^2 = .99$. (5) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc, $F(1,309) = 5.69, p < .05, \eta^2 = .66$. (6) The instructor calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk, $F(1,309) = 11.43, p < .01, \eta^2 = .92$. (7) The instructor asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic, $F(1,309) = 13.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = .96$. (8) The instructor asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions, $F(1,309) = 5.57, p < .05, \eta^2 = .65$. (9) The instructor will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole, $F(1,309) = 11.51, p < .01, \eta^2 = .92$. Follow-up tests were not conducted for hypotheses one and two because there are only two groups for gender and two groups for training/no training. The means and standard deviations for verbal immediacy by teacher gender are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Group Means and Standard Deviations for Verbal Immediacy by Teacher Gender

Verbal Measures	Female		Male	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Uses personal examples*	3.45	1.04	4.07	.91
Asks questions/encourages talking*	4.22	.83	4.42	.74
Discusses irrelevant student thoughts*	2.92	.96	3.20	1.07
Uses humor*	3.54	.90	4.02	.91
Addresses student by name	4.15	.95	4.03	1.02
Addresses me by name	4.12	.96	4.03	1.03
Converses before/after class	3.32	.90	3.42	.99

Has conversed with me before/after	2.40	1.16	2.37	1.06
Refers to class as 'our/we'	4.20	.82	4.30	.81
Provides individual feedback*	4.21	.92	3.96	.90
Calls on students without volunteers*	2.55	1.05	2.14	1.05
Asks how student feel about work*	3.08	1.06	3.55	1.09
Invites students to call/meet	3.37	1.04	3.38	1.22
Asks questions soliciting opinions*	3.13	1.02	3.43	1.14
Praises students	3.66	1.01	3.57	1.02
Discusses unrelated materials*	2.44	.91	2.82	1.05
Is addressed by first name	1.74	1.10	1.68	1.10

Note: *Mean for females differs significantly from mean for males at $p < .05$. Total Respondents: 311

Of the nine significant variables, males were rated significantly higher than females for seven of the following verbal immediacy behaviors: (1) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class, (2) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk, (3) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan, (4) The instructor uses humor in class, (5) The instructor asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic, (6) The instructor asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions, and (7) The instructor will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole. Females were rated significantly higher than males for the two following variables: (1) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, and (2) The instructor calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk.

To answer hypothesis three a MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between teaching level and both immediacy scales. The independent variable is teaching experience with three levels: graduate teaching assistant, instructor, and tenured/tenure-track professors. The dependent variables are the questions about nonverbal and verbal behaviors. The third hypothesis states:

H3: GTAs and instructors will be considered as being more compassionate and approachable than tenured and tenure-track professors, while tenured and tenure-track professors will be perceived as being more credible than GTAs and instructors.

Of the 43 variables on the verbal and nonverbal scales combined, 26 were found to be significant. There are: (1) The instructor touches others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them, $F(2,308) = 6.07, p < .01, \eta^2 = .88$. (2) The instructor uses a monotone or dull voice while talking to people, $F(2,308) = 4.79, p < .01, \eta^2 = .79$. (3) The instructor looks over or away from others while talking to them, $F(2,308) = 3.96, p < .05, \eta^2 = .71$. (4) The instructor has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people, $F(2,308) = 3.79, p < .05, \eta^2 = .69$. (5) The instructor frowns while talking to people, $F(2,308) = 5.53, p < .01, \eta^2 = .85$. (6) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people, $F(2,308) = 11.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = .99$. (7) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people, $F(2,308) = 7.45, p < .01, \eta^2 = .94$. (8) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with them, $F(2,308) = 6.54, p < .01, \eta^2 = .91$. (9) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them, $F(2,308) = 8.21, p < .01, \eta^2 = .96$. (10) The instructor looks directly at people while talking to them, $F(2,308) = 5.19, p < .01, \eta^2 = .83$. (11) The instructor maintains eye contact with people when he/she talks to them, $F(2,308) = 5.76, p < .01, \eta^2 = .87$. (12) The instructor leans away from people when he/she talks to them, $F(2,308) = 3.06, p < .05, \eta^2 = .59$. (13) The instructor uses personal examples or talks

about experiences she/he has had outside of class, $F(2,308) = 11.35, p < .01, \eta^2 = .99$. (14) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk, $F(2,308) = 4.09, p < .05, \eta^2 = .723$. (15) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan, $F(2,308) = 8.03, p < .01, \eta^2 = .96$. (16) The instructor uses humor in class, $F(2,308) = 8.33, p < .01, \eta^2 = .96$. (17) The instructor addresses student by name, $F(2,308) = 6.39, p < .01, \eta^2 = .90$. (18) The instructor addresses me by name, $F(2,308) = 5.82, p < .05, \eta^2 = .87$. (19) The instructor has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside of class, $F(2,308) = 8.87, p < .01, \eta^2 = .97$. (20) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc, $F(2,308) = 5.77, p < .01, \eta^2 = .87$. (21) The instructor calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk, $F(2,308) = 3.11, p < .05, \eta^2 = .60$. (22) The instructor asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic, $F(2,308) = 14.25, p < .01, \eta^2 = .99$. (23) The instructor invites students to telephone or meet with him/her outside of class if they have questions, $F(2,308) = 5.66, p < .01, \eta^2 = .86$. (24) The instructor asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions, $F(2,308) = 5.54, p < .01, \eta^2 = .85$. (25) The instructor praises students' work, actions or comments, $F(2,308) = 3.20, p < .05, \eta^2 = .610$. (26) The instructor will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students with the class as a whole, $F(2,308) = 10.38, p < .01, \eta^2 = .99$. The means and standard deviations for verbal immediacy by teacher gender are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Group Means and Standard Deviation for Nonverbal and Verbal Immediacy by Teacher Level

Measures	GTAs		Instructors		Professors	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Uses hands and arms to gesture	3.57	.83	3.63	.85	3.49	.97
Touches on arm/shoulder while talking*	1.33	.67	1.33	.62	1.67	.86
Monotone or dull voice*	1.92	.91	1.83	.81	2.22	.87
Looks over/away while talking*	1.59	.77	1.58	.76	1.87	.74
Moves away when other are talking	1.71	.98	1.68	.88	1.89	.90
Has a relaxed body position	4.14	.89	4.31	.77	3.96	.76
Frowns while talking to people	1.64	.84	1.50	.65	1.88	.69
Avoids eye contact*	1.36	.61	1.36	.61	1.80	.85
Has a tense body position*	1.71	.79	1.45	.66	1.87	.68
Sits close or stands close*	2.61	.98	2.44	1.00	2.97	.92
Voice is monotonous or dull	1.82	.92	1.73	.96	2.03	.91
Uses a variety of vocal expressions	3.58	.88	3.69	.90	3.67	.93
Gestures when talking	3.66	.77	3.63	.89	3.71	.86
Is animated when talking	3.58	.97	3.70	.90	3.58	.91
Has a bland facial expression	2.07	.92	2.10	.81	2.14	.74
Moves closer to people when talking*	2.74	.85	2.39	.92	2.89	.81
Looks directly at people*	4.44	.64	4.28	.73	4.11	.81
Is stiff when talking to people	1.79	.74	1.74	.66	1.92	.73

Leans toward people when talking	2.66	.92	2.61	.96	2.91	.79
Maintains eye contact when talking*	4.41	.60	4.28	.67	4.08	.81
Tries to not sit/stand close	2.80	.94	2.91	1.07	2.68	.77
Leans away when talking*	1.82	.79	1.95	.77	2.09	.80
Smiles when talking	4.12	.83	3.93	.78	3.86	.84
Avoids touching	3.72	1.06	3.72	1.20	3.37	1.05
Uses personal examples*	3.37	1.11	3.95	.90	3.38	.91
Asks questions/encourages talking*	4.36	.75	4.38	.73	4.07	.94
Discusses irrelevant student thoughts	2.77	.97	3.22	1.09	3.22	.87
Uses humor*	3.56	.93	4.03	.84	3.62	.95
Addresses student by name*	4.28	.88	4.10	1.01	3.79	1.01
Addresses me by name*	4.25	.92	4.09	1.02	3.78	.99
Converses before/after class	3.20	.91	3.47	.98	3.47	.89
Has conversed with me before/after*	2.18	1.07	2.34	1.11	2.84	1.12
Refers to class as 'our/we'	4.22	.84	4.30	.79	4.18	.81
Provides individual feedback*	4.31	.83	4.01	.91	3.91	1.02
Calls on students without volunteers*	2.52	1.02	2.18	1.12	2.45	1.05
Asks how student feel about work*	2.96	1.04	3.70	1.03	3.22	1.10
Invites students to call/meet*	3.19	1.07	3.36	1.22	3.72	1.02
Asks questions soliciting opinions*	3.02	1.03	3.42	1.18	3.36	1.02
Praises students*	3.52	1.04	3.56	1.09	3.88	.83
Discusses unrelated materials*	2.30	.87	2.81	1.09	2.79	.88
Is addressed by first name	1.60	1.03	1.68	1.14	1.96	1.14

Note: *Mean differs significantly for variables at $p < .05$. Total Respondents: 311

Because there were statistically significant results for hypothesis three, which involved three factors, a post hoc test was conducted. A post hoc Tukey test was run which is designed to compare each condition to every other condition. This test compared the GTA and instructor conditions. It also compared the GTA and tenured/tenured-track conditions along with the instructor and tenured/tenured-track conditions.

For the variable: (1) The instructor touches others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (2) The instructor uses a monotone or dull voice while talking to people; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (3) The instructor looks over or away from others while talking to them; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (4) The instructor has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people; instructors were rated significantly higher in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (5) The instructor frowns while talking to people, instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (6) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (7) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people; GTAs and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly higher in comparison to instructors, (8) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with them; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (9) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them; GTAs and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly higher in comparison to instructors, (10) The instructor looks directly at people while talking to them; GTAs were rated significantly higher in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (11) The

instructor maintains eye contact with people when he/she talks to them; GTAs were rated significantly higher in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (12) The instructor leans away from people when he/she talks to them; GTAs were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (13) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class; instructors and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly higher in comparison to GTAs, (14) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly higher in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (15) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan; instructors and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly higher in comparison to GTAs, (16) The instructor uses humor in class; GTAs and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly lower in comparison to instructors, (17) The instructor addresses students by name; GTAs were rated significantly higher in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (18) The instructor addresses me by name; GTAs were rated significantly higher in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (19) The instructor has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside of class; GTAs and instructors were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (20) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc; instructors and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly lower in comparison to GTAs, (21) The instructor calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk; GTAs were rated significantly higher in comparison to instructors, (22) The instructor asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic; GTA and tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly lower in comparison to instructors, (23) The instructor invites students to telephone

or meet with him/her outside of class if they have questions; GTAs were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (24) The instructor asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions; GTAs were rated significantly lower in comparison to instructors, (25) The instructor praises students' work, actions or comments; GTAs were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors, (26) The instructor will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students with the class as a whole; GTAs were rated significantly lower in comparison to tenured/tenure-track professors.

This chapter presented results of this study investigating the relationship between teacher immediacy behaviors in the college classroom and the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal behaviors in relation to gender and teaching experience. Three hundred and eleven students participated in the study. Collected data included the participant's scores on the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale and the Verbal Immediacy Behaviors scale, and the demographic information of gender and teaching level of teacher. Based on analysis, a significant relationship was indicated for several variables of each hypothesis.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The results of this study concluded that when examining gender and the nonverbal scales, significant results came from examining males with the verbal immediacy scale. Hypothesis one was not supported because female teachers were not found to be more nonverbally immediate than males. In addition, males were not more nonverbally immediate than females. Males were rated more significant than females on the following variable: (1) The instructor has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people. Females were rated more significant for the other five variables. However, two of the five are scored inversely, meaning that females did not display higher nonverbal immediacy on the following variables: (1) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people; (2) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people. For the other three significant variables, (1) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with them, (2) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them and (3) The instructor smiles when he/she talks to people, females were rated significantly higher than males.

As noted in the literature review, a study by Hall et al.(2005) found that in an unequal power relationship, such as the teacher-to-student relationship, the superior used more nonverbal immediacy behaviors, such as facial expressions, more body openness, and smaller interpersonal distances than subordinates. In their study, perceivers believed that the greater the power distance between two people, the more nonverbal immediacy would be present by behaviors that are used by the superior (Hall et. al, 2005). In the present study, the majority of females evaluated were graduate teaching assistants. In total 194 females were analyzed, with 123 being GTAs, 17 instructors, and 54 tenure/tenured-track professors. Perhaps females did not rate significantly as being more nonverbally immediate because they were also not perceived as

being in a position of power because GTAs are teachers and students, rather than being a full-time employee of the university.

The second hypothesis was supported in that males measured higher on the verbal immediacy scale than females. Of the nine significant variables, males were rated more significant than females for seven of the following verbal immediacy behaviors: (1) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class, (2) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk, (3) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan, (4) The instructor uses humor in class, (5) The instructor asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic, (6) The instructor asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions, and (7) The instructor will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole. Females were rated more significantly for the two following variables: (1) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, and (2) The instructor calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk.

These results are congruent with research by Demetriou et al. (2009), which examined teachers' interactions with students and found that female teachers were more likely to employ emotional tactics, such as showing personal interest in students to re-engage them in learning than were male teachers. This research suggested that female teachers are more likely to see students as individuals, whereas male teachers are more inclined to communicate the subject knowledge and hope this will enthruse the student enough to engage him or her. In addition, 117 of the teachers analyzed were male, of which 14 were GTAs, 81 were instructors, and 22 were tenured/tenure-track professors. Since there is a large difference between the number of female

GTAs and male GTAs evaluated, there is a difference in experience that is not accounted for in the comparison of gender to the immediacy scales. However, this does indicate an importance of understanding and employing impression management and facework. If power is indeed a variable, there may be a link between perceived power, perceived facework skills, and perceived immediacy.

Kerssen-Griep et al. (2008) found that the facework students' experience from the instructors has a significant impact on both nonverbal and verbal immediacy relational perceptions in a classroom, particularly when the instructor mitigated face threats. Facework may be a major contributor to the relational success of many classroom messages, and students who experience skilled positive face support during feedback from their instructor believe they are in a better learning environment. Like impression management, immediacy affects content and relational aspects in the student-teacher relationship. In the classroom, a student's desire to appear intelligent cannot always be satisfied by other students; it is more likely that only the instructor can satisfy the student's positive face wants because the instructor is the one who is deemed the expert and who evaluates the students' work (Neary et al., 2008). Because image can affect the credibility of instructors and how their students perceive them, the image an instructor presents is important (Patton, 1999). Golish (1999) found that in persuasive scenarios where students had to ask their teacher or GTA for something, for example, changing their grade on a project, graduate teaching assistants were often perceived as more approachable than professors, and the students also felt like they could take advantage of GTAs. In fact, Golish (1999) found that students perceived both professors and GTAs to be high in credibility, but professors were perceived as having more legitimate, coercive, and expert power than graduate teaching assistants. Although previous studies examining gender and immediacy have concluded

that females are generally more immediate than males, particularly with nonverbal immediacy (Gorham, 1988; Patton, 1999; Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner, 2005; Santilli & Miller, 2011) the findings from this present study differed from those studies, possibly because females were not considered as experienced, and therefore were seen as less powerful.

The most revealing results came from analyzing results from hypothesis three. Graduate teaching assistants were rated as more nonverbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors on six variables. Those variables were: (1) The instructor uses a monotone or dull voice while talking to people, (2) The instructor looks over or away from others while talking to them, (3) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people, (4) The instructor looks directly at people while talking to them, (5) The instructor maintains eye contact with people when he/she talks to them, (6) The instructor leans away from people when he/she talks to them. GTAs were rated more significantly nonverbally immediate than instructors on the following only the variable: (1) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them.

Instructors were rated significantly more nonverbally immediate than GTAs on only the following variable: (1) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people. Instructors were rated significantly more nonverbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors on six variables. Those variables were: (1) The instructor uses a monotone or dull voice while talking to people, (2) The instructor looks over or away from others while talking to them, (3) The instructor has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people, (4) The instructor frowns while talking to people, (5) The instructor avoids eye contact while talking to people, and (6) The instructor has a tense body position while talking to people.

Tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly more nonverbally immediate than GTAs on two variables. Those variables were: (1) The instructor touches others on the

shoulder or arm while talking to them, and (2) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with them. Tenured/tenure-track professors were rated significantly more nonverbally immediate than instructors on three variables. Those variables were: (1) The instructor touches others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them, (2) The instructor sits close or stands close to people while talking with them, and (3) The instructor moves closer to people when he/she talks to them.

Graduate teaching assistants were rated as more verbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors on four variables. (1) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk, (2) The instructor addresses student by name, (3) The instructor addresses me by name, (4) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc. Graduate teaching assistants were rated are more verbally immediate than instructors on three variables: (1) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class, (2) The instructor provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc., and (3) The instructor calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk.

Instructors were rated more verbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors the following three variables: (1) The instructor asks questions or encourages students to talk, (2) The instructor uses humor in class, and (3) The instructor asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic. Instructors were rated more verbally immediate than graduate teaching assistants on the following four variables: (1) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan, (2) The instructor uses humor in class, (3) The instructor asks how students

feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic, and (4) The instructor asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.

Tenured/tenure/track professors were rated significantly more verbally immediate than GTAs on six variables. Those variables were: (1) The instructor uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class, (2) The instructor gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be a part of his/her lesson plan, (3) The instructor has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside of class, (4) The instructor invites students to telephone or meet with him/her outside of class if they have questions, (5) The instructor praises students' work, actions or comments, and (6) The instructor will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students with the class as a whole. Tenured/tenure/track professors were rated significantly more verbally immediate than instructors on the following variable: (1) The instructor has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside of class.

In sum, graduate teaching assistants were rated more significantly nonverbally immediate than professors on six variables. Instructors were also rated as more significantly nonverbally immediate than tenured/tenure/track professors on six variables. When combining GTAs and instructors, there was an overlap on four of the variables, meaning that together, GTAs and instructors were more nonverbally immediate than professors on eight variables total. Tenured/tenure/track professors were rated more nonverbally immediate than GTAs on two variables and instructors on three variables, with two overlapping, meaning that tenured/tenure-track professors are more nonverbally immediate than GTAs and instructors on three total variables.

On the verbal immediacy scale, GTAs were rated more verbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors on four variables. Instructors were rated more verbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors on three variables, with one variable overlapping, resulting in six total variables that GTAs and instructors rated more significantly verbally immediate than tenured/tenure-track professors. Tenured/tenure-track professors were rated more verbally immediate than GTAs on six variables and instructors on one variable, with none overlapping, meaning that tenured/tenure-track professors are more nonverbally immediate than GTAs and instructors on seven total variables.

These results support hypothesis three that GTAs and instructors would be viewed as more nonverbally immediate while tenured/tenure-track professors are seen as more verbally immediate. However, it is interesting to note that instructors were rated as more verbally immediate than GTAs on three variables that did not overlap with the ones that tenured/tenure-track professors rated more significant, so there is a noted difference between GTAs and instructors. The present study hypothesized that GTAs and instructors would rate higher on the nonverbal immediacy scale because of the relational aspects that nonverbal behaviors imply. Again noting that the relationship between a teacher and student is affected the power distribution, it could be that since GTAs and instructors are not established professors, they use more nonverbal immediacy behaviors to create the sense of power distance between themselves and students. GTAs and instructors might be ranked as more nonverbally immediate because they are seen as employing nonverbal facework strategies that resonate with the students, but because of the lack of experience in teaching, the verbal strategies employed in class are not as immediate as tenured/tenure-track professors who have had experience with how to talk to students.

As noted in the literature review, Politeness Theory consists of positive and negative face; with positive face being the need to feel included, approved of, and appreciated, and negative face being the desire to remain autonomous and unconstrained by others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is possible that GTAs are able to promote positive face and not as skilled at negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) describe acts that are inherently threatening to the negative face wants of the respondent. These include orders, requests, suggestions, reminders, threats and dares, all of which the last two are common classroom occurrences. Frymier and Houser (2000) note that teacher feedback from interaction in the classroom can also contain potential face threats and since GTAs have little experience and little training, it is likely that they would be unable to facilitate interactions in the classroom as well as a more experienced professor.

To address the results of instructors being seen as both nonverbally and verbally immediate, if perceived power is linked to perceived facework and immediacy, instructors may be ranking high on both verbal and nonverbal immediacy scales because they may be closer in age than a tenured/tenure-track professor, but also more powerful than a graduate teaching assistant. A GTA may not have to work as hard to establish relational dimensions associated with nonverbal immediacy but has to work harder than instructors and tenured/tenure-track professors to learn what to say in the new context of teaching. This challenge may be reflected in the results of the analysis of the verbal immediacy scale. GTAs will have to work harder to figure out how to promote positive face and save face of students in class where as they likely will not have to work as hard to connect to students on a relational and emotional level. Because GTAs are closer in age to students and less experienced in teaching and facework strategies in an unequal power-relationship such as the student-teacher relationship than instructors and

tenured/tenure-track professors, learning verbal immediacy skills could be a good way to balance the perception that GTAs are less credible. Tenured/tenure-track professors have more likely had classroom experience and are established as experts in their field, so they may automatically earn power because they know how to interact with students' face identities in the classroom setting.

Limitations

An obvious limitation of this study is the uneven ratio of male and females in the three various teaching categories. A majority of the females measured were graduate teaching assistants, with very few male graduate teaching assistants being rated, which may have resulted in the lack of significant nonverbal immediacy behaviors from females.

Another limitation of this study may be that the nearly all of the instructors rated by students were in the communication department. Because immediacy is a communicative concept, it is possible that the tenured/tenure-track professors may be consciously employing these behaviors. The researcher contacted many departments, such as English, history, psychology, public administration, and Spanish to administer the survey, but very few complied.

Finally, the Verbal Immediacy scale included verbal immediacy behaviors that measure such things as: using praise, humor, and personal pronouns, calling students by name, demonstrating a willingness to converse with students' before/after/outside of class, asking questions to acquire student viewpoint or opinions, and responding to student initiated topics, however it did not include measures directly observing credibility, competency, clarity. Using a scale that specifically measures credibility and competency of subject matter could produce more direct results as to whether tenured/tenure-track professors who were rated as more significant on the verbal scale than instructors and GTAs because they have had experience and know how to

use facework strategies versus if they are seen as verbally immediate because they were considered experts by the students.

Future Research

In the future, research in this area could consider examining perceived power or credibility associated with the various levels of teachers. Research could also consider surveying teachers to examine what kind of training in education he or she may have received. Years of teaching experience may have a large impact on how immediate a teacher is perceived by students. More focused research on graduate teaching assistants would be beneficial since GTAs are instructors in the college classroom. It would also be interesting to examine perceived facework strategies from the GTA point of view to see if they are comfortable with interacting with students in a manner that may create negative face, such as using commands and suggestions.

Conclusion

Research shows that immediacy behaviors result in numerous beneficial student outcomes. Graduate teaching assistants are often foreigners in a teaching atmosphere, and are expected to perform untaught teaching duties. It can be intimidating to be in a position of power and having to exert control in an unfamiliar setting. GTAs are still students and are not considered experts in their field of study, so they do not have the established credibility that an instructor or professor might have. With even some awareness and teaching of nonverbal and verbal immediacy behaviors, GTAs may not only become better teachers, but may also be perceived as such by the students. This could diminish unwanted face threats for students while at the same time making the GTA more credible and comfortable in the college classroom.

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