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## Teaching strategies to improve student perceptions of academic success: an approach toward immediacy

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TEACHING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC  
SUCCESS: AN APPROACH TOWARD IMMEDIACY

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
Eastern Washington University  
Cheney, Washington

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree:  
Master of Science in Communication

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By  
Andra L. Ely  
Spring 2012

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## MASTER'S THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

Teachers are integral portions of a student's ability to succeed in life. However, too often, many teachers do not take the time to develop the necessary skills to become great teachers in order to truly help their students to succeed in life after college. Therefore, I designed an instrument to measure the correlation between instructor immediacy values and students' perceptions of their success in communication classrooms in hopes to demonstrate that teaching behaviors and student success do in fact influence one another. The research question of this thesis was: Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?

The working hypothesis involved the idea that instructor immediacy values and student success as perceived by students are directly correlated. Moreover, the hypothesis expanded to encompass the idea that students' definitions of an excellent teacher will be positively correlated with instructor immediacy behaviors. To address the research question and hypotheses, I designed a questionnaire and surveyed 204 students in communication classes. I performed a correlation assessment of the quantitative data in SPSS and analyzed the open-ended questions via content analysis in order to report the data in a mixed methods approach. Findings from these grounded theory approaches suggest that instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students are directly correlated.

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“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.” – Anthony Robbins

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

In May of 2011, I was chosen as one of six selected graduate teaching assistants for the Department of Communication Studies. My task was to become acquainted with the material for the Introduction to Communication Studies course so that I could effectively teach the material beginning Fall Quarter, 2011. Although I felt incredibly fortunate to have received such an honor, I was very well aware that my previous teaching experience in the preschool setting was no match for the amount of strength, focus, and tact that I would need to effectively teach in a college classroom. Coming from a setting where I knew each and every student of mine on an intimate level was immensely different from the setting I was about to enter into by teaching Communication 200. However, I hadn't quite come to grips with this harsh reality until I had begun teaching in September.

Realizing that I wasn't entirely prepared to be a great teacher at this level, I wanted to know, at the very least, what it meant to be an "effective" instructor. I had this notion that once I discovered what it meant to be an effective instructor, I would then be able to slowly work my way into becoming the excellent instructor that I had so desired to become.

So, in my first week of teaching Introduction to Communication Studies, I began a Google search with an inquiry of "student-teacher relationships" in hopes of finding the magic answer of the actions I should take in order to better understand my students so that I could become a better instructor in turn. I chose to use Google as a preliminary research tool not only because it was readily available at my

fingertips, but also because I was inspired by a professor in a GSA meeting that week who said, jokingly, “Google is your homie; use your super-ninja skills to work him, but use him for good, not evil”. Even though he was half-way kidding, I decided to apply this professor’s theory of Google to my own inquiries in order to see if I could in fact receive some decent answers to my question.

Of course, as we all know, Google cannot provide an explicit answer for each and every question, hence the disclaimer to use it for good and not evil. However, it sure can help to create an understanding of the variety of options and answers to inquiries. Moreover, Google can open doors into the research field that one would never have thought possible if he or she hadn’t consulted with Google to discover a preliminary means for building upon research, which is how I arrived at one of the scholarly articles that initially inspired my research.

The article, *The relationship between teacher immediacy and student motivation* (Velez & Cano, 2008), presented me with the idea that instructor immediacy is positively correlated with effective teaching. Moreover, I had just given a lecture about knowing oneself in order for relationships to succeed, and the term immediacy was presented in the Beebe, Beebe, and Ivy (2007) text that I was using for the course. The text defined immediacy as “feelings of liking, pleasure, and closeness” elicited by these communication channels: “proximity, body orientation, eye contact, facial expression, gestures, posture, touch, and voice” (p. 99). I believed that if I had seen this Mehrabian-coined term “immediacy” several times in the same week in regards to relationships, then there must be some merit behind the term

and its relationship to effective teaching, as effective teachers generally have good relationships with their students.

However, my desire to find the answer to become a better instructor didn't stop there. Yes, the definitions of immediacy as per scholarly articles and text books helped, as did our weekly graduate teaching assistant meetings, but I was eager to know more than just *what* I could do to be a better instructor. I wanted to know *how* I could reach out to my students in a positive way and inspire them to succeed not only in my class, but in other courses on campus as well. This soon became the foundation for my research and my newfound thesis topic: the relationship between instructor immediacy and students' perceptions of their own success in communication courses at Eastern Washington University.

### **The Necessity for the research**

Strategic planning for student success is a part of the mission of Eastern Washington University, as the university strives to offer a quality education in order to offer opportunities and success for each student. Moreover, student success is a primary goal of every university, therefore validating my desire to discover the relationship between student success and immediate teaching behaviors.

Communication instructors and students tend to demonstrate very immediate behavior, and many students in the communication discipline are successful. I thought that perhaps there may be a relationship between immediacy and perceptions of success as perceived by students, which could manifest into another framework for the student success model used in order to support the

mission of the university: to provide students with a quality education so they can succeed.

### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of this research was designed to answer my research question, “Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?” This question was designed from a personal query, as I desired knowledge of what I could do to be a better instructor for college students in communication courses. Additionally, as a current student and instructor, I wanted to know not only how I could be a better instructor for my students, but also how I could continue to be a good student in my own graduate courses.

Throughout the beginning of my undergraduate degree, my first and second years specifically, I wrestled with the idea of what student success really meant to me. I began my undergraduate degree with the idea that success simply meant achieving good grades in order to complete my degree so that I could then search the real world for a beneficial career. However, nearing the end of my second year of my undergraduate degree, I experienced a shift in my thinking and understanding of success. It was then that I began to realize that success involved not only performance, but also the ability to apply my learned skills to my life and my future. I realized that success was not based simply in the moment, but that it was reflected throughout the rest of my life, and that college was simply a starting point for my success, it didn’t define my success. This inspired the second variable for my research, as I wanted to know how other students defined their own success. I

wanted to know if they felt that success was determined by grades alone or if they saw success in their future endeavors. I also thought that perceptions of success could be directly linked with instructor immediacy but I desired to understand exactly how the relationship existed.

I began researching the two separate topics and discovered many articles and research pieces addressing each topic. I also discovered possibilities of how the topics could intersect (motivation, affect, and cognitive learning), but there seemed to be gaps in the relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as a direct relationship, which inspired the purpose of my research: to discover if there is a positive relationship between these two values of instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms.

## **Conclusion**

Now common sense may say, of course, that there is a relationship between the way an instructor behaves and the way that students learn and perceive their success. However, I wanted to know if this really was true, or simply a figment of my imagination that manifested due to my role as the hybrid model of both student and instructor in graduate school. Moreover, I wanted to know how and why this relationship existed if it did.

The following chapters address the previous research on the topics of instructor immediacy and student success, the gaps in the literature, and my methods for discovering the relationship between the two variables.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction**

Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?

For decades, the topic of student success at the collegiate level has been debated, surveyed, researched, and exhausted. A variety of techniques and instruments have been used to gauge student success, but very rarely do the instruments involve two key functions: success as perceived by the student, and both verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the instructor, also known as immediacy values.

Evidence has shown, though, that students' overall education is influenced through and affected by instructor immediacy behaviors (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Goodboy, Weber, & Bolkan, 2009; Rocca, 2004; Sibii, 2010; and Velez & Cano, 2008). Values that are commonly linked with instructor immediacy are student motivation (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; and Velez & Cano, 2008), attendance (Rocca, 2004), cognitive and affective learning (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Goodboy, Weber, & Bolkan, 2009; and Sibii, 2010), and verbal aggression, a negative form of immediacy (Rocca, 2004; and Sibii, 2010). These areas, coupled with research regarding student success, will be reviewed in preparation for conducting the research to answer my question.

## **PART ONE:**

### **The Principle of Immediacy**

Immediacy, a term coined by psychologist Albert Mehrabian, states that “people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer” (Mehrabian, 1971, p. 1 in Rocca, 2008, p. 186). This idea of immediacy, or closeness, has been used to determine effective teaching styles related to students’ ability to learn, as immediate behaviors are linked with overall achievement (Rocca, 2008). Moreover, immediacy encompasses both nonverbal and verbal qualities, which are especially critical when evaluating instructor effectiveness in a student-centered classroom where the students’ perception of their own success may be dependent upon their instructor’s immediacy levels in verbal and nonverbal manners. According to Mehrabian (1971), these verbal and nonverbal behaviors are used to enhance physical and psychological closeness with students. The nonverbal and verbal immediacy values are reviewed in the following sections.

### **Nonverbal Immediacy**

Nonverbal immediacy lends itself to the belief that actions and behaviors add meaning to the context of verbal messages in addition to the messages that nonverbal behaviors communicate. According to Richmond, Gorham, and McCroskey (1987) in Velez and Cano (2008), “Nonverbal immediacy is largely a relational language perceived to convey affective feelings of warmth, closeness, and belonging” (p. 77). As an implicit behavior, nonverbal immediacy can conjure feelings of “arousal, liking, pleasure, and dominance”, and these feelings are

“mediated through actions such as eye contact, body position, physical proximity, personal touch, and body movement” (Richmond et al., 1987 in Velez & Cano, 2008). Therefore, nonverbally immediate individuals should have tendencies toward these particular behaviors. The more immediate the individual is, the more he or she will work toward incorporating these behaviors. Conversely, the less immediate someone is, the more likely he or she will be to avoid eye contact, communicate at further distances, and lack movement or body orientation toward the individual with whom he or she is communicating (Velez & Cano, 2008).

These ideas of nonverbal immediacy are directly linked to cognitive learning levels of students (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Goodboy et al., 2009; and Velez & Cano, 2008). The idea resonated that with increased instructor nonverbal immediacy such as smiling, eye contact, or direct body orientation, students will have an increased liking for the instructor (Velez & Cano, 2008) and will therefore achieve better engagement with cognitive learning in the classroom. Additionally, studies have shown that nonverbal immediacy behaviors have a more significant effect on student learning than do verbal immediacy behaviors (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; and Goodboy, et al., 2009).

### **Verbal Immediacy**

So why is it that we study verbal immediacy in addition to nonverbal immediacy if it has been shown that nonverbal immediacy has more significant effects on student learning? This is because of the high correlation of verbal immediacy with nonverbal immediacy (Edwards & Edwards, 2001 in Velez and Cano, 2008) and their direct association with effective teaching (Gorham, 1988).



Verbal immediacy in instruction is defined through “the use of praise for student efforts, humor, self-disclosure, willingness to engage students in conversation, and overall openness and willingness to meet and interact with students” (Velez & Cano, 2008, p. 78). The more often the instructor exhibits these behaviors, the more often students will be inclined to perceive the instructor as highly verbally immediate, creating a higher degree of liking of the particular instructor (Velez & Cano, 2008). Moreover, coupled with nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy reinforces nonverbally immediate behaviors, thus creating greater credibility of the instructor and increased cognitive learning of the student (Velez & Cano, 2008).

However, verbal immediacy has also been associated with verbal aggression, a negative form of verbal immediacy. Rocca describes verbal aggression as “a destructive behavior ‘using verbal and nonverbal communication channels in order, minimally, to dominate and perhaps damage or, maximally, to defeat and perhaps destroy another person’s position on topics of communication and/or the other person’s self-concept’” (Infante, 1987, p. 182 in Rocca, 2004, p. 187). Therefore, as instructors, we must be mindful, not only of the messages we deliver, but also how we deliver them. The following sections highlight the effects of immediacy on student motivation, cognitive achievement, affective learning, and relationships between students and instructors.

### **Effects of Immediacy on Students**

The presence of immediacy in college classrooms has a number of effects on students. In the following sections, the conversations of student motivation,

cognitive learning, affective learning, and student-instructor relationships are addressed with regard to their relationships with immediacy.

### **Immediacy and Student Motivation**

Research has shown that student motivation and attendance records have been directly related both positively and negatively to instructor immediacy (Rocca, 2004; and Velez & Cano, 2008). “It appears to be a part of human nature to seek out and approach what is enjoyable, satisfying, and safe, while avoiding pain, discomfort, and threatening situations” (Velez & Cano, 2008, p. 78). Therefore, we can ascertain that teachers who provide students with a sense of belonging and warmth in their verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors are more likely to draw students into the classroom and the environment. Rather, if the instructor demonstrates verbally aggressive behavior, belittles students, or displays negative nonverbal immediacy factors, students will have a tendency to avoid interacting with the instructor due to the negative effects of this type of immediacy.

This idea also relates to students’ rates of success in courses and the value that is placed on successful course completion by the instructor and through their immediacy factors. “If teacher behaviors lead to decreased student expectancy for success, students will become disenchanted with the course and cognitively disengage. On the other hand, if teachers are able to increase student value in the course, students will be more apt to consciously and consistently work to master course concepts” (Velez & Cano, 2008, p. 78). Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that we use intentional teaching strategies in order to relate the coursework to the students’ lives so that they will, in turn, see the benefits of studying the course, and

will then be more inclined to study the coursework and set high achievement standards for themselves. Moreover, motivating the students to view the lessons as useful to their lives will encourage the students to identify a higher value of education for themselves (Velez & Cano, 2008). Additionally, motivating students through immediacy factors has been shown to be correlated with higher attendance rates in classes, while the use of verbally aggressive language does not motivate students to attend classes on a regular basis (Rocca, 2004).

Through their study of the relationship between teacher immediacy and student motivation, Velez and Cano (2008) administered surveys containing immediacy, motivational, and demographic questions, and found a positive correlation between the instructor's approach and the students' motivation. Moreover, they discovered that "the relationship between teacher behaviors and approach-avoidance is not mediated merely by drive" (Velez & Cano, 2008, p. 81). The students are motivated by more than simply the drive to do well; instructional pedagogy, immediacy, and movement motivate them as well. "Teachers constantly communicate to students through body language, glances, gestures, and facial expressions. These communication behaviors, though often overlooked by the instructor, appear to transmit to students a motivational or demotivational message" (Velez & Cano, 2008, p. 81). The very types of nonverbal immediacy statements that were assessed, including smiling, body position, and vocal expression, have all been found to moderately positively motivate students to learn. By contrast, sitting behind a desk while teaching and using a monotone or dull voice

while lecturing were found to have moderately positive demotivational values, as perceived by the students (Velez & Cano, 2008).

### **Cognitive Learning**

Many studies have shown that student motivation is directly linked to both cognitive and affective learning (Allen, et al., 2006, Goodboy, Weber, & Bolkan, 2009). This makes perfect sense when we understand that “cognitive learning outcomes typically are measured through recognition, recall, and understanding of course content” (Alen, et al., 2006, p. 22). Therefore, in order for students to engage in the highest levels of cognitive processing, one would suggest that a student should be motivated to learn in order to achieve high scores on their “recognition, recall, and understanding of course content”.

Additionally, Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy suggests that each educational objective cannot cognitively be accessed without achievement of the previous objective in the taxonomy. Some educational outcomes indicate lower-level cognitive learning, while others indicate higher-level learning in analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving. In order for a student to display higher-level learning, though, they must be cognitively engaged in the material in order to score well on the assessments, which would help to demonstrate the effect of the levels of overall cognitive learning.

Although immediacy and motivation are linked, and motivation and cognitive learning are directly correlated, there is not definitive evidence of a direct relationship between immediacy and cognitive learning (Goodboy, Weber, & Bolkan, 2009). Moreover, studies by Andersen (1979) as well as Andersen and Withrow

(1981) demonstrate that instructor immediacy has no effect on the overall cognitive learning process for students. However, immediacy has been linked to the motivation of students and their affect toward teachers, which may contribute to increased learning (Christensen and Menzel, 1998). Therefore, we can understand immediacy as a correlational value between motivation and cognitive learning, although no direct causality exists.

### **Affective Learning**

Affective learning and cognitive learning, although different models, are directly linked (Allen, et al., 2006, Goodboy, Weber & Bolkan, 2009, Witt & Wheelles, 2001, Baringer and McCroskey, 2000). This affect of students for their instructors stems back to the idea of immediacy by Mehrabian, who believed immediacy to be, primarily, “a manifestation of liking” (in Baringer and McCroskey, 2000, p. 178). This “manifestation” occurs through proximity, which is achieved by communicating with individuals regularly. By regular communication, we increase proximity with one another, and increased proximity creates the possibility of increased liking, according to Mehrabian (1971).

“Liking” can also be referred to as “affinity” within this affective construct, and is defined as “a positive attitude toward another person...another person has affinity for you if that person perceives you as credible, attractive, or similar to her or himself, or perceives that you have legitimate power over her or him” (McCroskey and Wheelles, 1976, p. 231-232). So it is increasingly important for instructors to maintain their credibility and power while still creating a positive environment for learning through their attitudes. Positive attitudes are essential in

maintaining affect for both teachers and students, as students react positively to positive feedback and positive feedback creates a sense of liking for the student, which is reflected as affect for the instructor (Baringer and McCroskey, 2000, p. 180). This can be viewed as a hermeneutic effect of a positive climate created through attitudes of liking.

According to Allen, et al., (2006) the affective learning construct is generally associated with students' attitudes toward a specific instructor or course. Many times, this association can be linked to immediacy, motivation, or cognitive achievement levels. After all, a student must be motivated to do well, which causes high cognitive achievement levels, which generally creates positive affect of the student for the teacher. Moreover, when students display immediacy toward an instructor, the instructor is more likely to demonstrate immediacy in return. This action can result in a reciprocal affect that has potential to increase over time (Baringer and McCroskey, 2000, p. 185).

Sometimes, however, learning does not occur in the above sequence. At times, the learning process takes more of an inverse effect which is driven by positive attitudes and immediacy. Rodriguez, Plax, and Kearney (1996) found that demonstrations of immediate behaviors by instructors increases student affect for their instructors, causing an increase in student motivation and cognitive learning. Witt and Wheelers (2004) also discovered this information, and took it a step further by investigating both verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors. They discovered that instructors using high levels of immediacy, verbal or nonverbal, caused an

increase in affect of their students for them, contrary to those instructors who displayed lower levels of immediacy in their communication with their students.

With either approach toward learning, however, we can duly note that immediacy influences the psychological orientation of the student, therefore skewing their likeness, or affect, for a certain instructor. This affective relationship can be initiated by motivation or by immediacy, but either relationship can increase cognitive learning through likeness via immediacy behaviors of instructors and students. These relationships are imperative to student success, caused by student engagement, and are directly linked to immediacy. The following section is an attempt to unite the ideas of immediacy and student success through student engagement.

### **Student-and-Instructor Interactions**

Affect often rests upon the interactions and relationships between students and teachers both in and outside of the classroom setting. “When someone is immediate with us, our response often is to be immediate in return. If a student is immediate or shows liking toward a teacher the teacher may unconsciously feel obligated to reciprocate immediacy and liking toward the student. Therefore, student immediacy may produce more teacher immediacy which in turn produces more liking” (Baringer and McCroskey, 2000, p.185). Often times, the relationship built between students and instructors is the piece of the educational puzzle that fosters the student’s overall engagement with the course material and with their achievement and success at universities.

Prior to the millennium and its influence on educational relationships, student and instructor relationships were seen as fairly remiss. According to Nussbaum (1992), “teachers [were] viewed as the source and students as the receivers, and no attempt [was] made to account for mutual influence” (p. 172). With the primary goal of teachers being to facilitate learning (McCroskey, 1992), the engagement of students in the classroom often became an issue that was overlooked. Now, more than ever, though, we seem to be increasingly focused on the relationships between instructors and students in order to ensure a well-rounded education and engagement in the classroom (Price, 2010, & Campus Compact, 2008).

Engaged students and instructors were not always a thing of the past though. In fact, engagement to promote student success has been a targeted focus of millennial, or Generation Y, learners and instructors of these learners. According to Price (2010), students now, more than ever, are expecting their instructors to create a more engaging, fun, interesting, relaxing, humorous, and techno-savvy. Price deems these new expectations of students for their instructors as a development of parent-child relationships. She points out that “helicopter parents have often sheltered [students], a practice that tends to extend the students’ adolescence and delay their development of independence” (Price, 2010, p. 2).

Therefore, students are expecting very personal relationships with their instructors, which links with the idea of creating an immediate environment in the classroom. “Establishing high quality relationships with students while teaching course content effectively” (Gendrin & Rucker, 2007, p. 41-42) is the new challenge



for all instructors of this “millennial” learning environment. However, with Price’s Five New “R’s” for engaging the millennial students: relevance, rationale, relaxed, rapport, and research-based methods, instructors can create lasting immediate relationships with their students that create classroom engagement and promote overall student success, my next major topic, in the collegiate environment.

Now that the variable of immediacy has been discussed, I would like to introduce the next variable of my research: student success. The remainder of this literature review will address this variable and its pertinence to instructor immediacy in college classrooms.

## **PART TWO:**

### **Student Success**

The overall success of students is incredibly multifaceted, and, many times, misunderstood or not well researched due to a high focus on student achievement levels. Additionally, researchers do not always focus on students' perceptions of their own success, which plays a large part in the overall measurement of student success. I wanted to focus on student success and its relationship with immediacy in higher education for my research. Although literature does not suggest that the two ideas are related, previous studies indirectly demonstrate that there could be a relationship between immediacy and success, which will be explained in the following sections.

### **Student Success Defined**

Over decades and across many disciplines and educational programs, leaders have attempted to define student success and explain how it is different from student achievement. What has been discovered by leaders of the AFT Union, (2011) is that student success contains elements, and should be considered a framework for all students in higher education. The three key elements of success in the eyes of AFT (2011) are “(1) exposure to **knowledge** in a variety of areas, (2) the development of **intellectual abilities** necessary for gathering information and processing it, and (3) **applied professional and technical skills**” (p. 9). These leaders emphasize that the most important element of success is the third, the application of professional and technical skills. Simply from AFT though, we can see

that student success is rooted in more than just achievement in schools. It involves the knowledge, the practice of that knowledge, and professionalism.

These three major elements of student success in higher education are also explained by Ewell and Wellman (2007) who define the simplest form of student success, “getting students into and through college to a degree or certificate” (p. 2), then further explain the meaning behind success in its simplest form. There are many aspects to getting students through their degrees, as success is not simply based upon academic achievement. Ewell and Wellman state that success can be measured through “many dimensions ranging from *student flow* across the entire educational pipeline (high school graduation, college enrollment, retention, and degree completion), to the *quality and content* of learning and skills achieved as a result of going to college, to positive *educational experiences* (such as student engagement or satisfaction)” (Ewell and Wellman 2007, p. 2). This framework is evident, and further explains the elements of success described in AFT’s (2011) report on success in higher education.

### **Why I chose to focus on success and student perceptions**

As I stated earlier in Chapter 1, I used to be of the mindset that success was defined in its simplest form: obtaining a college degree and graduating through a program. As I gained more knowledge and confidence in my learning, though, I began to realize that success is dependent on more than simply obtaining a degree and receiving high marks in courses. I began to understand success as gaining applicable knowledge and practicing that knowledge in realistic settings. I began to discover that the quality and the content of my education mattered to my overall

success, and that success was not directly pertinent to life in college. My success would be determined not only by my ability to achieve high marks in classes, but also by how I learned and applied my learned knowledge and skills in life after college, which leads to the rationale for why I chose to assess students' perceptions of success.

I think that like myself, students all define success a bit differently. For some it may simply mean achieving high marks or grades, while for others, it may mean much more than achievement as defined by the AFT (2011). Perhaps some students are still discovering what success means to them, because it seems as though confidence in success is the missing piece between achievement and success. Regardless of how students choose to define success, I found their perceptions of success to be an invaluable measurement tool when determining the effects of immediacy behaviors on students. Moreover, much of the current literature pertaining to student success does not focus on or define success as perceived by students. The literature simply rests on instructor perceptions and government mandates. Perhaps if student perceptions were taken into consideration, we would be able to measure success more effectively in higher education.

### **Perspectives of Success**

Many different perspectives of the success of students in higher education have been presented in this millennial generation of learning. The current literature addressing student success as presented by Kuh et al. (2006) includes organizational, psychological, cultural and economic perspectives of student success, and these perspectives are all intertwined in some way. Moreover, this

literature explains some suggested implications for creating a successful learning experience for students in higher education, which are indirectly linked to immediacy. These perspectives and implications, as related to immediacy, are addressed in the following sections.

### **Sociological Perspectives**

Socialization and social groups play an important role in the formula of student success, because social groups provide a “psychological safety net” for students, allowing them to become more easily acclimated with the collegiate environment (Pescodolido, 1994). Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993), proposed an interactionalist theory, by which, a sociological model was born. His sociological model suggests an act of separation must occur for a student to enter into a world of success at the collegiate level. Students must separate from their life prior to college, friends, family, high school, and embrace a transitional period in which they develop new ways of interacting and forming relationships and social groups (Tinto, 1993). After this transitional period, Tinto (1993) suggests that the students must incorporate the normative values and behaviors learned into their daily activities. This will help the students to effectively distance themselves from their previous peers and family so that they can succeed as students and as individuals of society in their new surroundings.

From Tinto’s model, we can see that social integration is equally as important as academic performance. Kuh, et al. (2006) states that “academic and social integration [are] complementary but independent processes by which students adjust to college life” (p. 11). Moreover, “social integration represents the extent to

which a student finds the institution's social environment to be congenial with his or her preferences, which are shaped by the student's background, values, and aspirations" (Kuh, et al., p. 11). Therefore, a student's background likely shapes their goals and aspirations for life after college, which can easily be achieved if a student is allowed the proper social integration into the college lifestyle. Once a student is acclimated to the new environment, he or she can work toward achieving those goals set a priori, which is the target of success as outlined by AFT (2011) and Ewell and Wellman (2007). Moreover, a greater sense of self and society coupled with building new relationships with other students, faculty, and staff, a student has a better chance of becoming more engaged, which is a large contributing factor of immediacy in the educational process.

### **Organizational Perspectives**

Institutions themselves are partially responsible for the overall success of their students through their organizational approach toward learning and incorporating immediacy. The organizational approach supports the sociological well-being of the students and instructors at universities. Some important organizational considerations when assessing success and relationships include but are not limited to, "institutional size, selectivity, resources, and faculty-student ratios" (Kuh, et al., 2006, p. 13). Therefore, collegiate institutions should be responsible for maintaining an adequate instructor to student ratio, regardless of how large or small the college is, in order to encourage relationship engagement and immediacy and to promote student success

Bean's (1983) student attrition model supported and inspired the previous perspective on organization in relation to student success, postulating that attitudes, beliefs, and values of students are the driving force behind their choices to continue attending their institution of choice. Within Bean's model, we see that a student's attitudes about an organization can influence their beliefs or perceptions. If the perceptions are positive, then a student will see a "fit" or a sense of belonging, which shapes the values that a student holds for his or her education and success. This generally occurs when institutions are organizationally sound, as in, they provide a variety of resources, have an appropriate student-faculty ratio so that students and faculty can build and maintain relationships, and offer a well-rounded education in order to promote a student's success in life after college.

From this organizational perspective, we can draw conclusions that the organization affects a student's social and psychological perspectives of an institution, which may cause their motivation and affect to increase or decrease, respectively. The following section addresses the psychological perspectives of both students and faculty, which are primarily influenced by motivation, which is correlated with immediacy in higher education (Velez & Cano, 2008).

### **Psychological Perspectives**

Students' psychological perspectives of institutions are generally based upon the organizational structures of the institutions, as organization promotes attitudes and beliefs, which shape psychological perspectives and motivation of students (Kuh, et al., 2010). Bean and Eaton (2000) promoted this idea with their attitude-behavior theory, which focused on student self-efficacy through social, emotional,

and academic challenges. The self-efficacy was said to encourage confidence so that students were more likely to succeed despite the multiple challenges of collegiate life. “Those [students] who are led to believe their intelligence is a malleable quality begin to take on challenging learning tasks and begin to take advantage of the skill-improvement opportunities that come their way” (Dweck, 2000, p. 26). Therefore, those students with higher confidence levels due to self-efficacy and greater beliefs will tend to fit the mold of college life and succeed at greater rates than those students who do not possess high levels of self-efficacy or confidence.

There are many factors that contribute to students’ confidence, self-efficacy, and adaptation to the collegiate lifestyle, which can affect their overall educational success. Motivation, a key factor in immediacy, is also a major contributing factor to the psychological orientation of students in the college setting. The motivational theory, coupled with expectancy and self-efficacy theories, suggests that a student’s level of motivation contributes to the activities outside of the classroom and involvement that students have within the college atmosphere. Their motivation to engage in other activities is said to be transferrable, and also increases student performance in the classroom, helping students to achieve success in life after college (Bandura, 1982, Dweck and Legget, 1988, Kuh, 1999, and Olsen et al., 1998). Moreover, Bandura’s (1982) motivational theory combines with Rousseau’s (1995) psychological contract theory, which states that students have certain beliefs about not only their learning environments, but also their relationships with those around them, including, but not limited to, other students, faculty, and staff members. However, “these understandings rarely become explicit or orally articulated by the



student” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 14), which can lead to misunderstandings between students, faculty and staff if students choose not to communicate their needs. Therefore, faculty, staff, and students must be certain to articulate their needs and expectations of one another so that the “psychological contract” is not broken and so that everyone can ultimately succeed. Attitudes shape behaviors, which shape values, and these three factors intertwine with social perceptions and academic performance (Howard, 2005, Kuh, 1999). These values largely contribute to the definition and formula of success, primarily through motivation, which can be influenced by immediacy.

### **Cultural Perspectives**

Culture has a heavy influence on student success due to the many different ethnic systems of attitudes, beliefs, and values of education that shape a student’s psychological approach and motivation toward education. “Student perceptions of the institutional environment and dominant norms and values influence how students think and spend their time. Taken together, these properties influence student satisfaction and the extent to which students take part in educationally purposeful activities” (Kuh, et al., 2006, p. 14). Kuh continues to explain how these perceptions are largely shaped by a student’s cultural background.

Cultural norms and values evince a large difference of opinion when the values of education and success are concerned. According to Tierney (1992), many institutions disregard simply expect their students, be they first-generation college students or culturally unique, to conform to the ways of the university. However, culture has a large contribution to many disciplines, especially the communication

discipline. Therefore, Tierney (1992) suggests that institutions should embrace culture rather than expecting students to conform to the institution in every way possible.

Embracing culture will allow for students to grow in their education through their cultural values which allows for the encouragement of new ideas and diverse viewpoints in the classroom from which everyone can learn. “Students should not be left to manage and resolve [their] differences on their own, especially when the college environment values conventions and traditions that students perceive to be alien or antithetical to their own” (Kuh, et al., 2006, p. 14). It should be the responsibility of the institution to ensure that students are given every opportunity to succeed. After all, if universities choose to admit a largely diverse population, then the universities should be adequately prepared to embrace the cultural differences and provide the necessary resources for all of the students to succeed in college and in life after college. Moreover, cultural values bring a new lens to the classroom so that everyone can learn from one another’s cultural experiences, bringing some excitement to the classroom. Excitement and motivation are correlated, and because motivation is a large part of both immediacy and success, we can conclude that the two variables are related through the cultural lens of success. Culture also presents many economical factors that are outlined below and directly relate to student success.

### **Economic Perspectives**

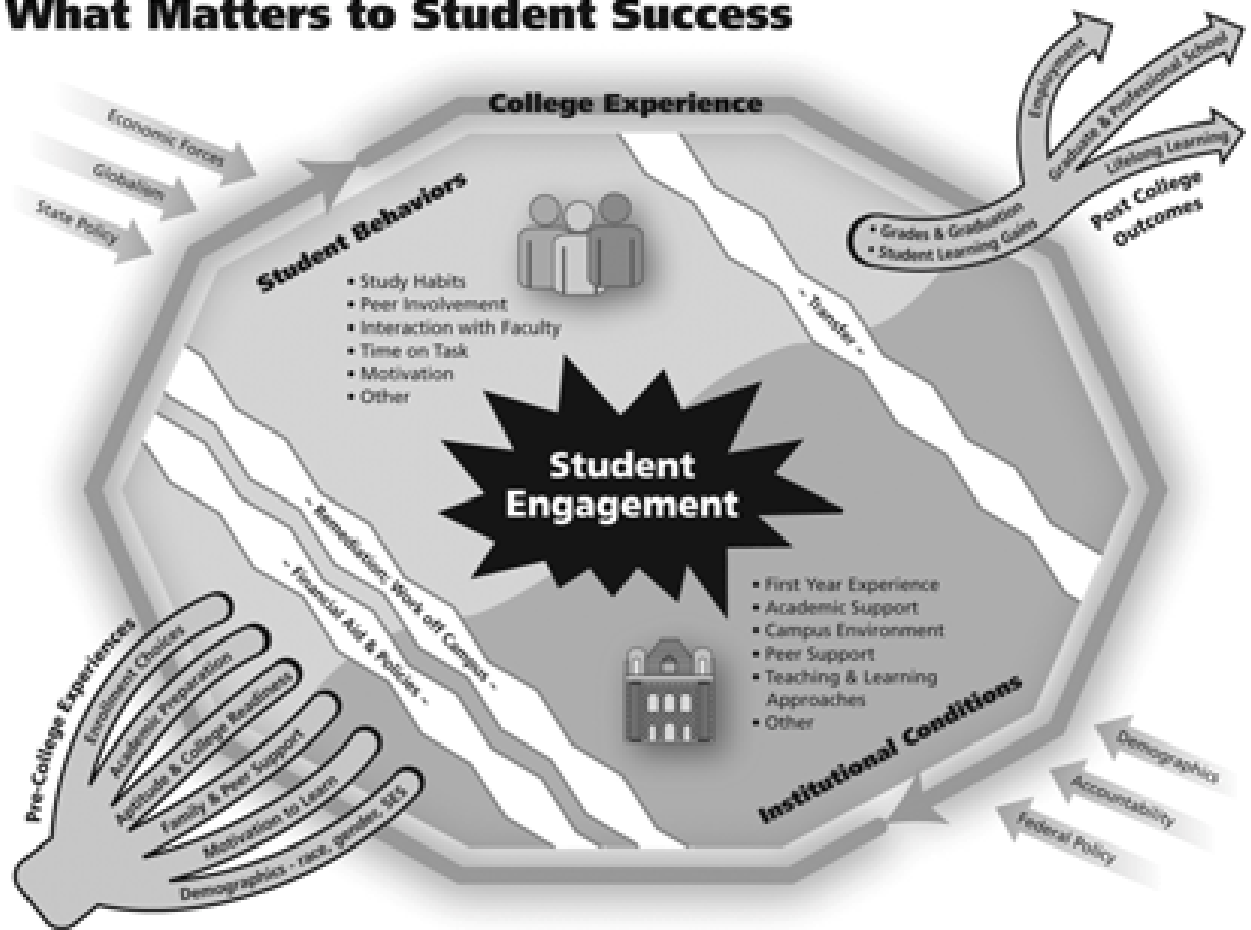
According to Kuh, et al. (2006), a primary reason that students choose not to complete their education is due to lack of funding for enriching activities, which, as

discovered in the psychological and sociological theories are increasingly important in the overall success of students in universities. Institutions must view the economic situation from the students' eyes and "weigh the costs and benefits of staying in college and participating in various activities" (Kuh, et al., 2006, p. 15). These activities encourage students to be engaged in the campus, which encourages an increased level of motivation and immediacy in the classrooms if students are engaged. This approach becomes important as we address the following models that encompass student success from a variety of angles.

### **Proposed success models**

Referring back to the definition of student success, "academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post college performance" (Kuh, et al., 2006, p. 7), and the implications of various perspectives of success, we are now prepared to acknowledge and address the different proposed models of student success as presented by Kuh (2006) and the AFT (2011).

## What Matters to Student Success



(Kuh, et al., 2006, p. 8)

I have chosen this model because student “motivation” and “teaching and learning approaches” are large contributing factors to immediacy (Velez & Cano, 2008, Mc McCroskey & Wheelles, 1976). Moreover, this model inspired the development of the questions pertaining to student success on the research instrument that I used for this thesis.

In their model entitled, “What Matters to Student Success”, Kuh, et al. (2006) have highlighted and explained the importance of student engagement to success, and how each element contributes to student engagement and overall success. They

have outlined the idea that pre-college experiences largely shape the student's psychological orientation and sociological perspective, contributing to the ways in which students will demonstrate engagement in the institution. Pre-college experiences must pass through the screens of "financial aid and policies" and "recreation and work off campus" in order to get to the core of student engagement on campus.

The AFT's (2011) proposed model of success piggybacks off of the Kuh, et al., (2006) "What Matters to Student Success" model by outlining rights and responsibilities of institutions, instructors, and students so that success can be achieved at its fullest potential if universities choose to adopt this perspective toward learning. The framework that the AFT used to devise their model involved elements of success with the student in mind such that the following would be provided in order for success to be achieved: "(1) exposure to knowledge in a variety of areas, (2) the development of intellectual abilities necessary for gathering information and processing it, and (3) applied professional and technical skills" (AFT, 2011, p. 9). In order for these elements to be applied, however, students, instructors, and institutions must be committed to the value of success and portray the appropriate responsibilities in their roles.

The AFT (2011) proposes that Institutions have eight major responsibilities that contribute to a student's success on campus. Institutions must "secure adequate funding", "[develop] a structure and level of instructional staffing that advances student success and creates a secure professional environment for good teaching and scholarship", "[maintain] effective procedures to ensure that

curriculum, teaching and assessment are faculty driven” (p. 12), “[build] support-service structures that advance student success”, “[support] and [coordinate] recurring institution-wide reviews of progress”, “[maintain] and [enforce] the standards of student responsibility”, “[ensure] public transparency on such matters as program and degree options, student attainment, and course scheduling”, and “[help to improve pathways from preK-12 to college” (p. 13). If the institution adheres to these core responsibilities, students will have greater success rates, as the institution will be providing them with the appropriate support in order to ensure success.

Success is not solely the responsibility of the institution, though. If the institution provides the above-mentioned support, then faculty must act on the resources and perform to their expected responsibilities so that students feel supported by their institution and their instructors on the path to success. The AFT (2011) advocates that faculty and staff must “work individually and collaboratively...to develop challenging curricula”, “[be] available and [provide] proactive help to students in puzzling out the requirements of the academic program and the course subject matter”, “[advise] students on their career goals”, “[offer] early and continual feedback” (p. 13), “[participate] actively in institution-wide reviews of progress in carrying out a student success agenda”, “[press] the college administration to ensure that policy decisions are based on the principles of shared governance, academic freedom and due process”, and “[support] individual faculty members in attaining professional development” (p. 14) in order to promote student success in and beyond the classroom.

Moreover, students have responsibilities in their commitment to their education, including, “attending classes and keeping up with their coursework”, “engaging professionals in discussions about students’ coursework and their educational and career goals”, and “periodically taking a hard look at their academic and career goals” (Kuh, et al., 2011, p. 14). If students can uphold to their basic responsibilities and if institutions, faculty and staff can provide the necessary support for the students, success is absolutely possible for everyone.

It is important to remember though, that this relationship is tripartite in nature. The universities cannot exist without the support of the faculty, staff, and students, the faculty and staff cannot succeed without the support of the institution and the students, and the students cannot succeed without the support of their institution, staff and faculty. This triangulated relationship is imperative for student success, motivation, cognitive learning, student engagement, and the relationships formed through student engagement. All of these factors contribute to and are indirectly related as per the literature reviewed and research that has been previously conducted. The following portion addresses my desire to directly relate immediacy and success, via student perceptions, in order to make logical sense of the two factors and their relationship.

## **PART THREE:**

### **Rationale for the Hypothesis**

Although it may seem as if these two large variables, immediacy and student success, should have a direct correlational relationship with one another, there is little evidence to show that the two variables are, in fact, directly correlated.

Immediacy, the verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors used to enhance physical and psychological closeness (Mehrabian 1971) with students has been linked to motivation and achievement, both of which are also large contributors of success, but there is a lack of evidence supporting that immediacy is linked to success. One could assume that the two variables are correlated because achievement is linked to success, but success involves more than simply achievement. It is the combination of knowledge, intellectual abilities, professional skills, and application of the skills in life after higher education (AFT, 2011; Kuh, et al., 2006). Therefore, I wanted to directly relate all of these values of education and make some logical sense of the various relationships between the variables of immediacy and success in higher education.

In addition to researching this particular relationship due to the lack of research performed on this combination of variables, I wanted to research the relationship through the lens of student perspectives. Very little research has been conducted concerning student perspectives of their own success, and I thought that this would be, quite possibly, the best way to measure the relationship between instructor immediacy and student success: through the eyes of the students.



## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **Introduction**

Through the literature previously reviewed, it is known that effective teaching can be dictated by immediacy behaviors, and that students respond to these behaviors in a variety of different manners. We also know that immediacy, motivation, cognitive achievement, and affective learning are all directly correlated, and that affective learning, motivation, and cognitive learning are all directly related to success. The missing piece is the relationship between teacher immediacy and student perceptions of success.

This is the point at which my research question comes into play. As a teacher, I wanted to know how students perceived instructor behaviors, and if the students' perceptions of their own learning were correlated with the behaviors of their instructors. In order to measure these perceptions, I devised a pilot questionnaire addressing three major issues in a likert-scale questionnaire format: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, and student success. I also added two open-ended questions addressing immediacy and student perceptions of success.

From previous quantitative research conducted regarding the factors of immediacy and success, I chose to continue a quantitative trend by coupling the items onto one questionnaire in order to discover the relationship between the two ideas. Open-ended questions were added to my questionnaire in order to justify and confirm the responses from the fixed items. Moreover, the written justifications for the numeric responses allows for triangulation in the research, as well as a

platform for textual frequency analysis in order to discover what success really means to students.

### **Addressing the hypothesis and research questions**

With the idea of a relationship between instructor immediacy and students' perceptions of success in mind, the hypotheses for the research are presented in the following order.

H1: Instructor immediacy behaviors will be positively correlated with students' perceptions of their success.

H2: Students' perceptions of success by definition will be positively correlated with a positive environment created through immediacy values.

H3: Students' definitions of an excellent teacher will be positively correlated with instructor immediacy behaviors.

These hypotheses were constructed based upon the original research question:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?

### **Procedures/Data Collection**

A total of 204 Communication Students in various courses throughout the discipline were asked to complete a questionnaire. The students from 5 Introduction to Communication Studies courses, 1 Intercultural Communication course, and 1 Mass Media

Communication course were asked to complete a questionnaire comprised of 4 demographic questions, 18 Likert-scale questions, and 2 open ended questions regarding their perceptions of their learning experiences and success in relation to their instructor's immediacy behaviors regarding the specific course. The names and identities of the students were not obtained from this questionnaire and the information is therefore reported as anonymous.

A fellow graduate teaching assistant volunteered to serve as a third party to administer the survey to the students in their communication classrooms in order to maintain anonymity. The students from the 7 Communication courses were then asked to complete the questionnaire. These students were chosen as a target audience in order to measure perceptions of instructor immediacy and student success. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire by hand with a pen or pencil, and deposit it into the manila envelope, once they had completed the survey to their satisfaction. The materials were collected in a manila envelope so as not to identify students with their survey responses, thus maintaining anonymity.

The quantitative data has been calculated in excel and SPSS and analyzed by content analysis in order to determine if there is a relationship between immediacy values and perceived student success. Correlations between verbal immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, and success were calculated in order to determine the relationship and statistical significance between the factors. The open-ended questions have been reviewed by content analysis and textual frequency analysis via the frequency tool, Wordle, and have been presented in conjunction with the quantitative data in the analysis of the relationship

between immediacy and perceived success. Additional information regarding the procedures is addressed in the following sections.

### **The Instrument**

The questionnaire used to obtain data included a cover letter to the students, instructions to complete the questionnaire, and the questionnaire itself. The questionnaire included four demographic questions, five likert-scale verbal immediacy questions, five likert-scale nonverbal immediacy questions, eight likert-scale success questions, and two open ended questions regarding definitions of the student's ideal teacher and their perceptions of success.

The cover letter was printed on Communication Studies Department letterhead and administered to students with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was printed on colored copy paper, one color for each class surveyed, so as not to combine or confuse the data when collecting, measuring, and reporting it. The cover letter and questionnaire can be found at the end of this chapter and in Appendix B.

### **Participants**

Students from five Introduction to Communication courses, one Intercultural Communication course, and one Mass Media Communication Course were selected as participants for this research. I chose this sample for my target audience, as the students enrolled in the class effectively represent the communication department as well as students from cross-disciplines, therefore adding some diversity to the study. Additionally the instructors of this course are an accurate representation of the instructors within the communication discipline through the diversity and

behaviors they exhibit in their classrooms. Moreover, the students serve as a target audience to measure student success within the communication discipline.

### **Purpose of the questionnaire**

A questionnaire was used in order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data surrounding the idea that a relationship between instructors' immediacy behaviors and students' perceptions of their own success exists. Based upon several other studies involving immediacy or success as variables, it is apparent that questionnaires effectively and successfully address the relationships between two or more topics based in immediacy or success. Therefore, I chose to combine specific questions in order to create factors that address the specific issue with a questionnaire. I also added two open open-ended questions to qualify and confirm the fixed responses, also known as triangulation.

The term "triangulation" was discovered in the 1960's when the use of multiple methods in research was emerging, and the term was used to describe the methodologies being combined. Denzin (1978) defines the term as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291). So, the term is as simple as it sounds: creating a methodology that is tripartite in nature and each point intersects with another. The connection of different methods and ideas allows one method to inform another, and thus all methods combine and work together in order to create a triangulated method.

I chose triangulation because I do believe that there are some great values and answers that I would not have discovered in a traditional fixed instrument. The open-ended essay responses allow participants to expand upon their numeric

responses to the fixed item responses and provide some narrative to justify their feelings and perceptions about both success and immediate teaching behaviors. All of these questions were defined by content analysis, which is further explained below.

### **Content Analysis**

I chose to use content analysis, a form of data analysis, to make sense of the fixed items and their correlations. According to Babbie (2010), “content analysis is the study of recorded human communications” (p. 333). In order to execute content analysis, coding, “a process of transforming raw data into a standardized form” was executed (Babbie, 2010, p. 333). Coding is also a grounded theory approach toward content analysis (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005 in Denzin & Lincoln). The fixed items were coded into three factors so that I could analyze each factor by the content within. The factors that I constructed consisted of nonverbal immediacy questions, verbal immediacy questions, and success questions. Due to a high correlation between the items within the nonverbal immediacy and verbal immediacy factors, the factors were combined into one larger factor and entitled “immediacy” for the purpose of this research.

### **Textual Frequency Analysis**

The open-ended questions were also reviewed by content analysis, or textual analysis. I have defined this type of content analysis as “textual analysis by frequency” in order to make meaning of the content and its relationship with the fixed items. The frequency analysis tool, Wordle (<http://www.wordle.net/>), was used to visualize the frequency and recurrence of the most common words in the

open-ended response questions. The frequency of each word was measured by the size of the respective word in the graphic created by Wordle, thus allowing me to analyze the meaning of the narrative responses and how they confirmed the fixed item responses. The Wordle images and explanations can be found in Chapter 4, along with the results and discussion of the findings of this methodology.

## **Chapter 4: Results & Discussion**

### **Part 1: Introduction**

RQ1: Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?

In order to answer the research question, I collected data via a pilot questionnaire in order to explain the relationship between students' perceptions of instructor immediacy and their own success in communication classrooms at Eastern Washington University. The data has been presented in correspondence with the following hypotheses.

H1: Instructor immediacy behaviors will be positively correlated with students' perceptions of their success.

H2: Students' perceptions of success by definition will be positively correlated with a positive environment created through immediacy values.

H3: Students' definitions of an excellent teacher will be positively correlated with instructor immediacy behaviors.



## **Part 2: Presentation and discussion of the findings**

The following sections address descriptions of the target population, the correlations of the quantitative data, and the textual analysis of the qualitative data in response to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

### **Descriptive Statistics of the target population**

Of 7 Communication classes (5 Introduction to communication courses, 1 Intercultural Communication course, and 1 Mass Media Communication course) that were administered the questionnaire, 204 responses were obtained.

117 participants reported that they were of the female gender while 87 reported male gender.

2 participants reported their age being less than 18; 181 participants reported their age to be between the ages of 18-24, the most common response; 19 participants reported an age of 25-34, the second most common age range; 1 participant reported an age of 35-44; 1 participant did not disclose their age range on the questionnaire.

Of the 204 participants, 38 individuals reported freshman status, 63 reported sophomore status, 64 reported junior status, 37 reported senior status, and 2 reported that they were graduate students. All participants disclosed their academic status for this study.

When responding to the question, "What ethnic status do you identify with?", 153 students reported White/Caucasian, 11 reported African American, 3 reported Native American, 15 reported Latino/a, 8 reported Asian, 5 reported multiple

ethnicities, and 9 did not disclose their ethnicity. These responses amount to a total of 195 descriptive ethnicities, for a total response rate of 95.6%. Moreover, the variety of ethnicities reported contributes to the cultural diversity represented in classrooms when immediacy and success are defined.

The responses to the question, “please write your (declared or planned) major”, are as follows in correspondence:

2 – Physical Therapy  
10 – Dental  
5 – Human Resources Management  
2 – Construction Management  
6 – Nursing  
1 – Social Work  
2 – Communication/Journalism  
7 – Computer Science  
4 – Interdisciplinary Studies  
6 – Exercise Science  
4 – Communication/PR  
5 – Communication Disorders  
15 – Visual Communication Design  
23 – Communication Studies  
6 – Psychology  
55 – Education  
1 – Health Services Administration

4 – International Relations  
1 – Economics  
2 – Pre-med  
7 – English  
8 – Business  
5 – Health and Fitness  
2 – Occupational Therapy  
1 – Children’s Studies  
1 – Music  
3 – Government  
1 – Accounting  
1 – Biology  
1 – Spanish  
1 – Mortuary Science  
2 – Film  
1 – Sociology  
1 – History  
1 – Recreation Management  
1 – Forensic Chemistry  
3 – Engineering  
2 – Undecided

From this description of the population, we can note that the majority of the participants are female, white, between the ages of 18 and 24, and are Education or

Communication majors of some form. Although this is considered a description of the “majority” of the participants, I would hardly define it as the norm due to the variety of students and responses that were obtained from this questionnaire, and also based upon the demographics of EWU as a whole. Therefore, I would note that although this research was designed to review and gather data from a target population, the data is quite representative of the overall campus as well as the target population, thus providing a variety of responses and incorporating diversity and culture into my research.

### **Correlations between Nonverbal Immediacy & Verbal Immediacy**

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, I chose to combine both the Nonverbal Immediacy (NVI) and Verbal Immediacy (VI) factors into one large factor, which I called “Immediacy” for the purpose of finding the relationship between immediacy and student perceptions of their success in communication classrooms. The following correlation charts support my decision to combine these factors of immediacy for my research.

**Figure 4.1: Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy Correlations by Item**

		VI_1	VI_2	VI_3	VI_4	VI_5	NVI_1
VI_1	Pearson Correlation	1	.544**	.291**	.222**	.493**	.437**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204
VI_2	Pearson Correlation	.544**	1	.512**	.311**	.494**	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204
VI_3	Pearson Correlation	.291**	.512**	1	.233**	.516**	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204
VI_4	Pearson Correlation	.222**	.311**	.233**	1	.359**	.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.001		.000	.302
	N	203	203	203	203	200	203
VI_5	Pearson Correlation	.493**	.494**	.516**	.359**	1	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	201	201	201	200	201	201
NVI_1	Pearson Correlation	.437**	.527**	.536**	.073	.462**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.302	.000	
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204
NVI_2	Pearson Correlation	.075	.034	.010	-.037	.119	.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.294	.632	.891	.600	.096	.198
	N	200	200	200	199	199	200
NVI_3	Pearson Correlation	.408**	.432**	.513**	.144*	.418**	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.041	.000	.000
	N	202	202	202	201	199	202
NVI_4	Pearson Correlation	.534**	.394**	.391**	.314**	.439**	.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	203	203	203	202	200	203
NVI_5	Pearson Correlation	.536**	.420**	.462**	.206**	.431**	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000
	N	202	202	202	201	199	202

**Correlations**

		NVI_2	NVI_3	NVI_4	NVI_5
VI_1	Pearson Correlation	.075	.408**	.534**	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.294	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	202	203	202
VI_2	Pearson Correlation	.034	.432**	.394**	.420**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.632	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	202	203	202
VI_3	Pearson Correlation	.010	.513**	.391**	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.891	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	202	203	202
VI_4	Pearson Correlation	-.037	.144*	.314**	.206**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.600	.041	.000	.003
	N	199	201	202	201
VI_5	Pearson Correlation	.119	.418**	.439**	.431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.000	.000	.000
	N	199	199	200	199
NVI_1	Pearson Correlation	.091	.575**	.433**	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.198	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	202	203	202
NVI_2	Pearson Correlation	1	.069	.108	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.332	.130	.506
	N	200	199	199	198
NVI_3	Pearson Correlation	.069	1	.550**	.634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.332		.000	.000
	N	199	202	202	201
NVI_4	Pearson Correlation	.108	.550**	1	.670**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	.000		.000
	N	199	202	203	202
NVI_5	Pearson Correlation	.048	.634**	.670**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.506	.000	.000	
	N	198	201	202	202

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above correlation matrix represents the mean raw score correlations of each item in both the VI and NVI factors. The following correlation matrix represents the correlations between the overall factors, which were constructed based upon the mean raw scores of the items within each factor.

Figure 4.2 Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy Correlations by factor

		Verbal_Immediacy	Nonverbal_Immediacy
Verbal_Immediacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	204	204
Nonverbal_Immediacy	Pearson Correlation	.609**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	204	204

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above correlations, we can note that verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy are, in fact, positively correlated, and can therefore be combined as one factor for the overall correlation between immediacy and success.

### Overall Correlations between Immediacy and Success

Figure 4.3: Immediacy and Success Correlations by Factor

		Immediacy	Success
Immediacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	204	203
Success	Pearson Correlation	.540**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	203	203

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From this correlation matrix, we can see that although the correlation of .540 between students' perceptions of immediacy and success is present. Although this number is not high enough to be considered a positive correlation, we can note that there are certain patterns and trends as well as the fact that there is a tendency for student success and immediacy to be related. Now that I have answered my overarching research question and noted that the hypothesis was not proven, I wanted to understand which items were most influential and which items were not in order to discover not only how and why my research may have gone wrong, but also to discover how we can become better instructors and better students in higher education. Therefore, I chose to run a correlation between the individual items within each factor in order to discover which items contribute more or less to other items in order to better understand my research and why I cannot prove my hypothesis to be valid based upon the low correlation score of 0.540.

### **Correlations between the raw scores of immediacy and success**

The following correlation matrix demonstrates the correlations between the raw scores of each item in order to discover which items of immediacy and success demonstrate tendencies in success and immediate behavior. I have highlighted and color-coded the most highly correlated items, despite the fact that the correlations of certain items may not be high enough to note a positive correlation between items. Red denotes a negative correlation, green qualifies as a positive correlation of .6 and above, yellow indicates a correlation of .5 - .59, blue indicates .4 - .49, and pink identifies correlations of .3 - .39. The matrix and correlation are presented on the following pages.



**Figure 4.4: Immediacy and Success Correlations by Item**

		VI_1	VI_2	VI_3	VI_4	VI_5	NVI_1	NVI_2	NVI_3	NVI_4	NVI_5
VI_1	Pearson	1	.544**	.291**	.222**	.493**	.437**	.075	.408**	.534**	.536**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.294	.000	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204	200	202	203	202
VI_2	Pearson	.544**	1	.512**	.311**	.494**	.527**	.034	.432**	.394**	.420**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.632	.000	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204	200	202	203	202
VI_3	Pearson	.291**	.512**	1	.233**	.516**	.536**	.010	.513**	.391**	.462**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.000	.000	.891	.000	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204	200	202	203	202
VI_4	Pearson	.222**	.311**	.233**	1	.359**	.073	-.037	.144*	.314**	.206**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.001		.000	.302	.600	.041	.000	.003
	N	203	203	203	203	200	203	199	201	202	201
VI_5	Pearson	.493**	.494**	.516**	.359**	1	.462**	.119	.418**	.439**	.431**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.096	.000	.000	.000
	N	201	201	201	200	201	201	199	199	200	199
NVI_1	Pearson	.437**	.527**	.536**	.073	.462**	1	.091	.575**	.433**	.509**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.302	.000		.198	.000	.000	.000
	N	204	204	204	203	201	204	200	202	203	202
NVI_2	Pearson	.075	.034	.010	-.037	.119	.091	1	.069	.108	.048
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.294	.632	.891	.600	.096	.198		.332	.130	.506
	N	200	200	200	199	199	200	200	199	199	198
NVI_3	Pearson	.408**	.432**	.513**	.144*	.418**	.575**	.069	1	.550**	.634**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.041	.000	.000	.332		.000	.000
	N	202	202	202	201	199	202	199	202	202	201
NVI_4	Pearson	.534**	.394**	.391**	.314**	.439**	.433**	.108	.550**	1	.670**
	Correlation										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.130	.000		.000
	N	203	203	203	202	200	203	199	202	203	202

NVI_5	Pearson Correlation	.536**	.420**	.462**	.206**	.431**	.509**	.048	.634**	.670**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000	.506	.000	.000	
	N	202	202	202	201	199	202	198	201	202	202
S_1	Pearson Correlation	.333**	.374**	.185**	.354**	.337**	.196**	.062	.285**	.305**	.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000	.005	.387	.000	.000	.000
	N	202	202	202	201	199	202	198	201	202	202
S_2	Pearson Correlation	.316**	.273**	.152*	.252**	.239**	.150*	.102	.264**	.191**	.192**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.030	.000	.001	.033	.150	.000	.006	.006
	N	203	203	203	202	200	203	199	202	203	202
S_3	Pearson Correlation	.261**	.295**	.312**	.090	.198**	.333**	.007	.283**	.203**	.258**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.211	.005	.000	.923	.000	.004	.000
	N	197	197	197	196	196	197	195	196	197	197
S_4	Pearson Correlation	.270**	.162*	.058	.146*	.113	.075	.079	.146*	.162*	.264**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.021	.416	.038	.112	.286	.267	.039	.021	.000
	N	202	202	202	201	199	202	198	201	202	202
S_5	Pearson Correlation	.410**	.409**	.228**	.114	.291**	.307**	.009	.234**	.204**	.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.109	.000	.000	.899	.001	.004	.000
	N	199	199	199	198	197	199	197	198	199	199
S_6	Pearson Correlation	.218**	.358**	.141*	.296**	.272**	.171*	.049	.228**	.277**	.188**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.046	.000	.000	.015	.491	.001	.000	.008
	N	201	201	201	200	198	201	197	200	201	201
S_7	Pearson Correlation	.257**	.279**	.321**	.183**	.267**	.274**	-.085	.337**	.318**	.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.010	.000	.000	.235	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	199	197	200	197	199	200	200
S_8	Pearson Correlation	.221**	.220**	.176*	.174*	.162*	.134	-.050	.229**	.121	.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.012	.014	.022	.057	.483	.001	.088	.034
	N	201	201	201	200	199	201	198	200	201	201

		Correlations							
		S_1	S_2	S_3	S_4	S_5	S_6	S_7	S_8
VI_1	Pearson	.333**	.316**	.261**	.270**	.410**	.218**	.257**	.221**
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.002
VI_2	Pearson	.374**	.273**	.295**	.162*	.409**	.358**	.279**	.220**
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.021	.000	.000	.000	.002
VI_3	Pearson	.185**	.152*	.312**	.058	.228**	.141*	.321**	.176*
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.030	.000	.416	.001	.046	.000	.012
VI_4	Pearson	.354**	.252**	.090	.146*	.114	.296**	.183**	.174*
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.211	.038	.109	.000	.010	.014
VI_5	Pearson	.337**	.239**	.198**	.113	.291**	.272**	.267**	.162*
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.005	.112	.000	.000	.000	.022
NVI_1	Pearson	.196**	.150*	.333**	.075	.307**	.171*	.274**	.134
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.033	.000	.286	.000	.015	.000	.057
NVI_2	Pearson	.062	.102	.007	.079	.009	.049	-.085	-.050
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.387	.150	.923	.267	.899	.491	.235	.483
NVI_3	Pearson	.285**	.264**	.283**	.146*	.234**	.228**	.337**	.229**
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.039	.001	.001	.000	.001
NVI_4	Pearson	.305**	.191**	.203**	.162*	.204**	.277**	.318**	.121
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.006	.004	.021	.004	.000	.000	.088
	N	202	203	197	202	199	201	200	201

NVI_5	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.248** .000 202	.192** .006 202	.258** .000 197	.264** .000 202	.277** .000 199	.188** .008 201	.277** .000 200	.150* .034 201
S_1	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  202	.468** .000 202	.225** .002 197	.188** .007 202	.308** .000 199	.310** .000 201	.345** .000 200	.260** .000 201
S_2	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.468** .000 202	1  203	.331** .000 197	.337** .000 202	.365** .000 199	.297** .000 201	.214** .002 200	.244** .000 201
S_3	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.225** .002 197	.331** .000 197	1  197	.276** .000 197	.356** .000 196	.202** .004 197	.383** .000 196	.234** .001 197
S_4	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.188** .007 202	.337** .000 202	.276** .000 197	1  202	.266** .000 199	.162* .022 201	.212** .003 200	.254** .000 201
S_5	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.308** .000 199	.365** .000 199	.356** .000 196	.266** .000 199	1  199	.297** .000 199	.264** .000 199	.278** .000 199
S_6	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.310** .000 201	.297** .000 201	.202** .004 197	.162* .022 201	.297** .000 199	1  201	.328** .000 200	.309** .000 200
S_7	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.345** .000 200	.214** .002 200	.383** .000 196	.212** .003 200	.264** .000 199	.328** .000 200	1  200	.436** .000 199
S_8	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.260** .000 201	.244** .000 201	.234** .001 197	.254** .000 201	.278** .000 199	.309** .000 200	.436** .000 199	1  201

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### **Analysis and explanations of the Correlation Matrix**

From correlation matrix incorporating all items, we can see that the nonverbal immediacy and verbal immediacy items are all somewhat correlated, therefore I have only denoted the correlations of 0.5 and above as significant in demonstrating tendencies of immediate behavior and student success as perceived by students. The only verbal and nonverbal correlations that are negative are items VI\_4 and NVI\_2: Inviting students to visit outside of class and portraying a monotonous voice. Therefore, we can note that an instructor who teaches with a monotonous voice is not necessarily considered to be inviting outside of the classroom setting.

On a more positive note though, we can see that asking questions and praising students are somewhat correlated, as is praise with humor. Smiling is also correlated with praise and humor, as are vocal expressions. Gestures, a nonverbal immediacy factor, are correlated with asking questions, a verbal immediacy factor, and smiling, vocal expressions and open posture, all nonverbal immediacy factors.

So what does this all mean? It simply means that as instructors, we must be aware of not only what we say, but also how we say it, as the messages perceived involve more than just words alone. These words are shaped by expression, tone of voice, actions, gestures and signposts, humor, and smiling. With that said, let us

take a look at how these verbal and nonverbal immediacy values correlate with students' perceptions of their success in these communication classes.

As previously noted in chapters 2 and 3, we know that student success involves more than a high level of achievement. The ability to apply the course material their future is not only a concern of students as per their open ended responses, but it is also somewhat correlated with all of the immediacy values tested in this pilot questionnaire. However, peer support and the use of different learning strategies are important contributors to student success in conjunction with the ability for students to use course material in the future. These correlational values are all highlighted in pink and blue on the above matrix. Pink denotes a correlation of .3 and above while blue identifies a correlation of .4 and above.

Overall, the only negatively correlated items are monotonous voice and learning strategies, and monotonous voice and studying environment. From these negative correlations, we can note that a monotonous voice not only negatively affects perceptions of verbal immediacy, but also learning and studying. I do believe it would be accurate to note from these negative correlations that an instructor's tone of voice can be either motivational or demotivational, which can directly affect a student's performance levels in the classroom (Velez & Cano, 2008) and therefore be reflected in their perceptions of success as negative if the tone of voice is not motivational.

With that said, let us take a look at the responses to the open ended questions in order to continue to make meaning of these tendencies in college classrooms.

## **Addressing the open-ended questions**

Taking a look further into the positive correlations of student success and immediacy allows us to arrive at the open-ended questions and the answers that were achieved from those questions. These responses to the open ended questions help to qualify the numbers reported on the likert scale questionnaire, and support the idea that instructor immediacy is directly correlated with students' perceptions of their success in communication classrooms. A few common responses can be found below the corresponding Wordle images, and the complete responses can be found in Appendix C.

## **Wordles**

In order to visualize the most common response types and trends in the responses to the open ended questions, I chose to use Wordle, a textual frequency analysis tool. Wordle allowed me to create the following images based upon the responses to the open-ended questions. These images can help us not only to visualize the most common responses but the sizes of the words, but the images also allow us to analyze the responses by content analysis, a grounded theory approach, in order to make meaning of the responses so that the numerical scores can be qualified by words.

Below are some common responses to the question, "In your eyes, what defines an effective instructor?" Following the responses is the Wordle image containing all of the response values to the question and demonstrating the most common words by the size of the words in the image.

*Common Responses:*

- “Someone who is supportive and open-minded while still holding you accountable”
- “Someone who can teach the material in a fun and interesting way so we can actually like what we are learning”
- “Is open to teach different ways in order to accommodate to different students. Nice, funny, willing to answer all questions students have.”
- “Someone who encourages you, involves you, and engages all the students”
- “An instructor who doesn’t just teach to one kind of student but all kinds. Who teaches to those who need visual aids or those who need to read or those that have a hard time learning. Someone who is always open for questions.”
- “An effective instructor is willing to adjust their teaching habits to benefit the class as a whole and is able to identify when to do this”
- “An instructor should be able to relate to his/her class. They should also be concerned about their students and what they get out of the class, not just what they need to lecture about”
- “Someone who can keep the class on course and motivated but also make the material enjoyable to learn”
- “Someone who wants us to do well and teaches us not from just the book but we can apply it to life”
- “Cares about student success, knows the material, approachable, takes time to dedicate outside of classroom, likes their job or wants to be here”





lecturing and expecting the students to retain the information and perform well on assessments.

Overall, these students desire an instructor who not only cares about them as students, but also takes into account their ability to learn, and different learning styles when they are presenting the “material” in the classroom setting. They also want someone who can be “effective” in their teaching pedagogy and someone who will “help” them when they need assistance.

Most importantly, though, students desire an instructor who cares about their overall success as students in the course. Therefore, we will now analyze the common responses and the Wordle concerning student success in order to visualize the textual relationship between my two research variables: instructor immediacy and student success.

Below, we see the common responses to question, “How do you define your own success in your education?” and the corresponding Wordle image subsequently follows the common responses listed below.

Common Responses:

- “Obviously grades, the impact it has on me, how it changes my views”
- “Staying focused and dedicated”
- “Getting good real-world skills”
- “By keeping motivated on the right track to earn my degree”
- “I define it by how hard I work for my goals. I control my destiny”
- “Being able to understand the subject and use real life situations when explaining it”



The largest word in this Wordle, “NR”, could be considered removable, as it represents the number of students who provided “No Response” to this question. However, I do believe that it serves some significance in this study, as it could represent the fact that some students aren’t yet sure what success means to them, which would make perfect sense because many of the participants are still early in their collegiate years, and have not yet discovered what success truly means to them. This idea is also represented in the common responses to the question, as the responses are much more scattered to this question, validating the uncertainty of students about their success or what it means to them.

Other factors, or large words in the case of this image, that seem to be important to students when they are measuring success (in order of largest to smallest) are: “success”, “well”, “work”, “good”, “grades”, “best”, “hard”, “life”, and “successful”. From these words and from the common responses preceding the Wordle image, we can gather that to some students, success simply means working hard to obtain good grades in order to graduate college. But to others, success means working hard in order to do well so that they can become successful in life after college, which is the true definition of success, according to the AFT (2011).

These responses directly relate to the students’ responses regarding their ideal instructor in several ways. Students not only want to be successful, but they want to be in classes with instructors who allow them to be successful in their achievement in the course and in life after college. These students desire instructors who are individuals who realize that students are learning and that no person is

perfect. But mostly, they desire an instructor who cares about them as individuals in order to help them succeed in any and every way possible.

### **Part 3: Conclusion**

Through the triangulated methodology of using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, I do believe that I have discovered some patterns and trends in this pilot research model in order to answer to my research question: Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?

Through the combination of correlations of immediacy items, success items, and responses to the open-ended question, I cannot reject or accept the null hypothesis, but I can more effectively address my three hypotheses:

H1: Instructor immediacy behaviors will be positively correlated with students' perceptions of their success.

H2: Students' perceptions of success by definition will be positively correlated with a positive environment created through immediacy values.

H3: Students' definitions of an excellent teacher will be positively correlated with instructor immediacy behaviors.

I now have an understanding that instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students are related via the tendencies in the correlation tables and the Wordle images. Moreover, I can note that many underlying variables contribute to the overarching factors that define immediacy and success as perceived by students, and these factors can be considered in future research regarding student success. Chapter 5 will discuss the conclusions in further detail.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **The focus of this research**

The focus of this pilot research was to define the relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students through a triangulated approach. The research question addressed was:

Is there a relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in communication classrooms?

The working hypotheses addressed in this thesis were:

H1: Instructor immediacy behaviors will be positively correlated with students' perceptions of their success.

H2: Students' perceptions of success by definition will be positively correlated with a positive environment created through immediacy values.

H3: Students' definitions of an excellent teacher will be positively correlated with instructor immediacy behaviors.

These hypotheses were validated in part by 204 student responses to a questionnaire which consisted of 10 likert-scale immediacy questions, 8 likert-scale success questions, and 2 open ended questions regarding a student's ideal instructor and their perception of their own success as related to the communication course in which they were enrolled. The overall correlation between the immediacy and success factors was .54, meaning that simply based upon my research alone, there is a 54% chance that instructor immediacy and

student success as perceived by students can be related, although we must note that this correlation is not significant enough to be considered positive, therefore creating grounds for new research in addition to the necessity to address the limitations of my thesis. Let us address the research model used for this study prior to the limitations and implications for future research though.

### **The triangulated approach**

I chose the triangulated approach because I believed that it would provide a well-rounded answer to the question as opposed to a strictly quantitative approach. I appreciated the approach of triangulation because it supports the intersection of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Denzin, 1978). Moreover, this approach allows the empirical evidence to be supported and qualified by the trends presented in the open-ended responses.

### **Addressing the research conclusions**

The mixed-methods approach toward obtaining the results to my thesis produced both quantitative and qualitative data, which intersect at a point in time and space. This idea is reflected through the coding of the open ended responses, or the qualitative data, and its support of and alignment with the mean raw scores for the likert-scale items, or the quantitative data.

Looking back at figure 4.3, we see that the values of immediacy and success display a correlational tendency of 0.540 at the 0.01 level.



**Figure 4.3: Immediacy and Success Correlations by Factor**

		Immediacy	Success
Immediacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	204	203
Success	Pearson Correlation	.540**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	203	203

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Moreover, the open-ended responses support the use of immediate behavior as an approach toward success via the words most commonly reported in the open ended questions: student, instructor, someone, class, material, teaching, willing, effective, help, success, good, well, grades, best, life, hard, and successful. Together, these words encompass the very intersection of success and immediacy, which is the point at which an instructor and a student work together to create a track for overall success of the student. This point occurs when the instructor becomes a person who cares about their students and the success of their students, and also when the students take the necessary responsibilities to apply their learning objectives not only to the classroom, but to life outside the classroom, which is where true success occurs (AFT, 2011).

### **Limitations and implications for future research**

Yes, we all know that research is never perfect. In fact, my research has more limitations than one, but that also opens the door for new research. The major limitation for my research involved the homogeneous group of participants who

were limited to one of three different class types, strictly in the communication discipline. Although this target population concentrates my research to highlight the answer to my research question, I do believe that other classes at the university deserve to be recognized in a study such as this in order to more accurately reflect the population college students overall. This would allow for varied responses that may reflect immediacy and success in a more accurate manner, as students in the communication discipline are generally used to their instructors displaying immediate behavior, which is the primary reason that most students join the discipline. Therefore, the limited scope and psychological orientation of the expectation for immediate behavior in communication classrooms may be considered a great limitation in my research.

An additional limitation worth noting is that all of the participants are students enrolled at Eastern Washington University, which can be considered a limitation in the scope of research. Moreover, this instrument used to gather data was a questionnaire that I designed. Although it was based upon the findings from other successful studies, it is still considered to be a self-designed questionnaire for this pilot research, which is a great limitation in regards to the findings obtained from this research. In the case that I perform this research in the future, I would absolutely consider revising many of my success-oriented questions in order to target perceptions of student success as related to immediacy. The questions as they are may be the underlying factor as to why the correlations between immediacy and success as perceived by students were so insignificant in this pilot research model.

In the future, I would like to see an assessment of the relationship between instructor immediacy and student success as perceived by students in other disciplines across the university, and possibly in a variety of universities so as not to target such a homogeneous group of students. This larger scope would allow me the opportunity to view the raw mean scores and open ended responses of several populations of students in multiple disciplines at the college level in order to target this research to the general college population rather than strictly Communication students at EWU.

Moreover, I would like to see other instructors implementing more immediate behaviors in the classroom so that success rates of students will rise. Despite the inconclusive results of my research, I do believe that success and immediacy are related based upon my experience as a student and instructor, and as validated by the tendencies presented in my research. Therefore, I believe that universities should begin offering trainings for instructors to improve their teaching methods and target their pedagogies toward immediacy. This type of training would not only help instructors to be more successful in the classroom, but it would guide their pedagogies toward displaying immediate behavior, and that is the pivotal point at which instructors can help students to succeed.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, I am pleased that I have been allowed the opportunity to explore my research passion through this pilot questionnaire. Despite the fact that the results are inconclusive, we can note the tendencies, themes, and patterns presented in the quantitative and qualitative results of this thesis and use this as a basis for future

research. Additionally, I believe that it is important for instructors and students to interact on a regular basis and develop a strong relationship, understanding, and appreciation for one another, which can help students to succeed. This research has not only helped me to discover my initial inquiry: how to become a more effective instructor, but it has also allowed me to better understand my own instructor-student relationships, both as an instructor and as a student, which was the manifestation of this thesis to begin with.

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## Appendix A

### *IRB Approval Form*



**Eastern Washington University**  
at Cheney and Spokane

MEMORANDUM

To: Andra Ely, Department of Communication Studies, 229 COM  
From: Sarah Heller, Chair, Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research  
Date: March 2, 2012  
Subject: Review of HS-3926 *Teaching Strategies to Improve Student Perceptions of Academic Success: An Approach Toward Immediacy*

Thank you for your response to my memo of February 29, you have addressed our concerns. Human subjects protocol HS-3926 *Teaching Strategies to Improve Student Perceptions of Academic Success: An Approach Toward Immediacy* has been determined to be exempt from further review according to federal regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects under CFR Title 45, Part 46.101(b)(1-6). Research qualifying for an exemption is valid for a period of one year to March 2, 2012. A signed, approved copy of your application is enclosed.

**Please Note:**

Please send us a copy of the information letter on Communication Studies Department letterhead and use this form when you distribute the letter.

If subsequent to initial approval the research protocol require minor changes, the Office of Grant and Research Development should be notified of those changes. Any major departures from the original protocol must be approved by the appropriate IRB review process before the protocol may be altered. A Change of Protocol application must be submitted to the IRB for any substantial change in protocol. The Director, Grant and Research Development, or the Chair of the IRB will determine whether or not the research must then be resubmitted for approval.

If you have additional questions please contact me at 359-7039; fax 509-359-2474; email skeller@ewu.edu. It would be helpful if you would refer to HS-3926 if there were further correspondence as we file everything under this number. Thank you.

cc: R.Galm  
I.Klyukanov  
G.Sinekopova  
Graduate Office

Department of Geography and Anthropology  
MS-52, 103 Isle Hall • Cheney, Washington 99004 • (509) 359-2433 • Spokane – (509) 458-6213  
Eastern Washington University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

Appendix B:  
*Research Instruments*



Department of Communication Studies  
229 Communications Building  
Cheney, WA 99004-2409

Dear EWU Student,

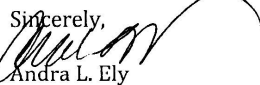
I am inviting you to participate in a research project to study the relationship between "instructor immediacy" in the classroom and the way in which EWU students define "success". Attached to this letter is a short questionnaire asking you to rank your instructor's immediacy as well as your own perceived success. I am asking you to review the questionnaire, and complete and return it, if you choose to do so. This questionnaire should take you roughly 5 minutes to complete.

The results of this project will be used to determine if there are correlations between instructor immediacy values and your own perceived academic success in communication classes. With your participation, I hope to understand what success means to you, and if excellent teaching standards increase your success rates at EWU.

I am unaware of any risk to you if you choose to participate in this survey, and I can assure you that you will not be identified with your responses in any way, shape, or form. This information is anonymous, and will not be shared with anyone aside from my research support committee, EWU Communication Faculty members, and myself. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of submitting your completed survey with your instructor or proctor, you may choose to submit it at the Communication Studies Office in Room 108.

With the idea of improving teaching skills at the collegiate level in conjunction with understanding what success means to you, I hope that you will take time to participate in the completion of this questionnaire. However, your participation is voluntary, therefore there is not a penalty if you choose not to participate.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding completion of the questionnaire or being associated with this study, you may contact me, Andra Ely, at 359.6414. The Institutional Review Board of Eastern Washington University has approved this study. If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protections Administrator at Eastern Washington University (509-359-7971/6567) <rgalm@ewu.edu>.

Sincerely,  
  
Andra L. Ely  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
MSC Student  
aely42@ewu.edu  
(509) 359.6414

voice: (509) 359-2313 fax: (509) 359-2496 email: CMST@mail.ewu.edu

Eastern Washington University is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action in employment.

Please take a few moments to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be used in order to learn more about the relationship between instructor immediacy and your perceived success rates in this communication course. Your participation in the completion of this questionnaire is anonymous and voluntary. You may choose to omit the provision of any information that may make you feel uncomfortable, and you are free to cease completion at any time. Once you have completed your questionnaire, please deposit it in the manila envelope.

### Demographic Information

1. Please circle your academic ranking:

Freshman                      Sophomore                      Junior                      Senior

2. Please circle your gender

Female                      Male

3. Please circle your age range

Less than 18                      18-24                      25-34                      35-44                      45-54  
55+

4. What ethnic status do you identify with? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please write your (declared or planned) major \_\_\_\_\_

### Immediacy Values

Please rate the following statements regarding your instructor and his/her teaching methods for this course on a scale of 1 to 5.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

#### *Verbal Immediacy:*

\_\_\_\_\_ Asks questions or encourages students to talk in order to enhance learning

\_\_\_\_\_ Praises students and their work, actions, or comments in the classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses humor in class discussions or lectures

\_\_\_\_\_ Invites students to visit outside of class if they have questions or concerns or need to discuss something

\_\_\_\_\_ Embraces discussion based on ideas or comments that students pose even when they don't seem to be a part of the daily lecture plan

#### *Nonverbal Immediacy:*

\_\_\_\_\_ Smiles at the class while instructing

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses a monotonous or dull-toned voice while lecturing

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses a variety of vocal expressions when talking to the class

\_\_\_\_\_ Moves toward the class while instructing or has an open body position while instructing

\_\_\_\_ Uses gestures to help explain subject matter while instructing

**Success**

Please rate the following statements regarding your perception of your own success in this communication course on a scale of 1 to 5.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

\_\_\_\_ I feel like this course is providing me with material that I can use in the future either in my other courses or in the professional field.

\_\_\_\_ I feel that EWU is an effective environment for me to learn the material and content of this course

\_\_\_\_ I spend most of my designated homework time for this course on task

\_\_\_\_ I feel motivated to do well in all of my courses

\_\_\_\_ I feel supported by my peers in my studies for this course

\_\_\_\_ I feel like my success improves when I interact with faculty members to discuss material

\_\_\_\_ I use many different strategies to learn the material for this course

\_\_\_\_ The environment in which I study helps determines my success in this course

**Open-Ended Questions:** Please provide a written response for the following 2 questions.

1. In your eyes, what defines an effective instructor?

2. How do you define your own success in your education?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.



## Appendix C

### *Open-Ended Responses*

### Immediacy Responses

In your eyes, what defines an effective instructor?

1. Passionate about subject/not dull. Thorough explanations.

2. Very effective
3. Interactive, willing to be available for questions and instruction, knowledgeable, allows application of information
4. One that enjoys their job, wants to see students succeed and is willing to help
5. Relates to students, makes class fun and doesn't disrespect students; a student is only as good as the instructor who is teaching it.
6. Thought provoking, honest, engaging.
7. NR
8. The way an instructor talks, teaches, and what kind of homework she gave
9. NR
10. Their excitement and involvement
11. Someone who is supportive and open-minded while still holding you accountable
12. Sense of humor and ability to be flexible with different students
13. NR
14. Engaging students, making learning fun
15. She really enjoys the students and being here; very funny; I tell all my friends to take this class
16. Openness, humor, active
17. Someone who can teach the material in a fun and interesting way so we can actually like what we are learning
18. Knowledgeable, caring about our learning – not just grades. Doesn't treat students like they're not smart
19. An instructor is willing to help students grade fairly, and is able to interact
20. One that is fun and enthusiastic who encourages students to participate and talk in class, One that isn't boring and just hands out tests.

21. Is open to teach different ways in order to accommodate to different students. Nice, funny, willing to answer all questions students have.
22. Someone who you can tell loves their job and all of their students.
23. One that relates to the students, interacts with the class a lot, humor to make class interesting
24. Good communication with students
25. Someone who encourages you, involves you, and engages all the students
26. NR
27. One who is proficient in connecting with the class using many outlets
28. Someone who is passionate about what they are teaching
29. Humor, knowledge of material, leadership
30. An instructor that engages the class rather than straight lecturing
31. NR
32. Clear, concise, friendly, open, and most of all, knowledgeable
33. Someone who changes up the way they instruct, not repetitive, involves the students, answers everyone's questions, makes sure students understand, can joke, and is clear
34. Openness to new ideas and concepts; availability and empathy to students
35. Positive and enthusiastic, informative and intellectual conversations
36. An effective instructor has great communication skills with students. Clearly explains what is expected of the class. "Easiness" or level of difficulty are irrelevant
37. Happy and helpful
38. Someone who is interested and excited about a subject. Someone who is very knowledgeable and who encourages discussion among the class
39. An effective instructor is Seville Hering
40. Someone that is kind and knows what they're talking about. They have credibility.

41. Engages the students, helps them want to learn. A good instructor makes class a joy and learning interesting and engaging. They make the material applicable and give examples. They allow students to express themselves and ask questions. They are positive and encouraging.
42. Everything you do. But you lack structure. Not structure for its own sake, but in the sense that nothing is wasted. No wasted time, props, or energy.
43. Someone who you're not intimidated by, so that it's easier to talk to and ask them questions. Someone who is entertaining and keeps you interested in what they are saying.
44. One who wants you to succeed by giving you a chance to do extra credit or gives advice as to how to study for best results
45. One who cares about their students; success and is always willing to help
46. A good personality
47. Someone who helps the class understand material and get past confusion before it's too late, for example, after poor grades are received on a test from the majority of the class. And someone who makes it clear exactly what material needs to be known.
48. Interacts with students on a more personal level; acts like they enjoy teaching, uses different ways to teach material
49. One who goes the extra mile to make sure you are understanding and retaining the material
50. An instructor who doesn't just teach to one kind of student but all kinds. Who teaches to those who need visual aids or those who need to read or those that have a hard time learning. Someone who is always open for questions.
51. One who is passionate about their class topics, makes the class fun and informative for students. Gets class involved with topic. Uses their experiences as a student to help class.
52. Someone who engages the class with a good balance of planned subject matter and additional unplanned teaching based on student interaction.
53. Always willing to help, cares about your grades with you, will go over anything needed, knows what they're talking about

54. Intelligent, funny, outgoing, nice, respectful, and caring
55. Flexibility, ability to elaborate, knowledge of topic, public speaking ability, likability
56. Patient instructor who cares about students
57. An effective instructor is willing to adjust their teaching habits to benefit the class as a whole and is able to identify when to do this
58. Teaching passionately
59. An ability to communicate with students
60. An effective instructor teaches with love and passion for the material. Showing the students their passion. They also make themselves available to the students for questions, concerns, and extra help
61. An effective instructor has a knowledge of the material and does not teach directly from the book. Visual aids are also helpful to reach students who learn differently.
62. Someone who can communicate effectively and convey the information of a lecture well. As well as dedication to the subject.
63. Uses a good tone of voice. Visual aid while teaching.
64. Someone who is willing to put in extra time to see students succeed. They must genuinely care about student success – not wanting just memorization – but content retention through involved teaching
65. One who cares about their students' success and doesn't set them up for failure
66. Someone who understands that a grade is just a number to assign and that each student can't just have a number on them. Also that if all you give is tests, that's all that grade can be based on. You need to have more to show understanding of material. Someone who makes class interesting/doesn't do the same thing every day motivates me to come.
67. Someone who is excited to teach the material and wants to be in class everyday to teach. Answers students' questions and is helpful
68. An effective instructor is one who is prepared for class each day with a variety of tools/techniques to best get the material across. They also must engage the class as a whole, and be enthusiastic about the material.

69. Professor that will help you learn the material
70. One that involves humor into his lectures
71. One that engages with the students
72. The good things that were asked in this survey
73. Active, understanding, involved, entertaining
74. One who keeps asking the class questions to get them involved
75. One who is willing to help us succeed
76. An exciting, not non-monotonic teacher
77. An effective instructor makes the material interesting even if it's usually boring material. They engage students and do their best to help students succeed.
78. An instructor who motivates while instructing
79. Someone who has a passion for what they teach. Not someone who's always concerned with grades.
80. NR
81. Engaging, funny, well-informed, not monotone
82. One who shows they care about the students, not just about their job
83. An instructor who cares about what they teach and is there to help other students understand and enjoy learning the material
84. Someone who is able to teach to different learning styles
85. Someone who knows the material and asks questions and discusses things with the class
86. Someone who listens, gives clear instructions, willing to repeat themselves and adjusts their lesson to fit the class needs
87. Engaged with the class and competent grasp of the subject
88. An effective instructor is one whose main goal is to make students successful

- 89. Open, successful, and a leader
- 90. NR
- 91. Someone that enjoys teaching people and what they do as well as helps the students with answering questions
- 92. She motivates the class and keeps attention
- 93. A teacher who teaches to assist all learning styles: visual, kinetics, verbal
- 94. Can relate to students
- 95. Helping students
- 96. Engaging, understanding, and genuine interest in students
- 97. Someone fun to listen to, easy to talk to, and knows the material well
- 98. Makes it fun
- 99. They help their students
- 100. NR
- 101. Easy to communicate with and provides an effective learning environment
- 102. Moxie
- 103. An effective role-model and leader
- 104. NR
- 105. The drive to teach
- 106. Willing to help. Fun and interesting. Always there when needed by their students
- 107. NR
- 108. An instructor should be able to relate to his/her class. They should also be concerned about their students and what they get out of the class, not just what they need to lecture about

- 109. An effective instructor is one who can provide information in a way that makes it relevant and worth learning
- 110. We all get along well and that makes the class interesting
- 111. Someone who we can connect with. If you cannot connect to someone on some sort of level, you won't take them seriously or learn from them effectively
- 112. They know the information, willing to help, understandable, excited about the material
- 113. Someone who can get the most out of someone who is willing to give their least
- 114. One that helps students but teaches in many different ways that make it so everyone can learn
- 115. An effective instructor communicates with his or her students face to face
- 116. One who is willing to help students get out of their comfort zone
- 117. NR
- 118. One that gets involved with the students and cares if they are learning or not, who doesn't "try" to fail you, and acts like a peer but also someone to look up to
- 119. Open, excited, friendly
- 120. An instructor that keeps my attention and makes me want to attend class not based on an attendance requirement, but actually wanting to be there.
- 121. Someone who is willing to take time outside of class to personally help you
- 122. Someone who is friendly, easy to talk to, and answers questions directly
- 123. Someone who knows the material well and is willing to spend the time teaching it, making sure everyone understands
- 124. Good instructing



125. Someone who is effectively able to grab the attention of the class and find ways to show what we are learning is actually useful
126. Someone who can communicate the subject well enough for everyone to understand and doesn't fear being asked questions
127. An instructor who gains the attention of students, uses a sense of their own personality and life into learning, making the class very open and careful so everyone is comfortable
128. A good listener, someone who is outgoing but knows how to get work done
129. Effectively communicating with the students in a way that they understand and to be enthusiastic and non-monotone
130. Someone who makes sure you understand the material and someone in whom you feel comfortable talking to
131. Someone who can teach in a creative way, enjoys interacting with students and is approachable
132. How willing they are to work with a student in and out of class
133. An instructor that wants you to do well in the course and helps you get there. Doesn't assign, impossible tasks. Answers questions
134. An instructor that tries to involve the whole class without singling specific student out. The workload is also manageable. They also make sure you are aware of what you need to do or learn.
135. Someone who can communicate the lesson to the whole class effectively and then challenges the class to use the information learned
136. NR
137. An instructor who knows the material and enjoys teaching the subject everyday with a bright positive attitude
138. Somebody who shows an interest in seeing the students effectively understand and apply the material. Additionally, they should be able to adapt to differences among students
139. Someone who gets the info across well while also considering all questions and concerns

140.       Somebody who isn't boring and explains material well
141.       Someone who can keep the class on course and motivated but also make the material enjoyable to learn
142.       An effective instructor uses many different teaching styles, has a passion for teaching, and is able to work well with the needs of the student
143.       Not making anyone feel bad, being open to interpretation sand alternative ways of teaching. Also, willing to help students in any way possible
144.       One who is open to communication, engaging, and genuinely interested in his or her subject
145.       Being enthusiastic in what they are teaching. Being open-minded to student suggestions and answer. Respectful and wants the student to learn and apply it to life in general
146.       Someone who loves what they teach and it shows. A teacher should have enthusiasm while talking to students. They should also want their students to do well
147.       Engaged, interested in subject and the students, caring but not easy (high standards) expects peers to support each other
148.       I define an effective instructor as someone who is friendly who provides adequate examples of the material in class, and who really cares about how well students are learning the material
149.       Their availability and if they genuinely want to teach the material and care about what they're teaching
150.       An instructor that makes it easy and interesting to learn. Someone that makes you want to got to class every day
151.       An effective instructor knows what he/she wants and how to get it
152.       Someone who not only motivates for greatness in the classroom but also outside the classroom. They also adjust to the different learnings of the classroom. The students also leaver learning something new.
153.       An instructor that cares about the students and the students' success. Who can effectively get the material across to all students

154. An effective instructor that is there to make sure the entire class is understanding the material and if not to help the students
155. Someone who is kind and understanding and not judgmental!
156. Caring and more interested in teaching than assessment
157. Helpful, cares about each student, willing to work with us
158. Understanding
159. Someone who wants us to do well and teaches us not from just the book but we can apply it to life
160. Teaches you in a practical way so I can remember the ideas better
161. One who is passionate about what they are teaching and willing to help their students in any way they can
162. An instructor who is passionate about the topic and who conveys the material in a relatable way
163. A perceptive instructor, and it would be nice if they were intelligent too
164. One who engages the classroom and makes time for each student. Gets material across clearly
165. Cares about student success, knows the material, approachable, takes time to dedicate outside of classroom, likes their job or wants to be here
166. Willingness to understand that not everyone learns the same
167. An effective instructor is one who is extremely approachable, amiable and open with the class
168. Being approachable and genuine
169. One who is open to the students' point of view and understands but also stays in control with a sense of discipline
170. One who relates to the students, one who "practices what you preach"
171. An effective instructor is one who engages with the class and keeps things fun while also teaching

172. One who cares about the success of their students not just in school but in life
173. An instructor who is passionate about the subject, explains the subject well, and is there for the students is an effective one
174. NR
175. When instructor seems happy to be teaching the course
176. Somebody who explains things effectively and gets students to think and not just demand that they listen
177. An instructor that is all about what you are learning rather than teaching a subject not really caring who understands. An instructor that cares and who is always willing to help and an instructor that challenges you
178. One that is open to any questions and is free at almost any time. Cares about how students are doing and wants to help you improve if you are not doing too well at the time. Someone who understands.
179. Thorough explanations, availability and clarity in question answering
180. Being there for students when help is wanted (being available), helping the students learn the material effectively, a good classroom environment
181. One that is open, detailed, helpful, encouraging, and is friendly
182. NR
183. An instructor who's interested in what they're teaching, and can be fun/funny
184. Someone who has the passion to make you understand something
185. Someone who's willing to help a student
186. Teacher who is open and enjoys teaching
187. Someone who can relate to you and just teach
188. Someone who is encouraging and encourages you to talk and interact
189. Somebody who can accurately reflect/demonstrate concepts in multiple ways; that way more people are able to learn the content

190. An effective instructor is someone who takes the time to help their students and assesses what they need to more effectively learn
191. Open , willing to help the students, lots of examples, interesting perspectives on the material
192. The ability to make a academic catharsis. Enables students to be better equipped with his/her taught subject
193. NR
194. Nice willing to help, funny, easy going
195. NR
196. A nonjudgmental, easy to communicate with teacher that respects all different students' needs
197. Someone who is knowledgeable in the course I'm taking and knows how to direct/lead well
198. Focus, listens, knowledgeable
199. Flexibility and not one method rigid way of teaching. Ability to apply different teaching methods in class
200. One who is actively engaged with students
201. Patience to help the students with questions and help them learn
202. Someone who is open to talk to and not judgmental so even if you have the wrong answer of what you say is dumb then don't shut you down
203. A good instructor teaches the subject, over and over and answers any questions, and works with the class, not just hand out grades
204. Engaging and interesting ideas  
Success Responses

How do you define your own success in your education?

1. Grades. Learned things that I can use in life
2. Above max

3. Limited
4. I strive for 4.0's
5. NR
6. Obviously grades, the impact it has on me, how it changes my views.
7. NR
8. The more I know, the more I succeed.
9. NR
10. Staying focused and dedicated.
11. Getting good real-world skills.
12. If I work hard and dedicate my time to my classes, then I will do well.
13. NR
14. If I am doing my best, getting above a 3.0
15. I get out as much as I put in
16. Awesome
17. By keeping motivated on the right track to earn my degree
18. Awesomeness is me!
19. NR
20. NR
21. NR
22. Study as much as you need to and do what you can to receive the grades you want
23. How well I can get along with my instructors and peers
24. Feeling confident in my work, no matter what my grade
25. I define it by how hard I work for my goals. I control my destiny

26. NR
27. NR
28. Being able to understand the subject and use real life situations when explaining it
29. High marks, retention of knowledge
30. How well I can recall the course work or information later
31. NR
32. Walking away with new knowledge
33. I believe I'm doing fairly well. I've been on the dean's list a few times. Since school gets harder, I'll work harder to get good grades. I believe I do above average, but not extremely outstanding.
34. It's been a long road, but I've put a lot of hard work and dedication into it and I am proud to be near the end of my degree
35. Inspired, able to remember information imparted, how I view and experience the world
36. My success is determined by essentially doing my best and completing what I start. Essentially, perseverance.
37. I am hard working and motivated and get work done
38. I have endured classes and excelled in others
39. By measuring the efforts at which put forward measured by the amount gained
40. Passing my classes and earning credits. Learning new things in my major.
41. In general, I push myself to do the best I can and as a result, I am a 4.0 student. However, this was the first quarter I actually was excited to go to class and though/shared the things I had learned with my friends and family. I was eager to apply the concepts learned in class to my life. I wish more teachers were like Seville. Her courses are like a breath of fresh air. She is positive and makes learning fun.
42. Success equals good grades and lifetime learning.

43. I have to be focused and generally interested in what I am learning
44. By trying my hardest, and devoting time to studying
45. How well I understand the material at the end of the course
46. Where I'm going in life and how well I'll do
47. The amount of effort and time I put into a class plus the professor's contribution will yield success.
48. I am responsible for my own success; as long as I do what is asked of me, with 100% effort, I will be successful
49. When my grades prove so, or when teachers or advisors tell me how well I'm doing
50. Doing well in all my classes. Passing with an A
51. Continuing my education achieving my degree with a fairly good GPA. Being able to take something away from every course I take that will help me later on.
52. Achieving a grade that represents the most effort I could put into the class.
53. GPA
54. To be happy in finding a good career and liking it
55. I do very well, I learn a lot while I study, I listen very well
56. Graduate and getting a stable full-time job
57. My success is when I not only get a good grade but am able to apply the material to real life situations
58. N/A
59. To understand the content of the lecture and to have my own idea
60. I define my success as knowing and being able to use material outside of class.
61. Understanding material from the classes that I have taken and being able to relay that information in an educated conversation. Good grades help too



- 62. Passing the class at the minimum. Bettering myself and growing at the maximum
- 63. Taking it day by day
- 64. Good grades (3.7 GPA+) and feeling that I will use material later in my career. Enjoying what I do
- 65. Doing my best, thus producing the best results for myself
- 66. Working hard, doing everything that I can do to make sure I'm successful
- 67. Hard work, study, do my homework
- 68. NR
- 69. Organization is the key to success
- 70. The only way to define it is if it prepares me for the potential jobs in the future
- 71. Grades
- 72. Pretty good
- 73. Success is passing my classes with an appropriate grade
- 74. Not based on a grade, but based on if I know the material
- 75. By doing my absolute best and doing what I know I can
- 76. Striving toward my goal
- 77. Graduating with my degree and getting decent grades. Knowing material that will help me in the future.
- 78. Good grades and comprehension of material at a later date
- 79. Someone who takes charge and goes for it. Gets it done
- 80. NR
- 81. To pass classes with good grades, then graduate

82. My grades and the amount of time spent on homework and how focused I am on it
83. It's been a long time coming but finally starting to see hard work pay off
84. It is based on the effort I put out
85. When I feel confident in the information I learned and feel I know it well enough that I could teach it to someone else
86. I feel that if three months after I finish the course I still remember what I learned, then it was a success
87. How much I retain after the class is over
88. My success in a course is defined by how much information I take from the course. In other words, how much knowledge I actually gained
89. Hard working, dedication
90. NR
91. By passing classes and knowing I did the best I could
92. I learned more because I wanted to
93. Work in progress
94. NR
95. Often
96. Grades, but also learning things that will last a lifetime
97. I define my own success happening
98. Having fun and doing good
99. I pass the class or I get help
100. NR
101. Excellent
102. I don't

- 103. I do my best and hope to achieve a lot through my learning
- 104. NR
- 105. A working progress
- 106. My success is really good. The material was presented amazingly!  
Great teacher!
- 107. NR
- 108. I work hard for my grades and in all my classes
- 109. My success is measured by my growth through a course despite the  
teacher or homework or grades. If I actually learned, then I was successful
- 110. I'm very successful because I have a great teacher
- 111. Pushing myself to excel in the classes I am good at, and challenge  
myself to struggle and succeed in the class I am not good at
- 112. Working hard, learning as much as I can , enjoying my classes
- 113. I work hard
- 114. I feel I am doing well in school and I am improving
- 115. I could be a better student but I feel that I work hard enough. I work  
better when I'm not under pressure
- 116. Taking the next step forward to being successful
- 117. NR
- 118. I definitely work hard for what I get out of the class. I'm not a slacker  
and do everything to the best of my ability
- 119. NR
- 120. A successful education is one that provides me with the tools for  
success in an ever evolving and competitive workforce
- 121. Asking questions on how to improve
- 122. Very good. Working hard and succeeding in my goals

123. When I feel that I have done my best and received a grade that reflects my effort, then I feel successful
124. Not sure
125. I succeed if I am understanding the material and can apply it to other classes/situations
126. By good grades and understanding and being able to use it outside of school
127. How well I perceive myself and my education, time management, and knowing that my education is very important
128. Staying up to date with work, putting in the extra effort to succeed
129. Great
130. I feel my success started off slowly, but is now climbing greater with each day
131. Trying as hard as I can to the best of my abilities, growing in knowledge, ideally a 3.7 or above
132. Dean's Honor Roll. Bam!
133. I define my own success as going to class everyday and doing my work to my full potential! Trying my hardest.
134. I do my work, ask for help by my peers or instructor. Make sure I', on top of what I need to know
135. I feel that I'm successful when I pass the class and also when I can retain the information after the class
136. NR
137. I set goals in school and rate my success based on how well I have achieved that goal
138. I define it in terms of how well I can apply these ideas and understand them in everyday life. Also, I would measure my success in terms of how I am evaluated by the instructor
139. Being able to pass my classes and leave with a better understanding of material covered

- 140. Pretty good so far, hopefully it will continue even better
- 141. Passing my classes with a good grade, but also taking away the information that I was supposed to learn
- 142. I think that I am successful in my education when I give my best effort and take information away from a course
- 143. My GPA, also if I can carry on the info I've learned to other classes or real world applications
- 144. Whether or not I feel that I have learned something
- 145. Staying on top of homework and studying to be prepared for all tests and quizzes. Time management
- 146. If I have learned something, and did my best, I feel like I have succeeded. In easier class, I base it off the grade I have received
- 147. By both my grades and by what I "actually" learn
- 148. I define my success by how much I retain and how well I learn the material
- 149. When I actually read the text book and learn about the subject, and want to learn more
- 150. I define it on how well I improve in a tough course and on my GPA
- 151. Truly learning the material in order to enhance my future life and career
- 152. My success relies on me and I determine my own outcome
- 153. How well I know the course material and how well I can use it outside of the classroom
- 154. Success is when you are able to fully understand the material and obtaining it for more than the quarter you are in that class
- 155. I need to be interested in the subject to really like it and do well
- 156. By my final grade
- 157. Determined, focused, always put schoolwork first

- 158. Never...it's a piece of paper that society tells you need to be successful
- 159. I did way better in this class than what I thought
- 160. Being able to apply school to real life
- 161. Good grades and what I take from the course
- 162. Great!
- 163. Based purely on how engaging the class is
- 164. By working hard to actually learn the material so I can pass the class and other classes after it
- 165. Go to classes, do the work, try to learn – not just memorize just for the grade
- 166. It's hard and I'm barely being successful
- 167. I define my success by the amount of experience and life influencing scenarios I encounter in college
- 168. Understanding
- 169. Hard work will always pay off
- 170. Learning daily life situations and how to handle them
- 171. My personal success comes out of what I put into my education
- 172. Truly learning new things and growing as an individual
- 173. My education is successful most of the time. The only time it's not is when I have an ineffective instructor
- 174. NR
- 175. When instructor is happy to teach, I'm happy to learn
- 176. What I take with me when I leave the class. The lessons I learned and what I can use in life
- 177. Compared to high school I am not doing too well my success is in education so far is not so great. But I am trying.

178. To have success in college you need to be involved with the professors and have a little one on one time with them. They will want to help you succeed more
179. Learning things that are useful and interesting. Learning that makes me feel I am growing in intellectual, emotional, and social awareness,
180. Going to class, learning what I need to, asking questions when I need to, studying, being prepared
181. Very good, although I could use some more motivation in my homework times
182. NR
183. Taking the time to do the work, and put the info to memory
184. Put work in, get good out
185. I feel like I am really successful I have lots of goals and I am ambitious
186. Mediocrely
187. I feel very successful in my education. I am getting good grades and this class pushes me to interact more with my peers and in my community
188. Learning things that I can recall and use in the future
189. I define success as meeting my own personal goals and living my life the way I want to
190. When I do the best that I can with what I'm given and try to give 100%
191. How I'll be able to utilize what I've been taught
192. NR
193. Motivation and time to focus on your studies
194. NR
195. NR
196. Learning new, useful things, and getting what is necessary for my future done

197. I define my own success in my education as well effort. I try my best and set goals whenever needed
198. How much I learn or know
199. NR
200. Making school a priority and a job like responsibility
201. Hard work
202. NR
203. My own success is measured by the knowledge I learn and my GPA of course
204. NR