Knowing isn't Teaching
Heartland Faculty Best Practices 2010

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Communication in the Classroom

- You can adopt communication behaviors to enhance student affective learning
  - Refers to development of favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the course, teacher, or learning in general
  - Affective learning leads to student motivation and retention
- Communication term for these behaviors is immediacy

Immediacy Instruction Overview

- What is immediacy?
- How is immediacy produced?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of immediacy?
- How do you enhance immediacy?

What is immediacy?

- Behaviors that cause people to like, evaluate highly, and prefer a communicator (Mehrabian, 1971)
- Behaviors that reduce the physical and psychological distance between communicators

How is immediacy produced?

- Immediacy is a receiver-centered concept
- There are two types of immediacy
  - Nonverbal – relates to visual and vocal aspects of communication
  - Verbal

Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviors

- Posture
- Movement
- Gestures
- Eye contact
- Vocal variation
- Touch
**Verbal Immediacy Behaviors**
- Use student's names
- Have students use your first name
- Use personal examples to demonstrate concepts
- Encourage out-of-class communication
- Give only positive feedback to individuals in class
- Give thorough feedback on assignments
- Ask how students feel about assignments and due dates

**Advantages of Immediacy**
- Enhances student affective learning  
  -(Frymier, 1994: Christophel and Gorham, 1995)
- Leads to better teaching evaluations  
  -(Beatty and Zahn, 1990)
- Moderates communication apprehension in students  
  -(Ellis, 1995)
- Moderates credibility loss when negatives occur  
  -(Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998)

**Disadvantages of Immediacy**
- Requires a great amount of effort
- Student failures may be taken personally by instructors
- Must be aware of cultural differences in terms of immediate behaviors
- May be more difficult for certain types of instructors (New instructors, international instructors)

**Enhancing Immediacy**
- Practice gestures in a mirror
- Have a peer evaluate you
- Videotape yourself
- Watch an experienced instructor's use of immediacy when they teach the same or similar material as you

**Mediated Immediacy**
- Can be utilized in fully online, hybrid, or traditional courses with an online component (Blackboard)
- 2 dimensions  
  - Approachability
  - Regard
- Handout details behaviors for each of these dimensions

**Summary**
- Definition of Immediacy
- Produced Nonverbally and Verbally
- Advantages and Disadvantages
- Enhancement of Immediacy
- You can do it!
Table 1
*Dimensions of Mediated Immediacy: Approachability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>Intentionally revealing personal information that allows others to feel that they know source</td>
<td>• referring to experiences outside official role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• photos portraying experiences outside official role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
<td>Varying emphasis, intensity, vividness, tone of message</td>
<td>• using vocal inflection</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• using punctuation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• using colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Being accessible for communication</td>
<td>• indicating availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• providing contact information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• setting time aside for contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informality</td>
<td>Portraying informality and casualness</td>
<td>• informal postures/settings in images</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• use of slang, colloquialisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>Displaying personality qualities/ personal history shared by receiver</td>
<td>• revealing interests, experiences, opinions, backgrounds, and so on, that match receivers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Providing for repeated contacts over time</td>
<td>• frequent encounters and/or interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Using humor</td>
<td>• sharing jokes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• playful interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>Displaying characteristics perceived as appealing</td>
<td>• presenting attractive appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Displaying competence and skill related to source’s role</td>
<td>• displaying appealing personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrating knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalness</td>
<td>Conveying that source views receivers as individuals</td>
<td>• using synchronous, richer channels&lt;br&gt;• remembering, using names&lt;br&gt;• incorporating knowledge of person in interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Indicating attentiveness and practicing responsiveness to receivers</td>
<td>• returning phone messages/e-mails&lt;br&gt;• listening to/reading carefully messages&lt;br&gt;• inviting future interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>Assisting receivers' efforts to pursue needs and goals</td>
<td>• clearly designed Web site to aid navigation&lt;br&gt;• providing needed into on outgoing messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>Following etiquette, courtesies, and other communication procedural norms</td>
<td>• word choices&lt;br&gt;• practicing common courtesies in interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nonverbal Immediacy Scale-Self Report (NIS-S)

This is the most up-to-date measure of nonverbal immediacy as a self-report. Alpha reliability estimates around .90 should be expected. This measure has more face validity than previous instruments because it has more and more diverse items. Its predictive validity also is excellent.

When using this instrument it is important to recognize that the difference in these self-reports between females and males is statistically significant and socially significant (that is, substantial variance in the scores on this instrument can be attributed to biological sex). Whether these differences are "real" (that is, females may actually be more nonverbally immediate than males) or a function of social desirability (that is, females think they should be more immediate than males think they should be) or a function of actual behavior has not yet been determined (as of September, 2003).

DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with or to others. Please indicate in the space at the left of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies TO YOU. Please use the following 5-point scale: 1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Occasionally; 4 = Often; 5 = Very Often

____ 1. I use my hands and arms to gesture while talking to people.
____ 2. I touch others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them.
____ 3. I use a monotone or dull voice while talking to people.
____ 4. I look over or away from others while talking to them.
____ 5. I move away from others when they touch me while we are talking.
____ 6. I have a relaxed body position when I talk to people.
____ 7. I frown while talking to people.
____ 8. I avoid eye contact while talking to people.
____ 9. I have a tense body position while talking to people.
____ 10. I sit close or stand close to people while talking with them.
____ 11. My voice is monotonous or dull when I talk to people.
____ 12. I use a variety of vocal expressions when I talk to people.
____ 13. I gesture when I talk to people.
14. I am animated when I talk to people.
15. I have a bland facial expression when I talk to people.
16. I move closer to people when I talk to them.
17. I look directly at people while talking to them.
18. I am stiff when I talk to people.
19. I have a lot of vocal variety when I talk to people.
20. I avoid gesturing while I am talking to people.
21. I lean toward people when I talk to them.
22. I maintain eye contact with people when I talk to them.
23. I try not to sit or stand close to people when I talk with them.
24. I lean away from people when I talk to them.
25. I smile when I talk to people.
26. I avoid touching people when I talk to them.

**Scoring:**

Step 1. Add the scores from the following items: 1, 2, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, and 25.

Step 2. Add the scores from the following items: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, and 26.

Total Score = 78 plus Step 1 minus Step 2.

**Norms:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>102.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>&gt;112</td>
<td>&lt;92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>&gt;104</td>
<td>&lt;83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>