

# The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia

By

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## DECLARATION

I, Ahmad Abdullah Asiri, declare that the PhD thesis entitled “The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia” is no more than 100,000 words in length, including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. This thesis contains no material which has been submitted for examination in any other course or accepted for any other degree or diploma in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

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## ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study sought to investigate the effects of instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviours on students' communication (i.e., class participation) and learning outcomes (i.e., state motivation, communication satisfaction, affective learning, and cognitive learning). The study sampled 115 undergraduate students at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. The participants were distributed into three groups: two control groups and one treatment group. The current study combined a quantitative method using a survey with a qualitative method using a semi-structured interview design. In this study, students participants completed the same survey at two different times: pre-test and post-test. Instrument measurements were composed of seven elements: verbal immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, class participation, state motivation, communication satisfaction, affective learning, and cognitive learning. The findings of this study strengthen that generally, instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviours cause positive student communication and learning outcomes. However, nonverbal immediacy was not shown to affect cognitive learning. These findings illustrate the predominance of verbal immediacy over nonverbal immediacy.

The results are discussed and implications are given for instructors and administrators at various universities in Saudi Arabia. Instructor immediacy appears to be a significant factor in developing interpersonal relationships with students and promoting student communication and learning outcomes.

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*In the Name of Allah (God), the most beneficent, the most merciful*

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother and father, my wife, and my wonderful children (Abdullah, Areen, and Abdulmajeed).

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## **CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Pedagogically Positioning the Researcher in the Research**

I have been a member of staff in the Faculty of Education at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia since 2002. Prior to my appointment I worked as a high school teacher of Arabic language courses for one year. At the university, one of my main roles is to teach the ‘Arabic Language teaching methods’ course in the Diploma of Education and to supervise Arabic Language students in their pre-service field experience for four months. My ongoing interest in pedagogy prompted me to improve my pedagogy and generated my research interests in immediacy of learning and teaching.

I have always believed that effective teachers are those who can employ a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies. However it can be difficult for instructors to appropriately match teaching strategies with students' learning needs. As educators we must always be ready to modify our instructional approach to cater to the background and learning preferences of the students in each class. Not only do students differ in terms of knowledge, but they also differ in terms of maturity, interest, and motivation. The overarching pedagogic challenge is to find a way to make course materials, and the learning process, accessible to all students; to be pedagogically responsive to individuals who are having difficulty integrating new knowledge while at the same time providing enough stimulation and challenge to prevent boredom in others. To meet this challenge, educators must constantly ask themselves reflexive questions that interrogate pedagogical practices, such as: ‘Where do we get our ideas about what constitutes good

teaching?’ Clearly, there are many sources for these ideas: our own experience as learners; our experience of ‘what works’; observations and conversations with colleagues; public debate about education; and scholarly research and writing on education (Tennant, MacMullen, & Kaczynski, 2010). However, these ideas exist within a broader context of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

As Wang (2013) said “When teachers and students construct effective interaction, students perceive their teachers as supportive, and there is the potential for a pedagogical relationship to be strengthened or an interpersonal relationship to be developed” (p. 2); when teaching high school in 2001, I tried to build good social relationships with students both formally, in school, and informally, out of school. My students and I took part in various activities for one day of each weekend, and I organised several excursions and trips during the year. I found I had credibility and had earned the trust of my students more than any other instructor at the school. Could this be because I had developed excellent relationships with my students but also with their parents? This rapport created an amazing situation whereby if one of my students had a problem with his family, his parents would ask the school’s principal to organise a meeting with me to provide advice on the best course of action, rather than contacting the student’s advisor. Of course, this was empowering for me and I felt that it improved my reputation and enabled me to be even more effective in my teaching.

My belief in the value of active learning led me to become interested in how transformative learning is fostered when students are able to engage with subject matter on a personal level and can relate the subject matter to their own lives. The key to enhancing this engagement was an understanding of the diverse range of learning styles and student experiences. For each individual and classroom, I started to use different process to stimulate student engagement. I encouraged students to prepare their own

questions for class discussion and to help other students learn by preparing and presenting short analyses of specific readings to begin class discussions; opportunities to work together on research projects were also provided. In this way, students were empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. In addition, I facilitated the organisation of study and peer review groups that aimed to encourage co-operative and collaborative learning among students.

I also found it useful to distribute a summary of the main topics for each class and to use overhead transparencies to present a 'rolling' and detailed outline of any interactive lecture sessions. This allowed the students to reflect on the key ideas of the class without feeling the need to concentrate on taking notes. Using class notes provided me with the flexibility to take the time to discuss important points raised by students or incorporate other active learning techniques during a lecture without fear of leaving out important course material.

As my interest in how instructors cultivate learning partnerships with students developed, I began to consider how teaching is not about instructing students in a rigid way on how to think or act; nor is it about imparting information to them as if their minds were empty vessels just waiting to be filled. Rather, I understood the purpose of teaching as being to ignite transformative learning: to cultivate students' innate curiosity, to empower them to take responsibility for their own learning, and to inspire in them the courage to grow intellectually. In this way, educators can provide the opportunity to develop relationships, clarify values, uplift the spirit, and spur the community to action.

My teaching goal became to provide students with a learning environment that is both exciting and rigorous. One that empowers students and instructors in the pursuit of learning. To this end, I started to tailor my assessment strategies to allow me to be fair

in my assessment of student learning outcomes, irrespective of students' learning styles. Most importantly, I treated my students with respect and created a safe environment learning where they felt free to discuss candidly topics that they might otherwise have hesitated to address. I wanted my students to feel comfortable expressing their needs and opinions. Students responded reciprocally to my commitment by committing themselves to the learning of the class as a whole, as well as to the advancement of their own education. I know learning is successful when students tell me that they have learned 'to see the social world through a new lens' or 'to think more critically.'

I believe that teaching is the noblest profession; a teacher prepares students for their life and careers and is a role model, so he requires relational development with students. Teven (2001) suggests that it is essential for instructors to develop good relationships with their students in order to maximise learning. Teacher-student relationships can often develop into successful mentorships and lifelong friendships (Rawlins, 2000) Changes in teacher-student relationships can impact on students in many ways, affecting their learning, motivation, self-confidence, and career aspirations (Docan-Morgan& Manusov, 2009). As a result, over the past three decades, instructor immediacy has been recognised as one of the most influential instructor communication behaviours and it has received much attention in the field of instructional communication (Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006; Zhang et al., 2007).

### **Immediacy as an Educational Construct**

Immediacy is a concept devised and defined by Mehrabian (1972), who characterised it as a set of behaviours that "reduce distance, enhance closeness, reflect liking and affect, and increase sensory stimulations between communicators" (p.1). It

has been suggested 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). This definitive exploration of immediacy was a catalyst for research into instructional communication and it had important implications for learning (Gorham & Christophel, 1992). Khoo (2010) expanded on Mehrabian’s definition, referring to immediacy as a “psychological and physical closeness seen during communication acts that generates attraction to and positive evaluation of the communication partner” (p. 8).

Immediacy can be grouped into two categories: verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy. Verbal immediacy behaviours create a feeling of closeness with students through what is said, including word choice, self-disclosure, articulation patterns, use of humour, provision and solicitation of feedback, and addressing of students by name. Nonverbal immediacy behaviours convey a feeling of closeness with students using physical characteristics, including facial expressions and gestures, body language, adoption of a close interpersonal distance, smiling, and eye contact (Arbaugh, 2001; Richmond et al., 2006).

Instructor immediacy is created by shifting the focus towards the student, as in my student-centred classrooms, and can be achieved by the use of both verbal and nonverbal behaviour (Richmond et al., 2006). The results from research studies show that instructor immediacy is helpful not only in moulding the learning activities of students, but also in improving communication skills between and among students and their instructors (Allen, Witt & Wheelless, 2006; Henning, 2012).

In terms of the significance of immediacy in an educational context, Andersen, Andersen and Jensen (1979) were interested in examining Mehrabian's claims regarding immediacy's positive influence on students' learning. As an instructional communication

construct in an educational context, immediacy soon became the focus of a number of studies. From the 1970s through to the end of the twentieth century, immediacy researchers in tertiary educational contexts developed survey instruments aimed at measuring the association between the variables of instructor immediacy and students' learning.

The early research on immediacy focused on non-verbal behaviours, before later studies differentiated between verbal and non-verbal forms of immediacy, the effects of which could be observed separately or in concert (Gorham, 1988; Robinson & Richmond, 1995). The distinction between verbal and non-verbal immediacy also had the apparent effect of highlighting the commonalities between immediacy and current thinking on affective teaching. In the 1980s, as the research was tested in classrooms, some researchers shifted their emphasis to the various effects of immediacy on different student ethnic groups. As communication is a process that is essentially culture dependent, this was a logical advancement in the research. As a result of studies taking into account ethnicity, the field of study was further refined with cultural sensitivity.

As time went by, immediacy researchers started to adopt one of two positions: that the association of immediacy to learning is direct; and that there are mediating factors between the two variables. Andersen et al. (1979) made the assumption, due primarily to lack of any evidence to the contrary, that the impact of learning on immediacy is direct. Although affective and cognitive learning had been examined without clear constitutive or operational definitions, subsequent studies by Gorham (1988), Sanders and Wiseman (1990) and Powell and Harville (1990) supported the direct model. By contrast, most indirect models consider the primary aspect to be motivation, where students being motivated to learn is a causal factor that collinearly impacts affective and cognitive learning (Christophel, 1990).

Rocca (2001) addressed the concept of verbal aggression, this time triangulating verbal aggression, immediacy and students' participation, or motivation to speak in class. Rocca (2001) found that the more intense the teacher immediacy was, the more motivated students were to speak up in class. Conversely, where verbal aggression was more intense, students were less motivated to speak up in class. To a great degree, this finding contradicts Fassinger's (1997) conclusion that teacher traits have a negligible effect on student participation and instead it is verbal and non-verbal peer behaviour and the broader emotional climate in the classroom that exert the most significant impact on students' class participation.

Taking apprehension as the conceptual opposite of motivation, affective and cognitive learning, Chesebro and McCroskey (2001) explored the immediacy–learning relationship, examining the interaction between student apprehension, teacher immediacy and clear teaching style. According to the study, the more apprehensive students were about their capacity to understand content or achieve highly in class, the lower their ability to process content and to absorb new information. Chesebro and McCroskey (2001) suggested that teacher immediacy mitigated such effects, with the results supporting the proposal that students' apprehension has a high negative correlation to motivation, understanding, affect for teacher, and affect for the subject.

Educational scholars believe that the study of the connection between students' communication and learning results and instructor immediacy is more essential than any other element – such as when it comes to enhancing the educational arena (McCroskey, Richmond, Sallinen, Fayer, & Barraclough, 1995; Richmond et al., 2006). According to Simplicio (2000), to be effective, an instructor must not only work hard to enhance content knowledge and pedagogic expertise but teachers' effectiveness is improved when they strive to communicate better with their students. Pogue and AhYun (2006)

stated that where students perceived teachers as being highly immediate, they experienced greater motivation and affective learning. Conversely, the less immediate they perceived the teacher to be, the less motivated and affective learning they were found to experience (Pogue & AhYun, 2006). These results indicate that the presence of high immediacy has “a more profound impact on student affect and motivation than either one by itself” (Pogue & AhYun, 2006, p. 340).

Similarly, Benson, Cohen & Buskist, (2005) found that teacher immediacy was a key component in creating a nurturing and supportive instructional environment, with students participating in the study revealing that their teachers had to care about them on both an academic and a personal sense in order for the students to attend class, be attentive and make an effort. Students added that teachers should be engaging, innovative, enthusiastic and approachable, in order to build a positive learning environment and positively influence both the children’s affect for the teacher and academic outcomes.

Teachers who exhibit high immediacy and enthusiasm for the subject matter are viewed by students as approachable, enthusiastic, and caring (Stipek, 2006), and ideally teachers cultivate relationships with their students, in order to encourage students to be responsible for their own decisions whilst at the same time offering them assistance by providing solutions and encouragement (Stipek, 2006). Stipek went even further, suggesting that those students who did not feel encouraged or cared for achieved poorly academically. Conversely, students who felt cared for and encouraged were also found to make a greater effort in class as a means of reciprocating to the teacher for devoting their time and effort to the teaching task. Stipek (2006) stated:

Teachers need to make special efforts to show a personal interest in and interact positively with the students whom they find most difficult to teach by going out of their way to compliment positive behaviours, showing an interest in the students' lives outside school, listening to the students' perspectives on the problems they are having, and collaborating with them on developing strategies to address these problems. (p. 48)

Lowman (1995) observed that instructors need to create learning settings that encourage positive affect in students, such as a sense of self-efficacy and high self-esteem, rather than creating discouraging settings based on fear, anxiety, and discontent. In this way, teacher immediacy can effectively create appropriate teacher–student relationships that are open and trusting, resulting in enjoyable learning experiences on one part and rewarding teaching experiences on the other part (Noddings, 2002). College instructors who can identify and understand the effects of their verbal and nonverbal behaviours are more able to improve classroom communication and learning outcomes by incorporating immediacy into their pedagogy. The result of incorporating immediacy is improved communication between instructors and students and enhanced student communication skills and learning outcomes.

### **Higher Education in Saudi Arabia**

A series of rapid developments in the early 1970s led the Saudi government to establish the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia in 1975. The ministry was created to improve the performance and growth of higher education providers. Its responsibilities include the provision and management of scholarships for students wishing to pursue education abroad, the supervision and monitoring of private government colleges and universities, the approval of undergraduate and graduate

degrees and programs, and the enactment and maintenance of rules and policies for all higher education institutes.

Education in Saudi Arabia is supervised by two governmental agencies: the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVT), which supervises the vocational and technical institutes, and the Ministry of Higher Education, which supervises higher education providers. These agencies implement roles and objectives for education and are supported by government funds. Their primary responsibilities include authorisation, management, planning and allocation of the budget among the higher educational institutes.

The provision of equal opportunity and free access to quality education for both male and female students, the expansion of current institutions, and the establishment of new higher education institutions are some of the primary aims of the Ministry of Higher Education. Males and females are taught separately by their own gender at all levels of education, but other than this gender division, the Ministry of Education aims for equity in education.

In 2013, the Saudi Arabian government spent 25 percent of its total budget (\$54.4 billion USD of \$221 billion USD) on education and training (Ministry of Finance, 2013). This is a significant increase in education spending as compared with \$7 billion spent by Saudi Arabia on education in 2004 (Ministry of Finance, 2013). The rapid economic and social development in Saudi Arabia has resulted in the establishment of higher education institutions in all areas of the country. There has been a significant increase in both the number of colleges and universities, as well as the number of students enrolled. There are now 24 government universities, 8 private universities, and 21 private colleges where, prior to 2001, there were less than eight universities. The top university in Saudi Arabia is King Abdullah University of Science

and Technology (KAUST) which was established in late 2009. Despite its youth as an institution, Kumetat (2012) states that in the field of research, KAUST aims to set new standards in science education. The vision of KAUST is that by 2020 it will be a globally renowned graduate research university that makes significant contributions to scientific and technological advancement, and will play a crucial role in the development of Saudi Arabia and the world.

Beginning in 2005, the Ministry of Higher Education on behalf of the government of Saudi Arabia began a new higher education initiative, referred to as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Program to Study Abroad. The primary intention of the initiative was to fulfil the country's requirement for experts and well-trained professionals by sending students to foreign countries to pursue an undergraduate degree in general science, engineering, or medicine. The initiative's objective is to educate and increase the knowledge and skills of Saudi students, and to enhance their understanding of social aspects and culture by giving them the chance to make new friends, share their culture and traditions with foreigners, and acquaint themselves with a foreign culture by experiencing it firsthand.

Saudi students are currently sent to 24 countries worldwide. Students are encouraged to study in developed Asian countries such as Malaysia, China, Japan, and Singapore, although most students prefer to pursue their education in English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, the United States (US), and Australia. According to a report issued by the Ministry of Finance in 2013, the government spent \$6 billion on more than 120,000 students. The mission of the scholarships program is to prepare and qualify Saudi citizens so that they can compete on an international level in the labour market and different areas of scientific research,

and provide highly qualified individuals to benefit Saudi Arabian universities as well as government and private sectors.

Few of the 120,000 Saudi students currently studying overseas would have experienced a classroom where they are permitted to be 'active' learners or experience immediacy with their instructors or other students. In Saudi Arabia, instructor-centred learning is the norm and, consequently, when students transition into a new and foreign teaching environment based on student-centred learning, a common and shared cultural experience is often a lack of confidence and knowledge about how they should communicate with their instructors and peers, as well as how to be active in their own learning.

### **Aims of the Study**

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between instructor immediacy and tertiary student communication (i.e., class participation) and learning outcomes (i.e., state motivation, communication satisfaction, affective learning, and cognitive learning) at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia with the goal of improving teaching and learning methodologies. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices are evident in the classroom at King Khalid University?
2. To what extent is instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy related to student class participation?
3. What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student motivation?

4. What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student communication satisfaction?
5. Is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning?
6. What is the extent of the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning?

### **Need for this Study**

I believe this research holds significance in five key areas. I propose immediacy is a significant variable influencing the instructor-student relationship and a positive and significant association has been shown to exist between instructor immediacy and students' communication and learning outcomes (Witt, Wheelless, & Allen, 2004). However, in a meta-analysis of research conducted in to immediacy (Witt et al., 2004), only eight studies were identified as having utilised quasi-experimental designs that manipulated instructor immediacy and compared learning effects. Smythe and Hess (2005) noted that the first problem with immediacy research in the instructional context is that, "with the exception of a few studies that experimentally manipulated teacher immediacy, virtually every study shares a common methodological foundation: teacher immediacy is measured by retrospective student report" (p. 171). To overcome this problem, this research applies a quasi-experimental design with two control groups and one immediacy group. The mixed method design combines two types of immediacy into a single construct to reliably test the validity of commonly held beliefs about the effect of immediacy on communication and learning outcomes.

The second area of significance of this study is that, unlike previous studies, it looks at immediacy as it relates to Saudi Arabia. Cross-cultural research into the effects

of instructor immediacy have compared effects of immediacy in classrooms in the US with classrooms in Australia (McCroskey et al., 1995), Brazil (Santilli, Miller & Katt, 2011), China (Myers, Zhong & Guan, 1998; Zhang, 2005; Zhang, 2006; Zhang et al., 2007), Finland (McCroskey et al., 1995), France (Roach, Cornett-DeVito & DeVito, 2005), Germany (Roach & Byrne, 2001; Zhang et al., 2007), Japan (Neuliep, 1997; Pribyl, Sakamoto & Keaten, 2004; Zhang et al., 2007), Kenya (Johnson & Miller, 2002) and Korea (Park et al., 2009). However, US culture's very different from the culture in Saudi Arabia in terms of value orientation (e.g. collectivism versus individualism, large power distance versus small power distance). No studies have specifically investigated the effects of instructor immediacy on Saudi Arabian students. The current study provides a cross-cultural test of immediacy-based learning models from the US, focusing on classrooms in Saudi Arabia universities.

The third significant factor of this study is that the main Arabic model of learning is didactic and behaviourist: students focus on memorisation and repetition, listening as the instructor conveys knowledge (Alkeaid, 2004). In this situation, the instructor is referred to as 'active' and the students are 'passive' (Talbani, 1996). This teaching style has been observed in Middle Eastern universities, where the basic teaching method is a top-down, instructor-centred mode of lecture delivery (Chadraba & O'Keefe, 2007; Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010). In Saudi Arabian universities, delivery of information in the form of lectures constitutes the main method of teaching for 73 percent of instructors (Alkeaid, 2004). As a result, the Ministry of Education (2010) and the Ministry of Higher Education (2010) recognised the urgent need for education reform, and consequently introduced and promoted new teaching and learning strategies that emphasise student-centred methods. The Ministry of Education has poured both effort and resources into developing its curricula and programs, on the basis that

education is an investment in the future (Ministry of Education, 2010). While the Ministry continues to develop plans and train instructors, it acknowledges that it currently lacks sufficient information to adequately prepare students for new educational challenges (Ministry of Education, 2010). To remedy this, the importance of suitable learning environments and effective learning strategies is being recognised and addressed. Therefore, this study aims to provide instructors with practical suggestions on how to be more effective in the classroom and has as a goal to help instructors improve their understanding of the ways in which immediacy behaviours affect students' communication and learning outcomes.

The fourth area of significance of this study relates to classroom participation, which has been shown to help students to learn skills, to accept new ideas, to debate, and to elucidate their own arguments (Weaver & Qi, 2005). The Saudi Arabian government acknowledged the importance of this fact when it built the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) in 2004. This organisation aims to facilitate dialogue between and among society's stakeholders in order to consolidate national unity and promote public interest based on the principles of Islam. Unfortunately, most Saudi Arabian universities do not currently heed the principles and aims set out by the KACND, which hinders their ability to educate college graduates with adequate dialogue skills. However, in Saudi Arabia, where democracy is in its infancy, sparking change in the education system is always going to be a challenge.

Aligned with the fourth significant factor, in practice, this study aims to provide the Deanship of Academic Development and Quality, established by King Khalid University in 2011, Quality, with information about current classroom practice. The Deanship aims to achieve the goals of 'total quality' through staff training within each faculty. The present study aims to evaluate instructor immediacy, and to use this

information to suggest ways to improve the quality of teaching at King Khalid University.

The next chapter will provide a thorough examination of the body of literature on culture and learning style, as well as immediacy, both verbal and nonverbal, especially as it relates to motivation, class participation, student satisfaction, affective learning, and cognitive learning.

## **CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review will examine and discuss the theory and research associated with instructor immediacy. This review centres on the relationship between instructor immediacy and student communication and is presented in nine sections. The first section presents an overview of immediacy, including definitions and kinds of immediacy behaviours, followed by a section on the theoretical framework of the thesis. The third section looks at culture and learning style, including the influence of cultural difference on immediacy, then some general studies on immediacy are summarised. The fifth section focuses on immediacy and student motivation, while the sixth looks at immediacy and students' class participation. The seventh section talks about immediacy and student communication satisfaction, followed by an explanation of the relationship between immediacy and affective learning. The final section clarifies the effect of immediacy on cognitive learning.

### **Defining Immediacy**

Immediacy behaviour, as it relates to the educational context during the past three decades, has been used mainly to describe the instructor-student relationship. Instructors may implement immediacy in the classroom via both verbal and nonverbal behaviours, each of which has a distinct primary function. Verbal immediacy can enhance student learning and participation via lectures, while nonverbal immediacy (NVI) can enhance the effect of the lesson content, instructor and subject on students, and may improve students' perception of instructor-student interactions (Richmond et al., 2006). Therefore, educational communication skills and immediacy are likely

correlated (Frymier & Houser, 2000). A meta-analytic investigation of 81 studies (Witt et al., 2004) revealed statistically different results between verbal immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, affective learning, and cognitive learning. The results indicate a positive and substantial relationship between overall instructor immediacy and overall student learning (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

*Overall Effects across Differing Types of Instructor Immediacy and Overall Student Learning*

		Overall learning
Overall immediacy	average <i>r</i>	0.500
	N	24.474
Verbal immediacy	average <i>r</i>	0.472
	N	8.468
Nonverbal immediacy	average <i>r</i>	0.481
	N	21.171
Combined immediacy	average <i>r</i>	0.545
	N	3.158

*Note.* Modified from Witt et al. (2004).

Given that the correlation between immediacy and learning has been established, it is important to note that there are two kinds of immediacy: verbal and nonverbal immediacy. Both types will be discussed in detail in the next sections.

### **Nonverbal Immediacy**

Nonverbal communication, “called ‘body language’ in the popular vernacular, is assumed to include gestures, facial expressions, body movement gaze, dress and the like to send messages” (Knapp & Miller, 1994, p. 8). According to Richmond et al. (1987),

nonverbal immediacy is a relational means of communication that conveys feelings of closeness, belonging and affection. Mehrabian (1981) states:

People rarely transmit implicitly nonverbally the kinds of complex information that they can convey with words; rather, implicit communication deals primarily with the transmission of information about feelings and like-dislike or attitudes. The referents of implicit behaviours, in other words, are emotions and attitudes or like-dislike. (p. 3)

Thus, nonverbal immediacy is based on the idea that instructors' nonverbal behaviours induce feelings of pleasure and liking in the students. These feelings are expressed through physical actions, such as "eye contact, body position, physical proximity, personal touch, and body movement" (Richmond et al., 1987). Andersen (1979) further defined nonverbal immediacy as the implicit use of closeness-inducing behavioural cues, and examined the effects of nonverbal immediacy on affective learning and found that, "The more immediate a person is, the more likely he/she is to communicate at a close distance, smile, engage in eye contact, use direct body orientation, use overall body movement and gestures, touch others, relax, and be vocally expressive" (p. 548). The types of nonverbal immediacy behaviours are outlined in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

*Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviours*

Behaviour	An instructor displaying nonverbal immediacy when talking to another if...
Physical proximity	Moves closer. Stands closer. Sits closer.
Body orientation	Leans forward.
Touch	Touches on the hand, forearm, or shoulder. Pats the shoulder of another.

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Eye contact	Makes eye contact with the group as a whole. Makes eye contact with individuals. Looks in the general direction of another.
Smiling	Face is animated. Smiles.
Body movement and gestures	Nods head. Uses hands and arms to gesture. Calmly moves body around.
Body posture	Body posture is relaxed.
Vocal expressiveness	Changes pitch and tempo of voice. Uses short pauses. Uses relaxed tones.

---

*Note.* Adapted from Richmond and McCroskey (2004).

While one might expect that direct verbal messages might have the most impact on immediacy, it is the nonverbal behaviours described in Table 2.2 that appear to be the most meaningful. Instructors achieve immediacy using a combination of verbal and nonverbal behaviours, but generally it is nonverbal immediacy that has the greatest impact (Richmond & McCroskey, 2004). Nonverbal behaviour plays a critical role in communication as it accounts for approximately 70% of interpersonal communication and has a significant effect on impressions, feelings and attitudes toward others (Anderson & Kent, 2002; Offir et al., 2004).

Richmond (2002) found that nonverbal messages are more influential in the creation of immediacy, while Offir et al. (2004) suggest that in interactions people pay more attention to nonverbal behaviour “since we intuitively feel that people have less control over their nonverbal messages” (p. 104). Mehrabian (1971) surmised that 93% of the communication process is nonverbal while only 7% is verbal. Mehrabian believed that if instructors rely on students’ nonverbal behaviours to evaluate their own

performance, it could be argued that student behaviours provide indirect feedback that encourages some teaching behaviours and discourages others. Frymier and Houser (2000) indicated the perceived use of nonverbal behaviours is associated with communication functions important to interpersonal relationships, such as conversational ( $r = 0.66$ ) and narrative skills ( $r = 0.63$ ). In classroom environments, the significant amount of conscious and subconscious nonverbal communication that occurs between instructors and students may be a means of focusing attention in order to perceive meaning and respond accordingly (Mundy & Newell, 2007). An instructor's perception of student nonverbal behaviour is “most influential in how instructors perceive the interpersonal relationships they have with their students” (Mottet, 2000, p. 161) and nonverbal behaviours are vital in improving students' views of instructor-student interactions. Verbal behaviours, on the other hand, are often dependent on nonverbal cues and if a verbal immediacy message is conveyed along with an inconsistent nonverbal message, students frequently ignore the verbal message and interpret only the nonverbal message (Richmond, 2002). Similarly, Gendrin and Rucker (2002) observed that instructors' nonverbal immediacy cues had a greater influence on students' cognitive and affective learning than their verbal immediacy cues. Despite this, verbal immediacy still plays a significant role and its impact will be discussed in the next section.

### **Verbal Immediacy**

Verbal immediacy involves direct verbal expressions and is used by instructors to induce degrees of like and dislike in students. Examples are syntactic expressions of present or past tense verbs, probability (will vs. May), ownership statements (my/our class), and inclusive references (we vs. I) (Rubin, Palmgreen, Sypher, & Beatty, 1994).

In a teaching context, verbal immediacy can be expressed through praising students, using humour, engaging students in conversation, asking students questions, telling personal stories, calling students by name, giving positive feedback, and opening up to verbal interaction with students (Edwards & Edwards, 2001; Gorham, 1988; Park et al., 2009). Edwards and Edwards (2001) showed that the use of verbal immediacy is highly correlated with nonverbal immediacy. Several researchers reported significant correlations between verbal immediacy and student motivation, cognitive learning, and affective learning (Christophel, 1990; Gorham, 1988; Kearney et al., 1985; Powell & Harville, 1990; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990; Witt & Wheeless, 2001). More discussion will be under each independent variable in the following sections.

## **Theory of the Study**

This study draws upon humanistic theory, which was developed by Maslow in 1943 and enhanced by Rogers in 1969. Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs, which suggests that we as humans have essentially weak dispositions, but as we progress through life our intrinsic worth increases. Intrinsic worth is comprised of two elements: an individual's self-concept and others' perceptions of that individual. In order to achieve self-actualisation, or intrinsic self-fulfilment, one must first achieve certain elemental necessities such as love, esteem and psychological safety. Only then must the individual strive for higher needs, such as appreciation, caring, understanding and spiritual needs. Maslow's (1943) position was that people are inherently good and strive to learn, understand, and accept themselves and others. Humanistic theory seeks to explain individuals' emotional and social development through their interpersonal connections, most notably in an educational setting. The theory draws upon techniques for the cultivation of relationships, and recognises the various verbal and nonverbal communication behaviours required to create such relationships (Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1969). Humanistic theory proposes that not only does instructor communication promote interaction between instructors and students; it also enhances students' self-esteem and facilitates emotional, social and academic aspects of learning.

The humanistic movement developed by Maslow and Rogers sought both to achieve cognitive goals and to develop communication, self-satisfaction, disposition, perception and interaction through humanistic education (Patterson, 1973). Humanistic education emphasises interpersonal relationships in an academic setting. Rogers (1969) and Aspy and Roebuck (1977) stated that interpersonal relationships between students and instructors improve students' self-esteem and facilitate their emotional, social and

academic learning. Aspy and Roebuck (1977) went on to conduct several studies looking at the importance of interpersonal relationships between students and instructors in a learning environment. These studies supported Rogers' (1969) work, which cited humanism as an important facilitator of learning; he suggested that instructors must be genuine, trustworthy and empathetic toward students in order to enhance their emotional, social and academic learning. He observed that when instructors display humanitarian traits, students perceive them to be compassionate. This aids the development of the instructor-student personal relationship.

The work of Maslow and Rogers laid the groundwork for the development of theories of immediacy, especially as they are used in the classroom. The ability of instructors to connect with their students using both nonverbal and verbal immediacy is what makes it possible for instructors to develop a personal relationship with their students that allows the students the confidence and the latitude to take an active role in, and to be responsible for, their own learning. Mehrabian (1971) explained the impact of nonverbal immediacy based on approach-avoidance theory, suggesting 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" (p. 1). Thus, if a student feels comfortable with his instructor, then he will be more willing to engage with the learning and the delivery of knowledge the instructor is able to offer. Mehrabian (1981) discussed the concept of arousal relative to the perception of proximity, arguing that if one feels a sense of liking (for example, through physical and psychological closeness) during an interaction, one is more likely to pay attention to people and their messages; conversely, if one feels a sense of hostility then one is more likely to avoid people and create distance from the message (Mehrabian, 1981). Verbal immediacy may be further explained in terms of speech accommodation theory (Giles,

Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson, 1987; Jordan & Wheelless, 1990). People adapt the manner and content of their verbal communication to the perceived preference or style of the receiver and context. Immediacy behaviours, then, serve to enhance interpersonal closeness (Mehrabian, 1981). This is significant in terms of teaching because, without a sense of immediacy, the student will not feel comfortable to engage with either the instructor or the teachings. According to implicit communication theory, messages are constantly transmitted via a measure of verbal and nonverbal communication known as immediacy. Mehrabian is credited as the originator of the implicit communication theory (1981). Mehrabian began his theory by postulating that “people rarely transmit implicitly the kinds of complex information that they can convey with words; rather, implicit communication deals primarily with the transmission of information about feelings and like-dislike or attitudes” (Mehrabian, 1981, p. 3). Mehrabian identified five major categories of implicit behaviours (see Figure 2.1).

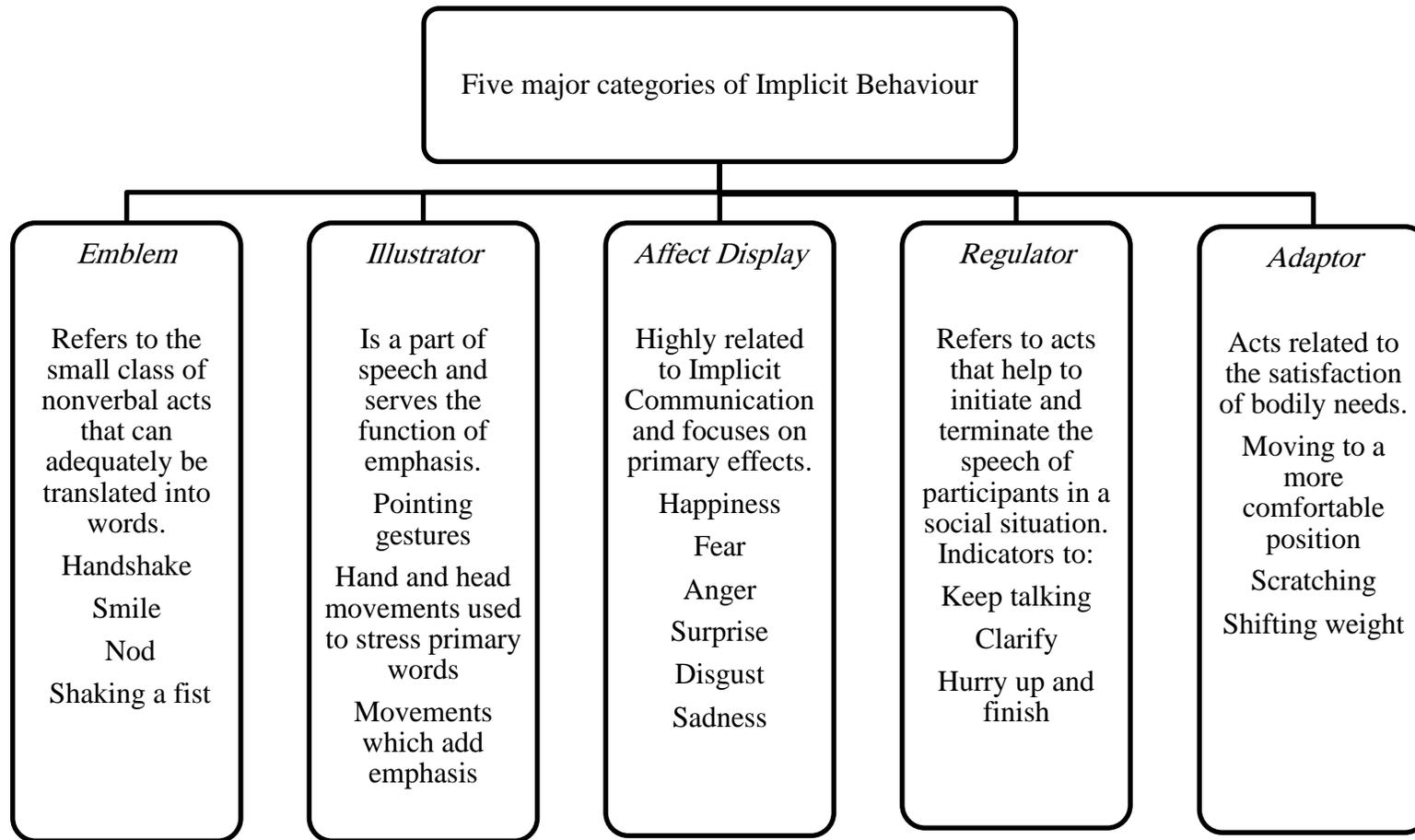


Figure 2.1. Five major descriptors and categories of implicit behaviour

Mehrabian (1981) described the interaction between symbols and referents and stated:

... any communication act involves, on the one hand, a group of symbols and, on the other hand, the referents (objects, events, or relationships) designated by those symbols. Coding rules are used to infer referents from symbols (decoding) and to convey referents through the use of symbols (encoding). Analogously, within the field of implicit communication, the implicit behaviors are the symbols of communication, and the referents are our emotional states and our attitudes, likes-dislikes, or preferences. (pp. 4–5)

As a result, implicit communication theory deals with a wide variety of the symbols and the decoding process used by the observer to form emotional states, attitudes, likes-dislikes and preferences (Velez, 2008). Further to Mehrabian's concept of proximity, Kelley and Gorham (1988) found that immediacy creates 'mirroring effects'; for example, a person will tend to smile back when a person smiles at them. From these results we learn that if immediacy is used appropriately by instructors, students' attitudes toward instruction and, consequently their own learning, may be improved (McCroskey et al., 1992). Advancing Mehrabian's work, Mottet, Frymier and Beebe (2006) explained the link between immediacy and affect using emotional response theory, which "predicts that (1) people pursue things they like, (2) people like things that they feel positive emotions for, and (3) people's emotions are influenced by the implicit messages they receive from others" (p. 262). In a learning environment, instructors communicate their emotional state using a combination of explicit and implicit messages, including both verbal and nonverbal immediacy cues. In the extreme, such messages may influence a student's emotions to the point where they adopt the emotional state of their instructor. Students who feel positive emotions or liking toward their instructor— due to their instructor's immediacy cues — feel more affectionate not only toward the instructor but potentially even toward the topic

being taught. For instance, studies have shown that a student's emotional response to an instructor's immediacy cues can predict whether that student will avoid or approach learning and school-related activities, such as class time and homework (Allen et al., 2006; Mottet & Beebe, 2002; Rocca, 2004).

Grounded in the theoretical framework provided by the early work on humanism of Maslow (1943) and Rogers (1969) and more recent studies on immediacy and its benefits in the classroom, this quasi-experimental study will focus on immediacy theory, both verbal and nonverbal to investigate the connection between immediacy and student communication and learning outcomes.

## **Culture and Learning Style**

Learning is strongly influenced by cultural norms and characteristics. Various studies have explored the role of culture in shaping learning styles and strategies. Hayes and Allinson (1988) found that a community's culture can exert strong grouping and harmonising effects, which influence the development of learning methods. In addition, the way in which culture governs individuals' preferences for certain learning modes or techniques has been explored by Hofstede (2005), who proposed that the preferred learning method in a given culture depends on social experience within the community. Differences and variations in regional communities can be gauged and categorised based on culture and, while descriptions of the learning process and individual learning behaviour have been standardised to some extent, there remain many competing theories relating to learning methods and their effectiveness (House et al., 2004).

Many students make the transition from their home environment to new cultural and learning environments in order to pursue particular fields of study and, as a result, university classrooms host a range of backgrounds, cultures, social attributes, educational levels, religions and languages (Friedman, 2006). Friedman (2006) noted that this diversity has a tangible influence on the process of knowledge acquisition and even an instructor's preference for a certain mode of address can highlight cultural differences. Some students can feel uncomfortable addressing instructors by their titles, whereas students from more traditional cultures may feel uncomfortable addressing instructors by their first names. What is acceptable for one community may not be acceptable for another. Such cultural influences are not limited to the classroom; they occur on an institutional level and within social and political organisations, where a specific way of expressing ideas and resolving learning issues is expected.

Several studies have attempted to present evidence to prove the existence of learning variations based on cultural differences. Studies applying the Kolb Learning Style Inventory (KLSI) showed that geographical region can significantly impact learning style (Hofstede, 2005). For example, Yamazaki and Kayes (2007) reviewed a range of studies looking at learning styles in different cultures, including: Yamazaki (2005), which compared Japanese and American management style; Barmeyer (2004), which compared students from France, the French province of Québec in Canada, and Germany; Auyeung and Sand (1996), which compared accounting students from Australia and Hong Kong; and Hoppe (1990), which compared managers from 19 different countries. The results of these studies led Yamazaki and Kayes (2007) to conclude that culture significantly influences learning style.

### **Teaching and Learning Style Variations by Culture**

It is significant that culture should have such an impact on teaching and learning styles as it informs the social and emotional modes of behaviour and human interaction on a daily basis. Different cultures have developed teaching methods that suit and reflect their everyday cultural life (Joy & Kolb, 2009). For instance, hierarchical cultures, such as Saudi culture, tend towards behaviourist, unequal instructor-student relationships, where the instructor holds a position of power and respect as the deliverer of knowledge, while the student is seen as an empty vessel or the passive recipient of that knowledge (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Park, Lee, Yun, & Kim, 2009; Richardson & Smith, 2007). It is inevitable that teaching style is influenced by the culturally-informed pedagogical strategies and methods implemented by instructors; for example, Middle Eastern classrooms are characterised by instructor-centred lecture delivery, rote learning, and dictation (Chadraba & O'Keefe, 2007; Tubaishat, Bhatti, & El-Qawasmeh, 2006). In a Middle Eastern context,

pedagogy consists mainly of illustrating concepts and reading from textbooks (Burt, 2004; Russell, 2004) and student assessment is generally conducted through an examination-oriented system that relies on passive knowledge absorption. Examinations require memorisation of facts rather than application of concepts, and position students to follow the prepared curriculum exactly, rather than forming their own analysis (Richards, 1992). In contrast, Western countries such as the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) employ pedagogic and assessment systems in universities that focus on complex practical problems and active learning, which allows for a much more collaborative and interactive approach to learning (Joy & Kolb, 2009).

Many tertiary teaching methods and strategies are specific to the country in which teaching and learning occurs and an individual instructor's views on teaching are often formed based on the instructor's personal educational and cultural background (Bourke, 1990). Gay (1999) also found that instructors tend to use teaching and learning methods based on their own history and experiences, and draw on examples that are supposed to make subject matter and intellectual abstractions meaningful to culturally different students (Gay, 1999). Gay pointed out that effective teaching and learning can sometimes be severely impeded by sociocultural factors; notably, social and cultural distance between instructors and students in classroom interactions may form an obstacle to learning. For instance, the students may not grasp the sociocultural references made by the instructor, nor understand the culturally grounded expectations and standards that the instructor may see as a norm and will expect the students to be well-versed in and respond appropriately to his pedagogical methods.

The way students perceive instructors is also ethnically influenced. For example, students in primary and secondary schools in the Middle East are expected to respect their

instructors as absolute authority figures and to consistently perform to the highest standard. Students are only encouraged to learn about matters directly relating to the school curriculum (Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2005), which tends to preclude group or team activities (Burt, 2004). As a result, students tend to be ill-equipped to solve problems related to their learning without their instructors' help. In the absence of sufficient learning support, students prefer prescriptive learning (Burt, 2004), and they favour readings in which the information is direct, simple and readily memorised (Russell, 2004; Tubaishat et al., 2006). The preference in these students for rote memorisation and prescriptive learning means they are less likely to seek experiences that allow self-expression or curiosity, ultimately resulting in a lack of problem-solving and communication skills (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010).

### **The Influence of Cultural Difference on Immediacy**

Culture, it has been suggested, can contribute to the development of psychological, physical, social, political, educational and religious identities and attributes, as well as personal values, perceptions and behaviour (Berry, 2002). Cultural influences on individuals' perceptions and interpretations of interactions and the meaning they draw from those interactions have been found to impact on an individual's sense of self and cognitive processes differ between individualist and collectivist cultures (Joy & Kolb, 2009; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). For instance, Saudi Arabia is a nation governed in a hierarchical manner and has a long history of political and social structure that favours the collective good of the nation over the personal rights and experiences of the individual. Thus, its citizens are accustomed to having information delivered to them and decisions made for them, rather than questioning and challenging authority, as one observes in countries with a longer history of democracy, such as the US. This cultural difference is

typically apparent in the classroom where Saudi students are accustomed to a passive mode of learning, with a prepared curriculum delivered by an authoritative instructor figure. In contrast, American students tend to do more group work and pool their skills and knowledge, seek out their own research, and aim to solve their own problems, rather than relying on the instructor to provide the answer (Yamazaki, 2005). Simply put, the culture is reflected in the teaching and learning style and, in Saudi Arabia, students are unaccustomed to instructor immediacy because that kind of closeness or rapport is not part of the culture.

Cultural factors that have been shown to influence students' immediacy have been investigated by Zhang (2006), who suggested that if a student comes from an open culture where opinions are freely and comfortably shared, they are likely to have greater immediacy. Immediacy connected to region, race and religion has been investigated by Sanders and Wiseman (1990), who examined the effects of immediacy on white, Asian, Hispanic and black students. Applying the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIM) (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987) and the Verbal Immediacy Measure (VIM) (Gorham, 1988), Sanders and Wiseman (1990) observed various similarities and differences between the effects of immediacy on affective, cognitive and behavioural learning among the study participants. The study concluded that immediacy has common, positive pan-cultural effects. Further, differences were identified between groups of study participants in terms of the levels of statistical significance of the various associations, pinpointing the immediacy behaviours that support learning in specific ethnic groups (Khoo, 2010). This is of interest to this research because cross-cultural research into the effects of instructor immediacy have compared effects of immediacy in classrooms in the US with classrooms

in different countries so the results of this research will present the difference between Saudi culture and other cultures regarding immediacy.

Using the verbal and nonverbal immediacy scales, Powell and Harville (1990) examined the effect of instructor immediacy relative to culture. It was found that instructor clarity, verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy were clearly linked to the educational outcomes of Hispanic and Asian American groups.

A study by McCroskey, Sallinen, Fayer, Richmond, and Barraclough (1996) examined the correlation between culture and affective and cognitive immediacy in international students originating from Australia, Finland and Puerto Rico who were enrolled at American universities. These students were asked to compare the immediacy of the instructor in their current class and that of the instructor who taught their previous class. The study employed the NIM (McCroskey et al. 1996) to determine the influence of immediacy in this setting. Additionally, the study utilised a 'learning loss' instrument to compare how much students learned compared with how much they would have learned had their instructor employed a culturally appropriate level of immediacy. NIM results for instructor immediacy were similar for the Puerto Rican students and a previously established US baseline, and only slightly lower for Australian and Finnish students. In all cases, immediacy was found to have a positive association with cognitive learning. However, the degree of this association differed significantly. The influence of immediacy on cognitive learning was found to be more significant for Finnish and American students than for Australian or Puerto Rican students. The study concluded that the ideal instructors for Australian and Puerto Rican students were those with greater immediacy, which suggests that there is a correlation between culture and immediacy.

Neuliep's (1997) study, which surveyed 227 Japanese university students in Tokyo and 191 American university students in the US, correlated instructor immediacy with learning loss and learning respectively. Neuliep (1997) posited that the effects of instructor nonverbal immediacy on learning would be less significant for Japanese students than for American students. He proposed that the discrepancy may be based on previously identified cultural differences, such as the higher level of contextual communication and social hierarchy in Japan, as well as a range of culturally specific features, such as: the limited acceptability of immediacy in Japan, which restricts the conduct of instructors; the desire to maintain a positive self-image, which may create hesitation in students; and Japanese students' motivation to learn. Immediacy behaviours, such as the use of humour, greatly influenced all study participants, regardless of ethnicity. However, different effects were observed for several immediate behaviours. For example, tense body position enhanced cognitive learning for white students, while the behavioural learning of black students responded better to a relaxed body position. Further, discussion of topics introduced by students and maintaining eye contact with students positively influenced all groups except for black students, while student participation in assignment setting enhanced affective learning for all groups except Hispanic students, who preferred to have assignments set by instructors (Khoo, 2010).

### **Instructor's Authority and Culture**

Instructors vary in their style of instruction from authoritarian to supportive and permissive (Walker, 2008), and exert varying levels of power (Elias & Mace, 2005). Instructor decision authority is defined as the way in which instructors use power to make decisions in the absence of student input, consultation or opposition (Elias & Mace, 2005). Instructional style is also impacted by 'power distance', which is defined as "the extent to

which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that the power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 98).

The concept of power distance applies at a cultural level and determines the perceptions and behaviours of individuals within that culture. Cultural characteristics manifest in educational behaviours, leading to variations in individual teaching practices within different cultures. Power distance determines the acceptable level and type of student-instructor interaction. As such, student-instructor inequality is more likely to be present in a culture with high power distance than one with low power distance (Richardson & Smith, 2007). In high power distance cultures, education tends to be instructor-dominated (Hofstede, 2001) and the role of instructors is to deliver information to students, as opposed to promoting student participation and independent study, which is more likely to occur in low power cultures (Rao, Cheng & Narain, 2003).

In high power distance cultures such as Saudi Arabia, the educational framework tends to be instructor-centred and based upon a fundamental instructor-student inequality (Hofstede, 2001). In Eastern countries, which are influenced by Confucianism, instructors act as authority figures whose function is to transmit knowledge to the students (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997). Thus, student-instructor interactions during class are infrequent (Ho, 2001), and students may be reserved as a show of respect toward the instructor (Holmes, 2004). Alkeaid (2004) found that Saudi instructors’ use of power in classroom management was characterised by maintenance of total control over the classroom, with students expected to obey instructor commands. This authoritarian method of teaching is structured around strict hierarchical relationships. Zhu, Valcke and Schellens (2010) purported that students in high power distance cultures tend to be more passive and less likely to communicate with instructors. Eastern cultures usually favour an authoritarian, dialectic, and non-

sociable method of instruction that focuses on testing, information delivery, memorisation, verbatim reproduction of class content and conformity (Ho, 2001; Watkins & Biggs, 2001; Zhang, 2006). This means that the quality of learning is highly dependent on instructor expertise.

In contrast, American university instructors' exertion of power reflects a more equal relationship (Roach, 1991) and Western countries tend to have lower incidence of high power distance instructors. Instructors in Western tertiary institutions are generally perceived as facilitators, organisers or "friendly critics" (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997). This is because Western cultures prefer a humanistic, sociable and dialogic approach to learning that focuses on experience, enquiry, interaction, problem-solving, learning-by-doing and critical thinking (Ho, 2001; Holmes, 2004; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). Instructors and students in low power distance cultures interact as equals by asking questions, challenging ideas and engaging in debate, which means students are permitted and even encouraged to disagree with and criticise lesson content (Holmes, 2004). Liberman's (1994) study of Asian students in the US observed that the instructor-student relationship was democratic and that American instructors were largely open to exchanges of ideas with learners. In Kougiomtzis and Patriksson's (2007) study, while Swedish instructors allowed students to participate in the selection of class content, activities and format, Greek instructors did so rarely. Research comparing native students' perceptions of instructors in the US with those in other countries found that instructors in the US are perceived by students as being higher in immediacy than those in numerous countries, including Australia and Finland (McCroskey et al., 1995), Japan (Neuliep, 1997), China (Myers et al., 1998), Germany (Roach & Byrne, 2001), Kenya (Johnson & Miller, 2002), France (Roach, Cornett-DeVito, & DeVito, 2005) and Korea (Park et al., 2009). The strong correlation between

cultural values and immediacy in the preceding studies reveals that cultural values are important in determining appropriate classroom management, communication, teaching and learning methods and techniques, and instructor-student interactions.

In summary, the immediacy behaviour of instructors has been found to vary in different cultures. Notably, western instructors exhibit greater immediacy than Middle Eastern and Asian instructors. Immediacy cues can be perceived differently by different cultures, and instructors must be aware that immediacy behaviours that are common in Western classrooms may be perceived as inappropriate in the Middle East and Asia. Furthermore, variations in power distance and decision authority based on culture can also lead to variations in students' perceptions of instructors' authority and decision-making power. It has been established that there is a clear link between cultural differences and immediacy, the latter of which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

## General Studies of Immediacy

Educational scholars have studied immediacy in association with variables such as instructor credibility (Dunleavy, 2006; Finn et al., 2009; Schrodt, 2013), instructor clarity, (Chesebro, 2003; Comadena et al., 2007; Finn & Schrodt, 2012), instructor confirmation (Goodboy & Myers, 2008; Schrodt et al., 2006), student evaluation of instructors (McCroskey et al., 1995; Schrodt et al., 2008), student communication apprehension (Messman & Jones-Corley, 2001; Zhang, 2005), student motivation (Myers & Rocca, 2001; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006), and student learning (Allen et al., 2006; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Henning, 2012). As an instructional communication construct in an educational context, immediacy became the focus of several studies. Although most immediacy studies report generally positive relationships between instructor immediacy and student outcomes, there is little agreement about how immediacy works to enhance learning. Witt et al. (2006) identified some of the possible benefits of immediacy as follows:

- Immediacy may attract or arouse students' attention, which is related to cognitive learning;
- Immediacy may serve to increase students' state motivation to learn, which in turn increases their learning;
- Immediacy may enhance affect for the instructor and course content, thereby increasing cognitive learning;
- Instructor immediacy behaviours may function directly to increase students' learning; and
- Instructor immediacy may elicit certain positive emotional responses from students, which in turn increase learning. (pp. 152–153)

The key word in all of these statements is the word “may”, which indicates that while immediacy has been shown to have a positive effect on learning, it may not occur in all cases as instructors and students are individuals and their behaviour is informed by many things, of which immediacy is only one. As it is an important factor, however, the next section will look at how students perceive their instructors’ use of immediacy.

### **Student Perceptions of Instructor Immediacy**

Pogue and AhYun (2006) analysed the impact of overt instructor immediacy and credibility on students’ affective learning and found that students who perceived instructors as highly immediate and credible experienced greater motivation and demonstrated improved affective learning. Benson et al. (2005) similarly found that instructor immediacy was a key component in creating a nurturing and supportive instructional environment; participants in their study revealed that they needed to feel that their instructors cared about them on both an academic and a personal level in order to feel motivated to attend class, to be attentive, and to make an effort.

Instructors who are enthusiastic about the subject matter are seen by students as approachable, enthusiastic and caring (Stipek, 2006). Stipek (2006) proposed that students who did not feel encouraged or cared for tended to achieve poor academic results:

Instructors need to make special efforts to show a personal interest in and interact positively with the students whom they find most difficult to teach by going out of their way to compliment positive behaviors, showing an interest in the students’ lives outside school, listening to the students’ perspectives on the problems they are having, and collaborating with them on developing strategies to address these problems. (p. 48)

Lowman (1995) noted that instructors need to focus more on providing encouraging learning settings that help develop positive affect in students, such as a sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem, rather than discouraging settings based on fear, anxiety and discontent. In the right setting, instructor immediacy can create open and trusting instructor-student relationships, resulting in an enjoyable and rewarding experience for both the instructor and the learner. Noddings (2002) has elaborated on how this can be accomplished:

Time spent on learning to care is not wasted; it is not time taken away from academic instruction. Kids who are friendly, happy, and cooperative tackle their academic work with more confidence and both instructors and students enjoy greater working success. They are not adversaries but partners in learning. (p. 2)

It is clear from this quote that immediacy is an important factor in creating a productive and stimulating learning environment. Without the connection between instructor and student, students tend to disengage, whereas if the student feels like the instructor cares about him and his learning, he will be more likely to be a more active learner. At a basic level, immediacy prompts the student to place their trust in the instructor, resulting in a positive working relationship, where instructor and student are partners and where the goal is the student's successful learning.

### **Immediacy and Trust**

Trust as a key determinant of instructor immediacy was cited in Brookfield (2009), who asserted that "Trust between teachers and students is the affective glue that binds educational relationships together" (p. 162). The consequences of students' lack of trust in their instructors are significant; for instance, when trust is absent, students may be less likely to take risks and may experience learning deficits as a result (Robinson &

Kakela, 2006). Galloway (1977) observed that displays of nonverbal immediacy, such as laughing, smiling and maintaining eye contact made students feel liked and cared for by instructors. Further, Galloway (1977) suggested that instructors can influence student outcomes considerably and, through a study of situated kinesics. Additionally, he concluded that even simple gestures on the part of the instructor could cause a spectrum of emotions in students, from joy and trust to fear and doubt, depending on the context. Clearly, it is important that students feel confident in, and able to trust, their instructors, which creates feelings of safety in the students.

### **Immediacy and Students' Feelings of Safety**

Anderson and Carta-Falsa's (2002) study confirmed that the development of instructor-student relationships enhanced students' emotional and academic achievement; in other words, the students feel safe in the classroom and are able to focus effectively on their learning. Part of the learning process consists of risk taking. For example, Walberg (1984) examined the ways students take risks when they attempt to answer a challenging question. To take such a risk, a student must feel safe in the learning environment. As such, instructors who respond positively when students answer challenging questions establish positive interaction, communication and trust relationships with students. Holley and Steiner (2005) claim students need to feel safe in their learning environment and the difficulty of sharing opinions in front of one's classmates who hold diverse opinions and beliefs led them to conclude that "Problems can arise when a safe classroom environment is seen to be an environment without conflict" (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 50). Similarly, Boomstrom (1998) stated that, "If critical thinking, imagination, and individuality are to flourish in classrooms, instructors need to manage conflict, not prohibit it" (p. 407). Students' analytical thinking is enhanced by conflict that can be resolved through positive

communication. Boomstrom (1998) stated that, “If critical thinking, imagination, and individuality are to flourish in classrooms, teachers need to manage conflict, not prohibit it” (p. 407). Similarly, Azmitia (1996) noted that students underwent cognitive development when teachers used appropriate immediacy behaviours to manage conflict and debate in the classroom. She (2000) supported Azmitia’s (1996) finding that it was essential for teachers to use questioning and positive reinforcement, as when this was applied correctly, students were able to absorb and contextualise as well as interpret and analyse new information. Furthermore, verbal reinforcement can provoke a chain reaction where encouragement and praise results in improved motivation and desire to learn (Frymier, 1994). A lack of conflict creates an environment of safety in the classroom, making students feel comfortable and able to learn effectively; similarly, the use of humour in the classroom can have positive effects, as will be discussed next.

### **Humour and Its Role in Immediacy**

According to Gorham and Christophel (1990), humour is an essential element of instructor immediacy. Sharing personal stories or anecdotes, relaying tales of self-disclosure, and telling jokes are some of the means by which instructors may achieve verbal immediacy through humour (Gorham, 1988). Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) detailed the role of humour in an educational context, defining it as the extent of the intentional use of verbal and nonverbal behaviours that elicit laughter, pleasure and delight. Extensive evidence suggests that instructors’ use of humour can enhance students’ affective learning, create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere, reduce students’ anxiety, increase affect for the instructor and the course, and increase students’ willingness to communicate with instructors both inside and outside of class (Aylor & Oppliger, 2003; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999). Humour can

facilitate liking and provides a diversity of positive functions, such as increasing group cohesion and coping with stress (Banas, Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Liu, 2011; Claus et al., 2012; Dunleavy, 2006). Research studies have indicated that instructor humour contributes to creating a positive classroom environment to facilitate learning (Frymier, Wanzer, and Wojtaszczyk, 2008; Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin, 2010; Zhang, 2005). Torok, McMorris and Lin (2004) applied Gorham's (1988) discussion of humour to explore how students viewed instructors who use humour and what types of humour were acceptable, and found that when instructors used humour in the learning environment, students regarded them as approachable and charismatic. Students also felt more relaxed and self-content, were more attentive, had better attendance and understood the class content more readily. The results of their study indicate that 40% of tertiary students felt that humour "often" facilitated learning and 40% reported that humour "always" enhanced learning. Garner (2006) examined the use of humour in the classroom and found that instructors' use of humour had a positive effect on students' motivation and interest. However, while Garner obtained valuable insights into the benefits of the use of humour in the educational environment, he noted that the use of humour was not necessarily straightforward due to its personal, subjective and contextual nature. How individuals will perceive and receive humour is unpredictable; what may be humorous, ironic or funny to one person may be considered trite by another.

### **Immediacy and Students' Compliance/Resistance**

In addition to the use of classroom humour to create immediacy, there have been several investigations into students' compliance and resistance to instructors' efforts at immediacy, with some interesting results. For instance, Kearney et al. (1988) investigated the influence of instructor immediacy on student compliance and/or resistance. Their study

presented each participant with one of four hypothetical scenarios to explore the impact of instructor immediacy on students' resistance to on-task demands. The results indicated that students were more compliant when instructed by high immediacy instructors who applied prosocial compliance techniques than by those who applied antisocial techniques. Conversely, low immediacy instructors who applied prosocial techniques met greater resistance from students than those who applied antisocial techniques.

Kearney et al.'s (1988) results were confirmed by Burroughs (2007), Chory-Assad and Paulsel (2004) and Claus, Chory and Malachowski (2012), all of whom investigated the influence of instructor immediacy on student resistance and/or compliance. The results of these studies highlight that instructors perceived as having low immediacy were more likely to meet with student resistance, whereas students were more likely to comply with instructors who engaged in more immediacy behaviours.

### **Immediacy and Students' Attendance**

Rocca (2004) and Gump (2004) examined the correlation between instructor immediacy and student attendance. Both researchers concluded that student attendance was positively correlated with instructor immediacy. This is a logical conclusion to draw and, given that the evidence supports it. It makes sense that students should want to attend class if a connection has been established between themselves and the instructor that makes them feel connected to, and engaged with, the instructor and their learning.

## Student Class Participation

*“There is a difference between knowing and teaching, and that difference is communication in the classroom”* (Hurt, Scott, & McCroskey, 1978, p. 3).

A student’s response to what he or she has been taught in a class is termed “student class participation”, which may take place either during or after class (Fassinger, 1995). For student class participation to be effective, a student should not only ask questions but also prepare for the class in advance, specifically by reading the prescribed materials. A student may also participate in a class by answering the instructor’s questions, allowing fellow students to share their knowledge, attending class regularly, and working to understand the concepts taught as clearly and effectively as possible. By analysing all of these elements of participation in combination, one gains an idea of a student’s level of interest in the relevant subject (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005). Morreale and Pearson (2008) emphasise the importance of communication in education in relation to four factors:

1. Personal development: the importance of communication in education is reflected in a self-development model. By improving their communication skills, a person develops his/her relationships not only with the instructor, but with society as a whole;
2. Improvement of educational institutes: the educational environment can be enhanced only when the quality of classroom instruction improves;
3. Responsible participants: the development of students’ social and cultural values assists society to develop;

4. Successful business firms and careers: good communication education improves graduate outcomes. (p. 225)

The following sections will examine class participation, including its benefits, why students do or do not participate in class, and the societal benefit of class participation in that it helps to build democracy.

### **Benefits of Class Participation**

Many studies have pointed out the significance of class participation (Petress, 2006; Weaver & Qi, 2005). Class participation can be promoted by introducing activities that improve instructor-student interaction during class, thereby keeping students engaged with the subject matter (Cohen, 1991). These methods of teaching help to develop the student's interest in the subject, kindling a desire to pursue that subject further, and to work towards self-improvement in that subject (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Students begin to analyse the subject more deeply and become more eager to question and curious to learn (Crone, 1997; Kuh & Umbach, 2004). Activities that improve instructor-student interaction tend to promote a culture of self-guided learning in students. Students who take part in these activities prefer to study things in a logical way that satisfies their curiosity, rather than simply memorising information. This becomes evident when students are observed interpreting, analysing and drawing their own conclusions about the subject matter (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Besides gaining an improved understanding of the relevant subject, students also learn how to communicate with their instructors effectively and with integrity (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005; Girgin & Stevens, 2005). Similarly, Fritschner (2000) demonstrated that students realise that class participation is necessary for optimal learning.

This optimal learning was demonstrated by Handelsman et al.'s (2005) study, which showed that as class participation increases, students are found to achieve higher grades. It has been observed that about 90% of students take part in class effectively and one third of those participate regularly (Howard & Henney, 1998). Yet the question of what it means to participate effectively in class must be raised, as Nunn (1996) found that, in a 40-minute lecture, a student spent around one minute engaging in active participation. Further, West and Pearson (1994) looked at the number and type of questions that students generally ask during class and found that 73% of questions were based on the procedure, content, and clarification of ideas, and that students asked approximately three questions during a 60-minute class. Regardless of the stage of learning, most learners understand the concept of class participation and its importance in the learning process. Nevertheless, many students still fail to participate in class for a variety of reasons.

To support the development of dialogue skills, classrooms should be communication-oriented and should allow frequent critical analysis, debate and discussion. According to Brookfield and Preskill (2012), when instructors encourage students to participate in dialogue, students are able to build the skills to discuss ideas, suspend judgment and draw conclusions. Discussions are the best tool for cultivating the growth and development of dialogue ideals through collaboration with colleagues and the discovery of new ideas. As students develop the ability to participate in dialogue, continuous and persistent learning and motivation become part of the students' personalities and provide a platform for amassing 'collective wisdom'. In this way, students are able to express their ideas and achieve the learning they desire independently (Girgin & Stevens, 2005). This is important because it signals a shift from instructor as disseminator of knowledge to instructor as facilitator or mediator of learning and it gives

students power over their own learning and makes them critical thinkers, using their own cognitive tools in an active way, rather than being a passive receptacle for whatever knowledge the instructor chooses to pour in.

### **Why Students Do or Do Not Participate in Class**

**Logistics.** Many parameters hinder the rate of class participation, including class size. In a large class, not all students may get a chance to participate actively among the high number of students who wish to contribute. This can hamper the learning process for all students, particularly those who miss the chance to participate (Hyde & Ruth, 2002; Myers et al., 2009). Weaver and Qi (2005) found that large class size prevents effective communication between students and instructors. Howard and Henney (1996) mention that class size can be more predictive of communication effectiveness than the sex difference parameter. Higher levels of participation are seen in classes with smaller numbers of students, particularly classes with ten or fewer students. Conversely, classes with greater than 40 students were found to have reduced levels of participation (Weaver & Qi, 2005).

Class size is determined by the individual university and varies from one university to the next. For example, a class of 30 students may be considered small at one university, but large at another (Howard & Henney 1996). Cohen (1991) mentioned that college class sizes tend to be larger yet, in spite of that, every student still gets an opportunity to participate. Sprecher and Pocs (1987) proposed that to cope with the problem of large class size, students should meet on a weekly basis so that weaker students may have a chance to discuss the course work with the more capable students. This proposal was trialled and found to be very effective. Larger classes were divided into smaller groups, ensuring that the discussions ran smoothly. The nonverbal immediacy technique to enhance communication in a large class was offered by Cayanus et al. (2009), who suggested that

the instructor should approach the student who is asking a question, thereby filling the physical gap created by the large classroom. Rocca (2010) confirms that the nonverbal immediacy of the instructor is critical in maintaining student participation in class.

The classroom seating arrangement is another logistic factor that impacts greatly on communication. Traditionally, seats were arranged in rows and columns and the instructor sat or stood at the front, holding a position of power at the centre front of the room. In this formation, students sitting at the back had less opportunity to communicate with rest of the class and the class was very much instructor-centred (Shadiow, 2010). Now, a U-shape or circular arrangement is preferred to ensure that every student is able to remain engaged with the lecture and discussions (Fritschner, 2000). This layout takes the focus off the instructor, making the classroom more learner-centred, where all class members are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning while the instructor acts as a facilitator or moderator of the discussions.

Incorporating class participation into the overall course design positively impacts participation as well. It has been found that marking students on their class participation is an effective way to encourage participation, as students then evaluate their level of participation daily and consider its potential effect on their final grade (Finn & Schrod, 2012; Mazer, 2013). Fassinger (2000) also emphasised the importance of giving extra credit to students who perform outstandingly in class. The effectiveness of this strategy was twofold: it resulted in a better learning process and it improved student grades. Students who are aware that their participation will be graded are motivated to prepare themselves before lectures, to critically analyse the concepts delivered in the class and maintain regular attendance and punctuality (Peterson, 2001; Zaremba & Dunn, 2004). A mid-semester assessment allows the instructor to further assess and encourage

participation. The instructor then has the opportunity to identify and contact students who rarely or never participate, encouraging them to improve their participation in the second half of the semester (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2004).

Course type is another important parameter that contributes to the determination of class participation. For example, communication classes have a higher rate of participation than social and natural science classes (Crombie et al., 2003). Students in arts and social science classes often ask multiple questions and the period of these classes devoted to discussions tends to be longer compared with natural science subjects (Cornelius, Gray, & Constantinople, 1990).

Media can also be employed in a classroom to better assess individual student participation. Various software programs are now available that allow instructors to choose a student at random and evaluate his or her performance in the class. The 'Random Selector Model' (2006) was designed by Allred and Swenson and can help in the evaluation of student participation. 'Conversant Media' (2003), designed by Lourdusamy, Khime and Sipusic, utilises videos to help students learn as they progress through different practice exercises. Conversant Media was developed to support collaborative learning among students. The use of such software has been found to improve the quality of student class participation.

**Sex differences.** The impact of students' gender has also been studied in class participation research. Many researchers have noted that male students participate more in class than their female counterparts (Crombie et al., 2003). Tannen (1992) suggested that this phenomenon may be related to higher participation by males in their student life in general. Further studies were conducted to try to determine the reasons why males participate in class to a greater extent than females. Kling et al.'s (1999) meta-analysis on

sex and self-esteem found that females tend to have slightly lower self-esteem, which may influence their willingness to participate in class. There may also be cultural reasons for female students being more reticent and less participatory in class (Weaver & Qi, 2005); for instance, in Middle Eastern cultures, women are less participatory in higher education classroom, especially when the instructor is male (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010). Wade (1994) suggests that, to overcome the gender imbalance and bolster female self-confidence in terms of classroom participation, instructors should encourage females to participate in the class by directly asking them questions and always answering their questions. It is worth noting that the reasons males and females participate in class differs; specifically, females tend to have functional motives, whereas for males the motive is often sycophancy (Myers et al., 2002; Tannen, 2001).

**Confidence and classroom apprehension.** Personal problems may also form a barrier to class communication. For example, some students may feel uncomfortable speaking in front of other students, while some may fear ridicule from their fellow students if they were to ask a silly question. Weaver and Qi (2005) reported that a student's confidence is directly related to their involvement and behaviour in class. The instructor should use proactive students as both an example and a motivating factor to encourage other students to become involved.

Another way that the instructor may build students' confidence is to ensure that they are aware of the importance of preparing for a class in advance. Students who have prepared for class tend to be quicker to pick up new concepts and may have already devised some questions for the instructor based on prior critical analysis of the subject matter. This results in improved participation (Fassinger, 2000). Cohen (1991) also promoted advance preparation among students, asking them to read the topic for

discussion in advance. He asked students not only to read the material from their book but also to find five words that summarised the concepts of the topic to be discussed. Through this activity, Cohen found that students were more active in class and that many student questions were able to be answered by other students. Therefore, Hyde and Ruth (2002) recommended advanced preparation as a means of increasing class participation.

**Classroom and instructor impact on class participation.** Individual students come to class with differing aims and objectives and it is the instructor's responsibility to promote and expedite their learning by implementing effective teaching skills. Therefore, Davis (2009) wrote that the class environment helps shape a student's knowledge as well as their attitude toward the relevant subject. Interpersonal relationships among the students and with the instructor also influence the learning process. The instructor should maintain immediacy throughout their communications if they are to effectively interact with the whole class (Frisby & Myers, 2008). The instructor's attitude is a key factor in encouraging or discouraging a student to learn a subject. The instructor should therefore make a commitment to show students a positive attitude that motivates them to participate in the class.

Verbal and nonverbal communications each have their own effect on a classroom. Verbal communication delivers the actual subject content, whereas nonverbal communication helps develop the relationship between instructor and students. In terms of both verbal and nonverbal communication, a sense of high immediacy is critical. Immediacy shows the student that their instructor cares about their learning process, and is arguably the most important element of classroom interaction (Witt et al., 2004).

Immediacy can be created with the use of verbal expressions of appreciation from the instructor; these were found to motivate students to participate in class (Myers et al.,

2009). Myers et al. (2009) added that an instructor who is perceived to be socially and physically appealing may have a greater opportunity to hold students' attention. There are many ways in which an instructor can encourage students: for example, by calling them by name or by giving them written comments on their outstanding performances (Fritschner, 2000; Nunn, 1996). When an instructor asks a student to respond to the topic of discussion by calling their name and commanding their attention, the student is compelled to participate in the current class and will be more likely to participate in subsequent lectures.

Several studies have aimed to identify how students perceived their instructors; two forms of communication were identified. The first is termed students' "willingness to talk" (WTT), and relates to students asking instructors questions or discussing the class subject or lesson content. Studies examining the degree to which students chose to participate in the classroom relative to instructor immediacy behaviours found that instructor immediacy had a strong positive effect on students' WTT in class (Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Meyers, 2003; Myers, Martin, & Knapp, 2005; Rocca, 2010). The second type of communication, termed "outside of class communication" (OCC), involves students extemporaneously engaging with instructors by approaching them at school, or using email, telephone calls or school activities to make contact. For example, Fusani (1994) examined the correlation between instructor-student interaction and instructor immediacy and concluded that verbal instructor immediacy was positively correlated with instructor-student OCC. In other words, students who perceive instructors as more verbally immediate are more likely to visit them to engage in OCC (Jaasma & Koper, 1999). In addition, Jaasma and Koper (1999) reported that the length of such visits was correlated with both verbal and nonverbal instructor immediacy; that is, instructor-student OCC sessions were longer if

students saw the instructor as more immediate. Aylor and Oppliger (2003) went on to note that verbal immediacy was a very strong indicator of student satisfaction with OCC.

Dallimore et al. (2004) stated that an instructor can improve class participation by providing students with appropriate positive feedback on their responses to a topic. Myers et al. (2009) reported that there is a positive association between verbal and nonverbal expressions of appreciation or comments and student performance.

Merwin (2002) suggested that instructors should strive to pay individual attention to students, as it helps them realise that they are equally important to their instructor. Through this realisation, students are motivated to interact more in class and their learning is expedited. Myers et al. (2009) noted that when students are hesitant to communicate with instructors, it is usually either because instructors do not pay attention to them or because they criticise or ridicule them.

Myers et al. (2009) discussed ways to promote questioning among students and suggested that a competitive environment in the class could be beneficial. He stipulated that the instructor should help students who wish to learn more about the subject. Nunn (1996) suggested that the instructor should ask interpretive questions that facilitate discussion and do not have a single 'correct' answer. This helps the instructor to evaluate the ability of the students to grasp the concepts involved. An instructor should listen carefully to students and make an effort to understand their strengths and weaknesses before passing judgment on them or their intelligence level. The instructor should be patient and respectful towards the students, and avoid behaviours that are threatening or induce fear (Wade, 1994).

Rocca (2010) suggested that an instructor should start a course with a technical, fact-based question to help induce curiosity about the subject. Peterson (2001)

recommended a long 'wait time' before answering the instructor's question, providing students with an opportunity to elaborate upon their answers as they build knowledge and understanding of the relevant concepts. A short 'wait time' for an answer discourages student participation. Goldstein and Benassi (1994) contradicted this finding, stating that a higher level of student participation is seen when a professor helps answer his discussion question himself; this promotes a sense of mutual dependence and lets students feel relaxed and comfortable with the instructor. Fritschner (2000) had a similar result and highlighted the advantages of instructors revealing the facts themselves, showing that it helps reduce the communication gap between the students and the instructor and also decreases the status differential between them. The disagreement as to whether instructors should disclose the answer to their discussion prompts questions that may relate to the fact that students feel more comfortable with those instructors that do help answer the question (Henson & Denker, 2009).

### **Building Democracy through Classroom Dialogue**

Boler (2004) stated that "the obligation of educators is not to guarantee a space that is free from hostility—an impossible and sanitizing task—but rather, to challenge oneself and one's students to critically analyse any statements made in a classroom"(p. 4). An adult learner should always be given the opportunity to express their views and opinions in the classroom. The role of the instructor is to create an environment that allows students to voice their opinions, which are based on life experience and a wealth of knowledge (Rowland, 2003). The instructor should also promote the sharing of ideas and asking of questions to enhance the collective knowledge of the class (Kamansky, 2004).

Gorsky and Caspi (2005) developed a framework of instruction based on the inter-mental experience and intra-mental activity presented by Vygotsky. The framework is

designed for the higher education system and recommends that instructors should aim to understand students' learning activities by observing their dialogues and the resources they use for these dialogues.

There are two types of communication: interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Interpersonal communication exists between a student and an instructor and can take place either face-to-face or via media communication systems such as email or telephone.

Interpersonal communication may therefore be either synchronous or asynchronous. In contrast, intrapersonal dialogue exists between the student and his subject matter, which may take the form of literature, texts, books, journals, articles, websites or other information sources (Rowland, 2003). Hence, we see that all students are engaged in some kind of dialogue and the learning experience can occur through either inter- or intrapersonal dialogue (Dallimore et al., 2004).

An interpersonal relationship between a student and his instructor is developed in the presence of constructive communication (Frymier & Houser, 2000). It is important to consider individual teaching style in order to determine the communication behaviours that will be most effective in increasing immediacy.

Active learning experiences include mini-dramas, dialogue enactment, reflective experiences, question formulation, brief writing sessions, and conversations. Instructors should include these activities in the curriculum, as they can be very constructive for active learning (Felder & Henriques, 1995). Brookfield and Preskill (2012) found that dialogue between the student and the instructor results in positive interactions and enhanced learning. However, a highly structured course design reduces the opportunity for dialogue and immediacy.

In a classroom, research has shown that adults usually prefer to learn through interaction rather than taking a passive role in listening to the information presented by the instructor (Hawe, 2007; Robinson & Kakela, 2006). Wulff and Wulff's (2004) study aimed to determine the most effective methods for teaching graduate and undergraduate students, and therefore guide instructors. Results indicated that students appreciated open communication, interactive examples, structuring application opportunities, use of problem-solving methods, and other interactive methods. Interactive activities help students develop a critical understanding of the subject matter as well as a sense of self-awareness (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012). Constructive dialogue helps students articulate their opinions and enhance the knowledge and thinking skills of their fellow students (Felder & Henriques, 1995).

Researchers developed several research questions to act as guides to enhance the communication process between the instructor and the students in the classroom. These questions aimed to improve understanding of the instructor traits that benefited effective participation and discussion with students. Results showed that effective questioning sessions, a supportive environment, affirmation of student contribution and several constructive activities can enhance adult participation (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012; Dallimore et al., 2004; Rowland, 2003).

Discussion has been found to be one the most effective ways to stimulate growth, since it raises new ideas and encourages collaboration and cooperation (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Citizens in a democratic society are able to develop the skills to come forward and express their views and opinions through dialogue and conversation. Such conversations can facilitate judgments and decision-making by considering each individual's ideas (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012). When a constructive dialogue session—in the case of this

study, the classroom—involves a large number of people, participants can gain a deeper understanding of the subject and are therefore motivated to learn more. Sessions should ideally include participants from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures so that diverse ideas and up-to-date information may be presented, which may not be possible on an individual basis (Aguilar, Mortimer & Scott, 2010; Brookfield & Preskill, 2012).

Collaborative investigation of a subject can draw out new ideas, which an individual working alone may not have considered. Classroom participation activities can enhance collaboration and cooperation among students and can lead to the development of new and fresh ideas (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012). Students who participate in these activities will often develop the ability to tolerate different points of view and to simplify their own opinions on the subject (Blackmore, 2005).

Interactions and dialogues fulfil slightly different roles in a classroom. Dialogues are more constructive and serve a purpose that is valued by both parties (Kamansky, 2004): it improves comprehension, motivation, mutual respect, listening and synergic contribution. On the other hand, an interaction may be negative or uncooperative (Aguilar et al., 2010). According to Blackmore (2005), the aim of dialogue is to provide positive interactions that depend entirely on the environment, subject matter and design, and the personalities of those involved. The factor with the most vital role is that of the personalities of the instructor and the students, since both must be willing to participate in dialogue and take advantage of the opportunity to enhance their knowledge (Aguilar et al., 2010). The subject matter, encompassing both the content and the academic standard, also plays an important role in dialogue. Social sciences being taught at the graduate level require inductive teaching methods to be successful (Barge & Little, 2002). A direct

approach is usually required for difficult courses such as science or mathematics, where basic information must be shared in the classroom (Aguiar et al., 2010).

Human relationships are promoted in democratic systems, since democracy is based upon concern for others and strong social relationships. Dewey (1958) presented two perspectives on relationships: the social and the political. With regard to the social perspective, he states that relationships are formed based on individuals' self-governed values. Portelli (2001) believes that democracy in the field of education is closely linked with democracy in life. Barge and Little (2002) add that in terms of educational democracy, social relationships are a basic requirement for understanding. Bringing together individuals of different races, class and genders promotes diversity in an 'idea generation' and it may change the way power is used by instructors in the classroom (Giroux, 2005). One must maintain a good understanding of power in order to accurately evaluate the extent to which politics has taken over higher education or the public (Aguiar et al., 2010). In fact, Giroux (2005) suggests that education has already been taken over by politics, authority, and power.

The relationship between democracy and education is associated with a particular political stance (Blackmore, 2005), some aspects of which support democracy in the classroom and some of which oppose it. The role of the instructor in managing difficult situations can be judged using this stance. Theories of democracy and education theory require critical analysis, debate and reflection to decide whether the relationship is effective and constructive (Rock, 2006). Democracy relies upon dialogue between individuals, be it in a classroom or any other organisation (Blackmore, 2005). Self-governance is impossible without dialogue; it is an essential component of human nature. An instructor who conducts dialogue-based activities in class takes what Rock (2006) calls

a democratic stance. In such a classroom, the instructor not only delivers information but engages the students in healthy conversation (Barge & Little, 2002).

Many educators endeavour to create classrooms that develop a caring and integrated environment. In these classrooms, specific guidelines for behaviour are established that encourage students to consider how their actions affect others. This develops empathy and helps solve problems related to community and culture (Thayer-Bacon, 1996). A study conducted in schools sampled students from grades 3, 4 and 5. A survey was used that posed 30 positive statements which students were required to classify on a 5-point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Students in traditional schools rated the statements 22–59% further toward the 'disagree' end of the scale than students in democratic schools. Students in democratic schools believed that they had been given the opportunity to express their ideas in a safe environment where all views were considered. These students showed improved connectivity with other students, high potential of learning and caring attitudes (Checkley, 2003). They felt capable of making a difference in the community and becoming influential later in life.

An instructor may employ several types of learning strategies to promote dialogue in the classroom and that's lead to encourage students to express and defend their opinions by considering a topic deeply (Barge & Little, 2002). Students also should be encouraged to work in teams and develop strong relationships with their peers as a means of enhancing their knowledge, skills and abilities. Instructors at democratic schools always promote activities that help combat community issues and provide opportunities for students to collaborate in managing student clubs.

## **Immediacy and Students' Motivation**

According to Ormrod (2004), motivation can be explained as “an internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in particular directions, and keeps us engaged in certain activities” (p. 425). Two radically different sources of motivation exist: extrinsic and intrinsic. The former lies outside an individual, while the latter lies within the individual. In order to enhance student academic success and persistence, a thorough understanding of student motivation is vital. According to Gendrin and Rucker (2007), student motivations are key to attaining proficiency or competency in any challenging academic area. Furthermore, Bråten and Olaussen (2005) argued that identifying subgroups that share common motivational patterns is important for building theory and educational practice, thereby ensuring the ongoing success of the academic world. The impact of motivation on education has been examined by several educational researchers over an extended period of time (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992; Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996). Motivation indicates if, and to what degree, an individual attempts to learn independent of his or her capability to learn. According to Bråten and Olaussen (2005), some students may believe that they are capable of performing certain tasks but see little point in doing them, while others may have strong reasons for pursuing the task but feel doubtful of their ability to complete it.

Ormrod (2004) stated that learning was facilitated by motivation in one of four ways: (a) by enhancing the activity and energy level of an individual; (b) by focussing a person towards particular targets; (c) by facilitating initiation of particular activities and subsequent stability in them; or (d) by influencing the psychological processes and learning strategies of the individual in performing the task. The author further explained that all students are motivated in different ways and the responsibility for determining the ways in which individual students are motivated lies principally with the instructor.

Researchers have shown keen interest in studying the factors that students perceive to be the prime determinants of motivation and demotivation in classrooms.

Gorham and Christophel (1992) found that 63% of student-perceived sources of motivation were encompassed by contextual factors (factors considered as forerunners to the instructor's influence, such as dislike for the subject or the need for a good grade to be admitted to a certain course); 18% fell under the category of format/structure elements (factors that are influenced at least to some extent by the instructor, such as grading, opportunities to participate, assignments, organisation of class material and feedback provision); and 19% of motivation sources related to instructors' behaviour (such as enthusiastic presentation of class material, vivid speaking, sense of humour, accessibility, taking interest in students and approachability). Furthermore, studies on student-perceived sources of demotivation (Gorham & Christophel, 1992) established that context elements formed only 29% of demotivational sources, while instructor-linked factors accounted for 71% (comprised of 37% format/structure elements and 34% instructor behaviour elements). It was evident that students thought of demotivation as an instructor-related issue, while they took personal responsibility for their own motivation.

The 'expectancy-value model' of motivation poses a productive theory for the role motivation plays in student performance. According to Bruinsma (2004), the theory underlying the expectancy element of the expectancy-value model is that students who firmly believe in their ability to perform a particular task tended to utilise more cognitive and met cognitive plans than those who lacked confidence in their capabilities, resulting in improved persistence at the task and, consequently, higher achievement levels. Students' perception of their ability to perform tasks falls under three variables: (a) an expectancy element; (b) a value element; and (c) an affective element (Ormrod, 2004). The value

element explains the students' targets and beliefs as they pertain to the significance and interest of the assigned work, and the affective element relates to the emotional outcomes exhibited by the students with regard to the task.

Austin and Vancouver (1996) investigated the value element of the expectancy-value model and concluded that the level of effort invested in attaining the set target was determined by the difficulty of the target. On average, students who pursued more difficult targets tended to put in a greater effort. Finally, Meyer and Turner (2002) scrutinised the affective element. It was found that student motivation and cognition is influenced by several kinds of emotions. Learning and performance could generally be enhanced by positive emotions such as curiosity but negative emotions, such as mild anxiety, could also help by driving the student's focus on a specific task. On the other hand, strong negative emotions, such as nervousness, panic, insecurity and perceptions of incompetence, had an adverse effect on motivation, learning and student performance.

Perricone's (2005) research strays from the conventional instructional context, and therefore caution must be exercised in interpreting and implementing his work. However, Perricone (2005) raises some points that are worth considering. He opined that instructors should behave in a way that encourages students to enjoy the task instead of offering a reward for successful task completion. He emphasised that instructors should focus on the significance of learning specific material and its relevance in the lives of their students. Further, he suggests that one should assume that students' motivation to learn is directly influenced by the instructor's behaviour and that instructors should strive to make the learning process a joy for the students by, for example, providing interesting examples that highlight the significance of the topic in relation to the students' lives. This is relevant to immediacy as it relates to this research because if instructors are able to create immediacy

with their students, then students are more likely to be positively influenced by the instructor, which in turn may provide intrinsic motivation for them to learn and succeed in the class. This is supported by the research of Elliot and Knight (2005), who reported similar results to Perricone (2005), whereby, they found that external rewards may increase a student's motivation, but only temporarily. It is preferable to let the students enjoy their work rather than make them work half-heartedly until they get their reward. That is, intrinsic motivation is much preferred over extrinsic motivation. Elliot and Knight (2005) urge instructors to modify their behaviours in such a way as to motivate the students to learn. Behaviours that send a positive message to the students include provision of feedback, provision of options, celebration rather than reward, interpersonal involvement, real life models and cooperative learning. Shim and Ryan (2005) support the stance that extrinsic rewards are less effective than intrinsic rewards. For example, while a student who receives a low grade (an extrinsic reward) on an assignment may become depressed and lose motivation, they may also be motivated to learn in order to attain a more complete understanding, which should be seen as the ultimate reward, over and above grades. When students choose to learn for the sake of learning and its intrinsic benefits, their motivational levels tend to be higher than those who learn to receive good grades or other external rewards. Thus, instructors should seek ways to increase students' motivation intrinsically rather than rely on external rewards. It should be noted that Anderman (2004) takes a slightly different stance, pointing out that instructional context affects students' motivation to learn and that students' mean motivational levels differ in various courses.

Overall, studies indicate that classroom instructors have a significant influence on students' motivational levels (Allen et al., 2006; Finn et al., 2009; Gorham & Christophel,

1992). However, it is difficult to predict a student's motivation since there may be multiple influencing factors; furthermore, those factors may be unstable and vary depending on the context. The concept of a student's motivational levels varying from one class to another may lead one to conclude that a student's motivation cannot be predetermined but is dependent on the interactions that take place in a given situation (Simonds et al., 2006). For example, as previously discussed, an instructor's communication behaviour may influence a student's motivation to learn. According to Turner and Patrick (2004), a student's motivation changes from class to class and year to year as a result, at least in part, of instructors' individual communication behaviours; it follows that the opportunity for the student to openly interact with their instructor changes as well.

The sources of student motivation and demotivation are not always clear, and instructors and students often disagree on the factors that influence students' motivation to learn. According to Christophel and Gorham (1995), students usually attribute positive motivation to their own endeavours, but ascribe negative motivation (demotivation) to their instructors. In fact, in their study, demotivating actions on the part of the instructor had a more intense effect on students than motivating actions. That is, students blamed instructors for their lack of motivation but did not credit instructors with their motivation. These results may appear to challenge the accepted relationship between instructor immediacy behaviours and student motivation to learn (Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Ellis, 2004).

Christophel (1990) studied 562 undergraduate students across nine colleges on a single campus. His aim was to observe the relationship between instructor immediacy, state motivation, affective learning and student perceptions of their cognitive learning. A strong connection was observed between instructors' nonverbal immediacy and the

students' motivational state ( $r = 0.34$ ). Multiple regressions were used to determine the variance predicted in the affective and cognitive learning scores by nonverbal immediacy and by the motivational state. The initial correlation was strongly predicted. Most of the variance predicted in affective and cognitive learning was conducted by nonverbal immediacy and motivational state. A motivational model was suggested by Christophel (1990), whereby an instructor's immediacy affects a student's motivational state, with demotivating behaviours exerting more influence than motivating behaviours. Learning was found to be directly influenced by the student's motivation.

McCroskey, Richmond and Bennett (2006) studied the relationship between students' end-of-class motivation and instructor immediacy behaviours. The study showed that students were motivated when the instructors were responsive and assertive, communicated clearly and engaged in nonverbal immediacy behaviours. There was a multiple correlation between student motivation and instructor communication behaviours ( $r = 0.65$ ) and it was shown that these behaviours would collectively predict 42% of the variance in student motivation (McCroskey et al., 2006).

A meta-analysis conducted by Allen et al. (2006) examined instructors' immediacy as a motivational aspect in student learning. The authors emphasised the connection between immediacy and cognitive learning but also considered affective learning as a motivational mediator between instructor immediacy and cognitive learning. Allen et al. (2006) proposed a theoretical system whereby an instructor's behaviour forms a motivational affective outcome that then contributes to the generation of a cognitive outcome. The study supports the previous finding (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Ellis, 2004) that instructor immediacy influences both the motivational aspects of a student's

learning. The results conclude that an instructor's immediacy behaviour can improve their students' learning by enhancing their motivation.

In summary, student behaviour can be greatly affected by positive instructor attitudes. Prosocial behaviour (Seifert, 2004) and immediacy behaviour (Ellis, 2004) demonstrated by instructors can lead to increases in students' motivation to learn. In addition, instructors who show confirmation behaviour should successfully increase students' intrinsic motivation to learn. Confirmation behaviour clarifies students' understanding and generally comes in one of two forms. The first type defines a task, while the second enhances the student-instructor interpersonal relationship. An example of confirmation behaviour that may help to define a task would be taking the time to answer students' questions. An example of confirmation behaviour that may enhance interpersonal relationships would be striving to answer these questions in a respectful manner. These behaviours ultimately improve motivation. Instructors must understand that to deliver lessons using immediacy behaviours takes no extra time and does not result in sacrificing course material. Instructors who use immediacy are found to increase students' motivation, positively influencing their behaviour, and promoting beneficial learning outcomes (Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Elliot & Knight, 2005; Ellis, 2004; Glynn, Aultman, & Owens, 2005; Houser, 2005; Jaasma & Koper, 1999; Seifert, 2004). While it has been confirmed that positive communication, that is, immediacy, between instructors and students is beneficial and positively impacts learning, the motives for the student to communicate must be considered; without the student's willingness to communicate, all efforts at immediacy will be in vain and it will be a one-sided effort on the part of the instructor.

## Students' Communication Motives

The motives for communication depend upon the type of relationship between two people. Graham, Barbato and Perse (1993) proposed a model for interpersonal communication that based motives for communication on the following factors:

- The individual with whom the person is engaged in conversation;
- The manner in which the individual talks; and
- The topic about which an individual talks (the depth of disclosure).

Based on the prior research of Rubin et al. (1988), Martin, Myers and Mottet (1999) identified five motives for a student to communicate with their instructor:

1. **Relational:** associated with the student's attempts to develop a relationship with their instructor (Martin et al., 1999). In relational communication, students discuss personal subjects such as their likes and dislikes (Martin et al., 2002). Conversations go beyond course boundaries as students come to think of instructors as likable individuals who have the potential to become friends.
2. **Participatory:** associated with the student's desire to engage in class communication, commonly as a means of attaining good grades. To ensure that their level of participation is in a good 'zone' and to earn participation points, students may enter into active communication with instructors. Students may wish to participate in class communication to contribute an astute observation, to show interest in a particular course or to show the instructor their understanding of class material.
3. **Functional:** involving the gathering of information pertaining to the course (Martin et al., 1999). Students may inquire about assignments or the course in

order to clarify what is required or to broaden their understanding of the class content.

4. Excuse-making: related to the process of rationalising failure to submit work (Martin et al., 2002). Students may want to explain the reasons behind their poor performance on a test, failure to complete an assignment or absence from class. Students may attempt to convince the instructor to show leniency or give them credit when they fail to meet expectations with regard to coursework.
5. Sycophancy: associated with the student's desire to make a positive impression on his or her instructor (Martin et al., 2002). In an effort to endear themselves to their instructor, students may consciously or subconsciously communicate with their instructor in such a way as to tell them what they think the instructor wants to hear.

These five motives should be included in instructors' teaching methods to encourage students' communication in classroom, which then leads to improve students' learning.

Considerable research on student communication motives has been conducted, out of which three themes emerged: instructor communication, student communication and classroom results (Weiss & Houser, 2007). Mottet and Martin (2000) explored the theme of instructor communication, specifically examining the way in which it influences student motives for communication. A particular behaviour on the part of the instructor may elicit varying responses from students, although any verbal strategy (for example, compliments and self-disclosure) will increase the likelihood of students wanting to communicate for all five motives previously explained (Mottet, Martin, & Myers, 2004). An instructor who is

perceived as responsive will motivate students to communicate for participatory reasons, while an instructor who is both responsive and assertive will encourage both relational and sycophantic motives (Myers, Martin, & Mottet, 2002). Overall, instructor immediacy is negatively associated with the motive of excuse-making but positively associated with functional and relational motives (Martin et al., 2002). Similarly, instructor instrumental and efficacious skills have a positive association with participatory, relational and functional motives (Myers & Bryant, 2005).

The theme of instructor communication is closely related to student communication motives, which predict motives for communication with instructors. For example, students who experience high levels of communication apprehension are less likely to communicate for relational, participatory and functional motives (Goodboy et al., 2010). Assertive students are more likely to communicate based on excuse-making, functional and participatory motives (Myers et al., 2002). These motives are also linked with student information-seeking. Students communicating for a functional motive are likely to use an overt information-seeking strategy, whereas students communicating for sycophantic, participatory and relational motives are likely to use indirect and observation information-seeking strategies (Myers et al., 2002). The excuse-making, sycophancy and functional motives are also positively associated with student levels of Machiavellianism (Martin, Myers, & Mottet, 2006). Recently Weiss and Houser (2007) revealed that students' communication motives were influenced by their perceptions of instructor attractiveness; the functional, relational, sycophantic and participatory motives were positively correlated with the degree to which students were attracted to an instructor on a social and physical level. Furthermore, there was a positive association between perceived instructor

attractiveness and functional and relational motives, but a negative association for the motive of excuse-making.

Conventional learning outcomes have also been examined to some extent, with several notable findings. Firstly, students experience improvement in cognitive and affective learning if they communicate for participatory, functional and relational motives (Martin, Mottet, & Myers, 2000); however, none of the five motives show an association with the actual grades attained in a course (Goodboy & Martin, 2007). Secondly, the functional, participatory and relational motives are positively associated with student interest (Weber, Martin, & Cayanus, 2005). Finally, when students experience a high level of satisfaction in their communication with an instructor, they tend to engage in communication inspired by the relational, participatory and functional motives and refrain from excuse-making (Goodboy & Martin, 2007).

In addition to the three key themes about student communication already discussed, attention has also been given to computer-mediated communication between instructors and students. There is little difference in the prevalence of various communication motives between online and face-to-face interactions; in both cases, the functional motive is the most common driver of student communication (Kelly, Duran, & Zolten, 2001). However, many instructors believe that the principal motive behind student emails is excuse-making (Duran, Kelly, & Keaten, 2005).

Weiss and Houser (2007) demonstrated a moderate to high correlation between students' communication motivation and their level of attraction to the instructor. Specifically, this was true for relational and participatory motives. The authors stated that "just as people have motives to communicate with others in an interpersonal context; there are unique reasons why students communicate in an instructional environment" (p. 216).

Surprisingly, the results demonstrated an inverse relationship between students' motivation to communicate with instructors for participatory motives and their attraction to a task. They further explained that, from the students' perspective, task persistence, work accomplishment and productivity may not require participation. Hence, students are less likely to participate if they are task-oriented. Furthermore, students may think that interacting with instructors is futile, given their submissive role as compared with the power instructors have over students in the classroom (Weiss & Houser, 2007).

### **Decreasing Motivation**

Just as there are certain instructor behaviours that motivate students, certain other behaviours have been found to decrease students' motivation to learn (Rocca, 2004). According to Elliot and Knight (2005), student motivation and learning can be reduced by particular instructor behaviours that students see as negative, such as aggressive behaviours, which may cause students to feel as if they are being targeted (Elliot & Knight, 2005). Specific instructor behaviours were found to increase student attendance, while others decreased it (Rocca, 2004). Attendance may decrease in the presence of insulting, ridiculing or threatening behaviours, while positive behaviours such as eye contact, facial expressions and nonverbal gestures may increase student attendance. Rocca (2004) ascertained that attendance levels were lower in classes where instructors used fewer immediacy behaviours than in those with more immediacy behaviours. Moreover, attendance levels were impacted negatively by instructors' use of verbally aggressive behaviours (Rocca, 2004). This research further demonstrates how instructor behaviours can impact student outcomes, such as motivation to attend class. Based on these conclusions, one could argue that students who are motivated and interested in a class have

improved attendance because their instructor's immediacy behaviours make the students want to be present at lectures.

Following the research by Rocca (2004), further studies examined instructor behaviours that could possibly decrease student motivation levels. Rocca and McCroskey (1999) explored the relationship between interpersonal attraction and student ratings of instructor immediacy, verbal aggressiveness and homophily, which is the tendency for similar individuals to be attracted to each other. They concluded that students perceived instructors' behaviours as less verbally aggressive when they perceived an increase in immediacy. Homophily and immediacy were also positively related. Behaviours considered verbally aggressive were more common in instructors who were perceived as less immediate, less interpersonally attractive and less similar to students. As immediacy and motivation are known to be related, one may infer that reduced motivation to learn in students can result when students perceive less immediacy behaviours from instructors (Frymier, 1994). Increasingly, one can see that student motivation is a highly complex and sometimes perplexing subject area.

Non-compliance is a factor linked to demotivation in students (Richmond, 1990). For example, a student who fails to submit completed assignments can be categorised as lacking motivation to learn or experiencing demotivation. This has been studied extensively in the context of higher education classrooms. It was discovered that students who resist an instructor do so because of a lack of immediacy behaviours. These students are less motivated to learn and may develop non-compliance because an instructor fails to employ appropriate immediacy behaviours. Student perceptions regarding their instructor's immediacy behaviours or lack thereof may be the principal determinant of non-compliance and demotivation in students. On the other hand, an instructor is more likely to be

perceived as less immediacy if punishment or coercion with punishment are used as anything other than a last resort for regaining control of the classroom (Richmond, 1990).

The drivers of motivation and demotivation were studied intensively by Christophel and Gorham (1995), who found that instructors and students may have different perceptions of motivational and demotivational factors. For example, students may attribute the motivation to learn to personal factors that lie outside the scope of an instructor's domain, such as the amount of time spent on studies. Instructors are likely to consider students' lack of prior knowledge, poor appraisal on assignments, lack of skills required to perform satisfactorily on course material and workload both inside and outside the classroom as some of the most important demotivational factors. In terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, instructors and students disagreed as to the primary demotivating factor. Students gave high ratings to inappropriate presentation skills, lack of sense of humour, language barriers, excessive examples and lack of enthusiasm on the part of instructors, whereas instructors ranked unfair grading, hazy objectives, irrelevant assignments, lack of application reinforcement and student failure on graded work as the most crucial reasons for students' lack of motivation (Kelsey et al., 2004).

Further research supports the idea that the increase in student negative outcomes can be blamed on instructor misbehaviours (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2009). The link between instructor behaviour and negative student outcomes in the field of higher education was explored by Chory-Assad and Paulsel (2004). They discovered students harboured a perception that an instructor was 'not being fair' if the instructor used antisocial behavioural alteration techniques, or tended to react by expressing covert aggressive behaviours. Antisocial behaviours included communication statements such as: "Don't ask questions, just do what you are told"; "You will get an F if you don't listen to me"; and

“Remember that you are the student and I am the teacher.” The researchers concluded that these sorts of behaviours led students to believe that their instructor was exploiting his or her position of power. The students tended to use covert aggressive behaviours as a way of venting their emotions and inducing the same emotions in their instructors.

Hence, misbehaviours on the part of instructors may demotivate learning in students by inducing covert aggressive behaviours. Offensive instructor misbehaviours not only negatively influence student motivation; they also negatively impact student affective learning and students’ perceptions of instructor reliability (Banfield et al., 2006). Student motivation is required for learning and is triggered not only by instructor behaviours but also by various other educational elements. Student motivation also has a positive influence on learning outcomes (Simonds et al., 2006). Further, motivated students are more likely to seek involvement in the learning process, even when it is difficult or confusing. Dedication to learning and student motivation are, in fact, directly proportional. Researchers have discovered that student motivation is influenced negatively by several elements, including offensive instructor misbehaviours. Goodboy and Bolkan (2009) found that “When negative student emotions and feelings towards the teacher are created, student learning and motivation are endangered” (p. 215). To be more specific, students who do not like their instructor or feel that the learning environment is uninviting often lack the confidence to offer comments, questions or any form of input in class. Consequently, they lose motivation and are held back from learning to the full extent of their potential (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2009). Moreover, Delfabbro et al. (2006) found that students are less motivated to dedicate their full attention and commitment to their studies if they are bullied by, or get along poorly with, their instructors.

Additionally, Myers and Rocca (2001) suggested that an inverse relationship exists between student motivation and instructor verbal gestures (for example, malediction, teasing, ridiculing, character attacks, swearing, nonverbal emblems, background and physical appearance attacks, and threats). Furthermore, a negative association was found between students' assessment of their instructor's verbal aggressiveness and students' eagerness to communicate in and out of class (Myers et al., 2009). The study of Myers et al. (2009) concluded students who would normally interact with their instructors but might restrict or eliminate this interaction because of the instructor's verbal aggressiveness. In summary, students are less inclined to invest the effort to build an instructor-student relationship, feel eager to learn or show enthusiasm for communicating if instructors are verbally aggressive. Instructor involvement in offensive misbehaviours compromises student motivation.

Researchers to date have attempted to examine the negative influence that offensive instructor behaviours can have on student perceptions of instructors' reliability and student affective learning and motivation (Claus et al., 2012; Kelsey et al., 2004)

## **Immediacy and Students Communication Satisfaction**

Teaching is a communications process which, according to Zhang and Zhang (2013), is a relational, rhetorical and rational process where instructors strategically use cues and messages to influence the behaviour of students. Mottet and Beebe (2002) posit that communication in the classroom is used by college instructors to achieve three interrelated goals: namely, to relate, inform and influence others. These three goals demand a certain amount of interpersonal skill whereby instructors must connect with their students to get them to engage with and complete their course objectives (Schrodt et al., 2008). Comparatively, traditional Saudi teaching promotes authoritative information-packed lecturing, students' concentrated listening, and memorisation. Further, Saudi education favours hierarchical instructor-student interaction with varying responsibilities and roles (Alkeaid, 2004), where the instructor is viewed as a role model and an authority.

This style of top-down knowledge delivery is proving to be less effective than that of classrooms where there the instructor demonstrates high verbal and nonverbal immediacy; immediacy provides significant educational benefits to students' communication (such as improved class participation) and learning outcomes (including cognitive learning, affective learning, state motivation and communication satisfaction), resulting in a strong correlation between immediacy and student satisfaction. Effective immediacy behaviours can help a student to feel well-connected, satisfied and to experience quality communication (Umpfrey, Wickersham, & Scherblom, 2008) and form positive attitudes towards learning in the classroom (Kerssen-Griep, 2001; Cole, Sugioka, & Yamagata-Lynch, 1999). For many students, satisfaction with the college experience also requires strong relationships with their peers; self-evaluation activities and communication is the basis for a rational relationship among students and instructors that

supports a coordinated effort toward positive learning outcomes (Goodboy et al., 2010; Goldsmith, 2004).

Students who participate in constructive interactions in the classroom exhibit positive behaviours and have high levels of satisfaction with their academic institution and instructors (Frymier, 2005; Myers & Bryant, 2005). On the other hand, if a student is dissatisfied with the instructor, he would feel reluctant to form a relationship with either the instructor or the subject matter. A dissatisfied student experiences negative effects on both cognitive and affective learning processes (Richmond, 1990). A pedagogic focus to build positive relationships with students using direct communication can generate a sense of satisfaction and aid developmental efforts (Goodboy & Myers, 2008). Strong instructor-student communication by activities such as instructor affinity-seeking (Richmond, 1990; Roach & Byrne, 2001), instructor confirmation (Ellis, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Goodboy & Myers, 2008; Schrod, Turman, & Soliz, 2006), and instructor immediacy (Andersen, 1979; Christophel, 1990; Goodboy et al., 2010; Gorham, 1988; Plax et al., 1986; Richmond et al., 1987); this kind of communication effect positively on student's satisfaction.

To motivate students, instructors should use both verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviours (Frymier, 1994). By doing so, instructors can create a lasting impression on students and help them recall their learning experiences immediately (Kelley & Gorham, 1988). Instructors need to understand the motivation levels of their students and use that to establish the appropriate style of teaching. The aim should be for the students to be motivated and stimulated to the point where they want to extract more knowledge from their instructor. Immediacy makes it possible to motivate students to contribute and become involved in discussions, to think aloud, and discuss new and fresh ideas about the

subject (Frymier, 1994; Offir et al., 2004; Richmond et al., 2006), all of which makes the classroom experience more satisfactory for the students.

Satisfaction is increased when the communication process is strong and the communicators are competent (Spitzberg, 1991). Satisfactory communication requires the fulfilment of each individual's expectations and the ability of each individual to respond to the type of communication presented to him (Frymier, 2005). Student satisfaction is very much affected by immediacy behaviours. Students feel more satisfied with their instructors when they feel that the instructor is striving to diminish the psychological difference between them (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Strong instructor-student interaction along with engagement in academic activities can significantly influence a student's ultimate grade point average. Thomas and Galambos (2004) state that students who are satisfied with their interactions with the instructor are motivated to enhance their knowledge and to spend more time and effort on educational activities. They are also more likely to be satisfied with the academic institution as a whole and give positive feedback when analysed (Kuh & Hu, 2001).

A literature review of students' satisfaction compiled by Lamport (1993) states that satisfaction with faculty members is the main determinant of overall satisfaction with an institution. The student must already be inclined toward gaining knowledge in order to be motivated and satisfied by the instructor (Myers & Bryant, 2005). Learner satisfaction is highly influenced by the predominant social behaviour within the learning environment and particularly the support of the instructor. Improving learner satisfaction can in turn help achieve positive learning outcomes (Jung et al., 2002).

Haertel, Walberg and Haertel (1981) conducted a study into classroom environment spanning four nations that included 17,805 students in 823 classes. They

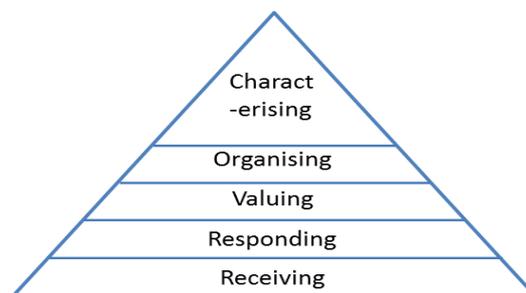
observed that the way a student perceives the classroom environment can affect not only their learning abilities but also their satisfaction levels, goals and cohesiveness. Romanski (1987) surveyed 7000 students and found that strong interactions can help improve student performance, satisfaction, and retention.

## Immediacy and Affective Learning

Affective learning is considered as “the positive value students attach to instructor communication in the classroom and consists of affect toward the course instructor, affect toward the course content, and affect toward the recommended course behaviours” (McCroskey et al., 1994, p. 59). Krathwohl (2002) states that the affective learning knowledge base and its sequence can be split into five distinct segments:

1. Receiving: the ability to heed and hear something well;
2. Responding: the ability to involve oneself by enquiring and responding to queries, putting forth energetic ideas and taking action;
3. Valuing: the willingness to openly display one’s beliefs and give credence to a variety of arguments;
4. Organising: the ability to give preference to arguments, settle concerns that may affect the whole environment, and consider a person’s overall demeanour; and
5. Characterising: the incorporation of different aspects of arguments and values to form an overall attitude that can be applied in personal and group situations.

These elements can be shown in hierarchical form, as seen in Figure 2.2.



*Figure 2.2.* Krathwohl’s taxonomy of affective learning

It was found that students demonstrate an increased desire to learn when instructors show high immediacy, which in turn improves affective learning and a significant relationship was found between instructor immediacy and student desire to learn (Pogue & AhYun, 2006). Students taught by instructors with poor overall immediacy were found to have reduced affective learning compared with students whose instructors applied immediacy skills to the delivery of subject content and interactions with students. The latter group of students showed much improved learning outcomes and it is believed that affective learning is a fundamental catalyst for students' cognitive learning and that students' affective learning is positively correlated with instructor immediacy (Finn et al., 2009). Andersen (1979) conducted a survey regarding nonverbal immediacy and learning, aiming to assess student responses regarding the positive impacts of the instructor and their delivery of the subject content. It was found that instructor nonverbal immediacy predicted 20% of the variance in student affection for subject content and 46% of the variance in student affection for the instructor. These results show a clear relationship between nonverbal immediacy and student affect for both the instructor and the subject content (Andersen, 1979).

A verbal immediacy measure (VIM) (Gorham, 1988) and 13-item nonverbal immediacy measure (NIM) (Richmond et al., 1987) were developed as semantically differential scales to measure affect. Four bipolar adjectives—good/ bad, worthless/valuable, fair/unfair and positive/ negative—were introduced. Gorham and Zakahi (1990) used these patterns to evaluate the relationship between verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affect. In doing so, they were able to also examine the overall immediacy of an instructor. When students who passed a subject were asked whether they would re-enrol in the same subject, the final outcomes for nonverbal immediacy, verbal

immediacy and their affects were between 0.53 and 0.60 ( $p < 0.01$ ), demonstrating a significant relationship between the variables.

Several other studies have proven a correlation between instructor immediacy and affect for subject material (Allen et al., 2006; Christophel, 1990; Frymier & Houser, 2000; Gorham, 1988; Pogue & AhYun, 2006). Chesebro (2003) put forth the idea that students' understanding and interest in a subject along with the quality of instructors are key to assessing affective learning levels, and are also important factors to consider when deciding upon strategies for instructors to help students learn affectively. Student confidence is often directly proportional to productive dynamism and imperativeness of an instructor's style; all scholarly changes impact positively on student learning. An instructor may also strengthen affective learning by altering the surroundings for study sessions, thus increasing interest for students (Finn et al., 2009). Allen et al. (2006) agree that a positive correlation exists between instructor dynamism and affective learning, stating that "results indicate a set of data consistent with the proposition that instructor immediacy behaviours predict or cause a level of affective learning" (p. 26). In summary, progressive affective learning is related to instructor immediacy, which drives students toward affective learning.

In a study of affective learning, students were asked questions regarding their feelings about a specific course and its instructor (Richmond et al., 1987). The students' responses were then assessed based on their willingness and desire to consider the subject, and their appreciation for the instructor's style. Behavioural learning and affective learning often appeared to be related. Another key indicator of student satisfaction with a certain course and instructor is whether students would be willing to enrol in the class again (Gorham, 1988).

Anticipation of good results forms a part of daily life and it is to be hoped that students expect that their instructors will perform well in terms of teaching and behaviour: for example, by controlling the flow of information on a particular subject, resolving queries, bringing up dynamic and positive thoughts and communicating verbally (Simonds et al., 2006). When these expectations are met, students are motivated to gain a better understanding of that subject under the guidance of the same instructor (Simonds et al., 2006). Students' perceptions of subject content and study environment also impact on their overall affective learning process (Pogue & AhYun, 2006). Proper, systematic development of instructor behaviours and training to deal with various circumstances that may arise when teaching enables instructors to conduct and control their immediacy behaviours and, therefore, their effect on students' affective learning (Richmond et al., 2004).

## **Immediacy and Cognitive Learning**

The cognitive learning domain consists of six elements (Bloom, 1976), which progress from simple to difficult as follows:

1. **Knowledge:** involves the gathering and remembering of data and information, and recognising or explaining details;
2. **Comprehension:** involves demonstrating an understanding of information and making inferences based on it;
3. **Application:** involves applying knowledge and ideas to practical situations;
4. **Analysis:** involves differentiating ideas into their constituent parts in order to move towards solving and eliminating problems;
5. **Synthesis:** involves compiling the ideas in a logical way in order to create new methods and definitions; and
6. **Evaluation:** involves assessing the ideas and evidence to draw and defend conclusions and judgments.

Cognitive learning at the tertiary level tends to be assessed using oral presentations, examinations, or assignments. It is defined by customary interpretation of observations with regard to learning and the gaining of knowledge in formal learning circumstances.

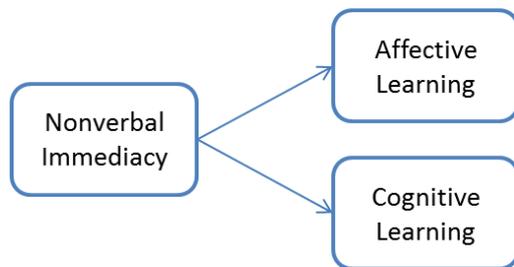
### **Models of Immediacy and Cognitive Learning**

Significant research has been dedicated to instructor nonverbal immediacy and its relationship to cognitive learning (Allen et al., 2006; Comadena et al., 2007; Witt et al., 2004). However, there is still controversy over how nonverbal immediacy impacts on cognitive learning. Several models have been proposed: the direct effects model

(Andersen, 1979), the arousal model (Kelley & Gorham, 1988), the motivation model (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994), and the affective learning model (Rodríguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996). The next section will discuss more about each model.

### **Direct effects model.**

This was first presented by Andersen (1979) and postulates that nonverbal immediacy has a direct impact on both cognitive and affective learning. Immediacy support exists for the associations between these factors (McCroskey et al., 2006; Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001). The direct effects model in Figure 2.3., describes the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and learning using a variable analytic model rather than a theoretical framework.



*Figure 2.3.* Direct effects model

Anderson's (1978) work demonstrated the direct impact of nonverbal immediacy on affective learning, but failed to find an association between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning. However, since then, evidence of an association between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning has been presented (Kelley & Gorham, 1988).

Andersen (1978) suggested hypothetical reasons why nonverbal immediacy may impact upon cognitive learning, but when he failed to find an association, he admitted that learning behaviour of tertiary students may not be affected by nonverbal immediacy, as they have already established study routines. Moreover, the effect of nonverbal immediacy

on student behaviour, if there is an effect, may not become evident until later in the semester. A meta-analysis of 81 studies of immediacy and learning outcomes conducted by Witt et al. (2004) demonstrated a moderate association between nonverbal immediacy and affective learning (average  $r = 0.49$ ); however, the effect of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning was found to be minimal (average  $r = 0.17$ ). However, the study did not control for potential moderating or mediating factors in forming these associations.

### **Arousal model.**

The arousal model in Figure 2.4., proposed by Kelley and Gorham (1988) acknowledges that nonverbal immediacy may affect cognitive learning independently of its effect on instructor-student affinity. They propose that it mediates this effect via a series of steps that begins with student arousal. This series is depicted by the ‘path model’, which specifies a linear relationship. Nonverbal immediacy arouses students, which stimulates them to pay better attention to course material, commit that material to memory, and, ultimately, experience improved ability to recall that material (the benchmark of cognitive learning). The arousal model is hampered by criticism and confusion as to the definition of arousal. According to Mottet and Bebee (2002), arousal is an indicator of mental awareness. They measure the construct using words like excited, aroused, and stimulated.



*Figure 2.4.* Arousal model

The arousal model is based on the concept that cognitive learning may occur in the absence of affective learning (Kelley & Gorham, 1988). Kelley and Gorham (1988)

indicate that arousal may impact the attention students pay to stimulus materials, and suggest that the association between these two variables forms an inverted U-shape, whereby increasing arousal has a positive effect on attention up to a certain threshold, past which attention starts to suffer. Comstock, Rowell, and Bowers (1995) proved the existence of such a relationship between nonverbal immediacy and recall, and suggested that high levels of nonverbal immediacy can reduce recall if students become too aroused.

The arousal model fails to adequately explain the association between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning. When Kelley and Gorham (1988) proposed the four-step process (nonverbal immediacy-arousal-attention-memory-recall), they had no evidence to support it. Furthermore, Kelley and Gorham (1988) speculated that a positive relationship may exist between nonverbal immediacy and learning, independent of affect, but they give no evidence to show that students' affect remained constant throughout their experiment. They show an association between nonverbal immediacy and recall, but do not prove that this association is attributable to the arousal-attention relationship. Other researchers, such as Mottet and Bebee (2002) have failed to demonstrate a significant relationship between arousal and learning as well.

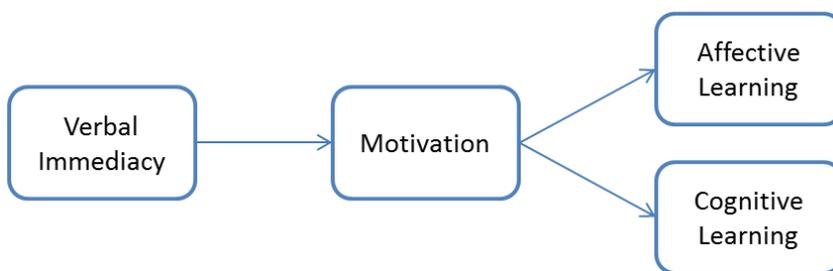
#### **Motivation as mediator model.**

Figure 2.5, depicts the motivation as mediator model, which proposes that a student's 'state motivation' is the sole mediator of the association between instructor nonverbal immediacy and learning. According to Brophy (1987), the behaviour of the instructor can help develop motivation; however, students tend to believe that instructor behaviours have minimal impact on their motivation levels (Gorham & Christophel, 1992). Gorham and Christophel (1992) demonstrated this perception when they asked students to answer an open-ended question regarding factors that they believed impacted on their

motivation to learn, either positively or negatively. They received 1,450 responses, only 26 of which cited nonverbally immediate behaviours as motivating. Nonetheless, research has shown that motivation is a modifiable variable that can increase as the semester progresses (Christophel & Gorham, 1995). Gorham and Christophel (1992) speculated that students who do not consciously acknowledge instructor behaviours as influencing motivation may still be affected by those behaviours on a subconscious level.

Keller's (1987) ARCS (attention-relevance-confidence-satisfaction) model forms the theoretical explanation behind the motivation as mediator model. The ARCS model proposes that four conditions are required for motivation:

1. Directing and maintaining student attention on suitable stimuli;
2. Understanding the relevance of course topics to personal goals or outcomes;
3. Expecting success; and
4. Feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment from learning achievements.



*Figure 2.5.* Motivation as mediator model

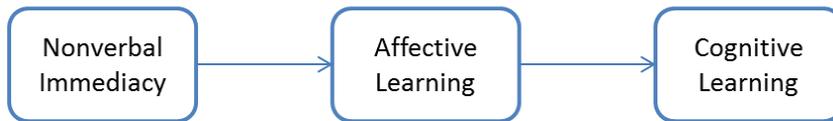
Frymier (1994) uses the ARCS model to explain how nonverbal immediacy behaviours may give students positive expectations of the course by drawing and maintaining their attention, and that this can ultimately result in improved satisfaction with the learning process. Keller (1987) did not propose a relationship between nonverbal

immediacy and relevance (the second step of ARCS), while Frymier and Shulman (1995) identified a moderate relationship between these variables ( $r = 0.52$ ) as well as between relevance and state motivation ( $r = 0.46$ ).

Overall, the motivation as a mediator model has received varying degrees of support. The model appeared to fit well based on initial research (Frymier, 1994). However, alternative models appear to have superior explanatory power as regards the association between nonverbal immediacy and learning (Zhang & Oetzel, 2006). Furthermore, at this stage, the motivation explanation is no more than a predictive model with minimal support for the theoretical explanation that underlies it. Finally, research investigating the impact of nonverbal immediacy on the components of ARCS and the relationship between ARCS and student motivation is lacking.

#### **Affective learning as mediator model.**

As shown in Figure 2.6, the affective learning model (Rodríguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996) proposes that affective learning is the primary mediator of the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning. Rodríguez et al. (1996) explored the components required for affective learning and concluded that affective learning is comprised of attention to a task, evaluation of that task, and, finally, internalisation of such values. Based on this evaluation, Rodríguez et al. (1996) inferred that the construct of motivation falls within the construct of affective learning. Rodríguez et al. (1996) found that motivation and affective learning are separate but exhibit a high degree of correlation ( $r = 0.77$ ), but nonetheless excluded the motivation construct from the affective learning model. Instead, the affective learning model focuses on the indirect effect of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning through its effect on affective learning



*Figure 2.6.* Affective learning as mediator model

Rodríguez et al. (1996) and Allen et al. (2006) have both drawn conclusions that ideally require further testing. Harrigan (2010) suggested that the affective learning as mediator model could be supported if: (1) nonverbal immediacy is shown to influence affective learning; (2) nonverbal immediacy is shown to influence cognitive learning; and (3) after controlling for nonverbal immediacy, affective learning is shown to predict cognitive learning and the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning is reduced in size to be close to zero. To date, researchers have not tested this third element and no theory thus far adequately explains the affective learning as mediator model. Generally, researchers agree that nonverbal immediacy behaviours help to develop a positive instructor-student relationship (Mehrabian, 1969); however, there is no evidence to explain why nonverbal immediacy may also improve a student's attitude toward the actual course. Overall, convincing evidence to support the affective learning model is still lacking. Further research is needed to test and provide theoretical explanations for the validity of the model.

### **Measuring Cognitive Learning**

Throughout the 1970s, researchers continually failed to demonstrate a relationship between cognitive learning and instructor immediacy (Andersen, 1979), although instructor immediacy had been found to increase student willingness to attend class, and therefore increased opportunities for cognitive learning (Andersen, 1979). By the 1990s, the relationship between cognitive learning and instructor immediacy was still not clear.

The measurements that had previously been used to gauge cognitive learning were shunned due to instructors' unreliability in terms of their composition of reliable, valid tests as well as their submission of students' scores. In addition, tests were not based on publicly stated objectives and often varied in their relevance to subject content and there was a general inability to standardise scores (McCroskey et al., 1996).

### **Learning loss as a measure of cognitive learning.**

The 'Learning Loss Scale' was introduced by Richmond et al. (1987) to provide a standardised way of measuring cognitive learning. It asks students to answer two questions on a 9-point differential scale where 0 denotes learning nothing and 9 denotes learning to a greater extent than in any other class:

1. How much were they able to learn in this class?
2. If they had their ideal instructor in the class, how much do they think they would have been able to learn?

The result of subtracting question 1 from question 2 represents the 'actual learning loss'. The lower this value, the greater the cognitive learning (Richmond et al., 1987). This method has several advantages; it is highly accurate (85–93%), easy to administer and it facilitates data collection. Chesebro and McCroskey (2000) tested the learning loss scale against other measures of cognitive learning and found that it is a moderately strong indicator of concurrent validity. Since then, it has been used in many studies and results have shown a positive correlation between instructor immediacy and perceived cognitive learning (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2000; Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994; Kelley & Gorham, 1988; McCroskey et al., 1996; Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Richmond, 1990; Richmond et al., 1987; Rodríguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996).

**Recall as a measure of cognitive learning.**

Kelley and Gorham (1988) investigated the impact of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning. They created four different 'conditions' with varying levels of nonverbal 'physical' immediacy (including proximity, open posture and head nods) and eye contact (high immediacy/eye contact; high immediacy/no eye contact; low immediacy/eye contact; and low immediacy/no eye contact). Then they tested students' ability to recall a series of words and numbers and used the results as a measure of cognitive learning. Eye contact was responsible for 6.9% of the variance on recall, while physical immediacy accounted for 11.4%. Overall, recall was greater when the instructor was high in immediacy.

Witt (2000) conducted a study similar to Kelley and Gorham's (1988), in which the same information was presented in four different pre-recorded teaching sessions with varying degrees of verbal and nonverbal immediacy as follows: higher verbal-higher nonverbal; higher verbal-lower nonverbal; lower verbal-higher nonverbal; and lower verbal-lower nonverbal. The study included 347 students enrolled in an introductory communications course that involved weekly face-to-face lectures and twice-weekly tutorials in small groups. Witt's sessions with study participants were performed in randomly composed small groups. Whilst the experiment adhered to rigorous conditions, Witt strove to prevent the students from feeling as if they were part of an experiment. Before being shown one of the four-recorded teaching sessions, students were informed that they would view a lecture from a guest instructor as part of the course, and then be required to fill out a questionnaire about their opinions on the session. They were not informed that there would be questions on the content of the lecture. The participants first filled out a questionnaire including demographic questions (age, gender, academic major,

class standing), a 12-point student motivation scale, and a cognitive learning assessment that consisted of sections of the script used in the teaching session with key words missing. Students had to ‘fill in the blanks’, which varied in terms of difficulty and detail, and were then scored based on how many and which words they were able to remember. This measure of recall was intended to measure cognitive learning objectively. This method is known as a ‘cloze procedure’, and has a typical reliability coefficient of about 0.80 according to Wheelless (1971). In Witt’s study, the reliability coefficient was 0.88. A two-way ANOVA analysis showed that groups that viewed sessions with higher verbal immediacy did not have a statistically significant increase in recall as Witt had hypothesised. In fact, it was found that groups exposed to teaching sessions with higher verbal immediacy scored lower than those exposed to teaching sessions with lower verbal immediacy, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Witt’s second hypothesis was that groups exposed to teaching sessions with higher nonverbal immediacy would experience improved cognitive learning, and this association was proven ( $p= 0.0005$ ). Students in the higher nonverbal immediacy group had better scores than students in the lower nonverbal immediacy group. This difference was responsible for 3.09% of the variance in cognitive learning. Witt’s third hypothesis was that the group that viewed the session with the highest degrees of both verbal and nonverbal immediacy would experience the greatest gain in cognitive learning; this was not supported by statistical analysis.

### **Comparing Measures of Cognitive Learning**

Witt and Wheelless (2001) used a 15-minute video presentation to determine the association between perceived learning (learning loss) and cognitive learning (recall). According to their results, the two variables shared a common variance of only 3%. The

authors considered this finding to be ‘troublesome’ in light of the large numbers of studies demonstrating a significant association between cognitive learning and nonverbal immediacy (Witt & Wheelless, 2001). This led Witt et al. (2004) to conclude that learning loss was basically an attitudinal measure. This research has not found any relationship between nonverbal immediacy and perceived learning ( $r = 0.02$ ). The difference between the results of this study and other studies can be understood in light of Witt et al.’s (2006) comment: “It should be noted that many of the authors of original data reports would categorize the learning loss measure as a measure of cognitive learning” (p. 156). So disagreement exists as to whether this should be referred to as ‘perceived learning’ rather than cognitive learning.

### **Summary**

This literature review examined and discussed theory and research associated with instructor immediacy to provide the necessary background that underpins this thesis. Immediacy behaviour as it relates to the educational context during the past three decades has mainly been used to describe the instructor-student relationship. Instructors may implement immediacy in the classroom via both verbal and nonverbal behaviours, each of which has a distinct primary function.

This study draws upon humanistic theory, developed by Maslow in 1943 and enhanced by Rogers in 1969. The theory draws upon techniques for the cultivation of relationships and recognises the various verbal and nonverbal communication behaviours required to create such relationships (Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1969). The work of Maslow and Rogers laid the groundwork for the development of theories of immediacy by Mehrabian (1971), especially as they are used in the classroom. The ability of instructors

to connect with their students using both verbal and nonverbal immediacy is what makes it possible for instructors to develop a personal relationship with their students that allows the students the confidence and the latitude to take an active role in, and to be responsible for, their own learning.

People adapt the manner and content of their verbal communication to the perceived preference or style of the receiver and context. Immediacy behaviours, then, serve to enhance interpersonal closeness (Mehrabian, 1981). This is significant in terms of teaching because, without a sense of immediacy, the student will not feel comfortable to engage with either the instructor or his teachings. Kelley and Gorham (1988) found that immediacy creates 'mirroring effects'; for example, a person will tend to smile back when a person smiles at them. From these results, we learn that if instructors use immediacy appropriately, students' attitudes toward instruction and, consequently, their own learning may be improved (McCroskey & Richmond, 1992).

Teaching is a communications process, which, according to Zhang and Zhang (2013), is a relational, rhetorical and rational process where instructors strategically use cues and messages to influence the behaviour of students. Mottet and Beebe (2006) posit that college instructors use communication in the classroom to achieve three interrelated goals: to relate, inform and influence others. These three goals demand a certain amount of interpersonal skill whereby instructors must connect with their students to get them to engage with and complete their course objectives (Schrodt et al., 2008).

Educational institutions exist within a broader political and social context which imposes restraints on teacher's pedagogical practice. Resistance from culturally and institutionally-endorsed notions of what education should be about and how educators should measure and prove the value of their teaching is in Saudi culture privileged in

traditional lecture based learning. It is assumed that this pedagogic model will deliver the cultural and institutional expectation that graduates will have obtained a wide range of skills in preparation for the workplace, including articulate and effective communication skills, high levels of technical skill, and the ability to work well in teams. There has been and is a concerted effort by governments, accreditation agencies, and peak bodies to regulate and control universities, largely via rigorous accreditation provisions, regular audits, standards requirements, and quality assurance processes (Borko, 2004). At present, there is a call from Saudi policy makers for universities and instructors to accept accountability for their teaching actions and educational outputs (Aldosary & Nahiduzzaman, 2010). In response, universities in Saudi Arabia have intensified central regulation and control over departments and schools. Many have set teaching targets or key performance indicators that instructors are required to meet, relating to areas such as student demand, retention, completions, equity and diversity, and student evaluations of teaching within a course (Tennant et al., 2009). These factors heavily impact on instructor-learner relationships, which are at the heart of teaching practice.

In the literature on immediacy it is asserted that the pedagogical benefits show the student that their instructor cares about their learning process, and is arguably the most important element of classroom interaction (Witt et al., 2004). Immediacy provides significant educational benefits to students' communication (such as improved class participation) and learning outcomes (including state motivation, communication satisfaction, affective learning, and cognitive learning). Effective immediacy behaviours can help a student feel well-connected, satisfied and experience quality communication (Umphrey et al., 2008) and form positive attitudes toward learning in the classroom (Kerssen-Griep, 2001).

In summation, students demonstrate an increased desire to learn when instructors show high immediacy, which in turn improves affective learning and a significant relationship exists between instructor immediacy and students' desire to learn.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY & RESULTS**

The methodology of the study was designed as a quasi-experimental investigation. The quasi-experimental pre-test post-test was equivalent groups via matching designs and the sample was not random. I used several techniques for selecting matched groups, compared for gender, socioeconomic background, and ethnicity. The sample was matched as all participants were Saudi male undergraduate students enrolled in the same course.

This chapter is organized into three main parts. The first part presents the research design and is divided into seven parts: experimental research, mixed method research, challenges of mixed method research, triangulation, research paradigm, setting and sample, and ethics. The second part discusses the quantitative research phase with the questionnaire results. The last part investigates the qualitative research phase and presents the interview results.

### **Research Design**

#### **Experimental Research**

Experimental research is defined as “the only study that can test hypotheses so as to set up cause-and-effect relationships, and symbolises the most reliable system of reasoning about the links among variables” (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 355). The essential feature of experimental research is that investigators deliberately control and manipulate the conditions which determine the events in which they are interested, introduce an intervention and measure the difference that it makes (Mertens, 2009). An experiment involves making a change in the value of one variable called the independent variable and

observing the effect of that change on another variable called the dependent variable (Cohen et al., 2011). Using a fixed design, experimental research can be confirmatory, seeking to support or not to support a null hypothesis, or exploratory, discovering the effects of certain variables (Mertens, 2009). An independent variable is the input variable, whereas the dependent variable is the outcome variable. In an experiment the post-test measures the dependent variable, and the independent variables are isolated and controlled carefully (Cohen et al., 2011).

The basis of a true experimental design is that the researcher has control over the experiment, that is, who, what, when, where and how the experiment is to be conducted. This particularly includes control over the 'who' of the experiment – that is, subjects are assigned to conditions randomly. Where any of these elements of control is either weak or lacking, the study is said to be a quasi-experiment (Robson, 2002).

Robson (2002) identified four types of design: true experimental; single case experimental; quasi-experimental; and non-experimental fixed designs. True experimental design occurs in the laboratory for the most part and involves randomly setting up two or more categories; the situation is manipulated by the researcher to ensure that different groups get different treatment. The single case design considers individuals rather than the groups and uses the person as a control; the person is subjected to various conditions that are experimentally manipulated at different times. In contrast, quasi-experiments observe random phenomena. Robson (2002) identifies a number of quasi-experimental designs, namely: post-test only non-equivalent groups; single-group post-test only; pre-test post-test single group design; pre-test post-test non-equivalent group design; pre-test post-test equivalent groups via matching designs; interrupted time series designs; and the regressing-discontinuity. In the pre-test post-test equivalent group via matching designs it

is possible to determine whether the variance in the results between the two categories is caused by the treatment or by other elements.

However, many challenges face the researcher who would like to use experimental designs to investigate educational and psychological phenomena. Several of these factors include school policies restricting differential treatment, difficulty in identifying appropriate comparison groups, small sample sizes, sampling bias, and ethical considerations (Mertens, 2009). Because of these problems, some researchers have turned to single-subject designs and qualitative designs.

In the study, a pre-test post-test experimental group design was used with the matched pairs because “it is useful as an exploratory tool. It gives an indication of which variables are related or associated” (Robson, 2002, p. 118). This research used several techniques for selecting matched groups, compared for age, gender, ability, ability, socioeconomic background, and ethnicity (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2013). In this study, the sample was matched as all participants were Saudi male undergraduate students enrolled in the same course, which is Syntax II.

### **Mixed Method Research**

The primary aim of mixed method research: to seek convergence and corroboration of results (Creswell et al., 2007), and to search for a deeper and wider understanding of the study topic. When results are successfully corroborated, the probability that the results will be viewed as credible or worthy by others is increased (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006). According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2010) mixed method research allows researchers to take advantage of the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data collection within a single study. Creswell (2008) pointed out that mixed method research can avoid the bias associated with using a single method, tackle different aspects of analysis and

address multiple questions. Mixed method research aims to achieve high validity of results and can therefore be used to construct more complex research problems (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The core feature of mixed method research that makes it a superior choice for this study is the ability to perform triangulation and convergence data analysis (Drew et al., 2008).

In the interests of advancing immediacy research, a mixed methods approach was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches can overcome the weaknesses and utilise the strengths of each approach (Gall et al., 2010). Second, the integration of qualitative and quantitative data can provide strong evidence for conclusions (Drew et al., 2008). Third, the triangulation of data from different methods increases the validity of the results and the conclusions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this investigation the data was collected using quantitative and qualitative approaches as the quasi-experimental research methodology provided "a model which entails theoretical principles as well as a framework that provided [relevance and methodological] guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm" (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 32).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) state "mix method approach is particularly useful when a researcher needs to embed a qualitative component within a quantitative design, as in the case of an experimental or correlation design" (p. 67). Drawings on measurement-oriented quantitative research as an investigative approach enabled me in this investigation to evaluate instructor immediacy and student communication and learning outcomes via student self-report. Conversely, also employing a qualitative approach, one which gathers detailed information that draws on contextualised settings, personal experiences, and individual perceptions was useful because both quantitative and qualitative methods rely

upon epistemic assumptions that guide researchers in investigating social phenomena. The Mixed method approach is synergistic where multiple data sets combine to create an effect greater than the parts, and combines objective analysis with subjective interpretation. A mixed method study commences with a clear objective and a thorough understanding of the complexities of the topic and endeavours to yield a meaningful answer to research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). There are four main rationales for the use of mixed method research (Collins, et al., 2006) outlined below:

1. *Participant enrichment*: mixing quantitative and qualitative research to maximise the sample; utilises methods such as recruiting participants, engaging in activities like institutional review board debriefing, and confirming appropriateness of participants for inclusion;
2. *Instrument fidelity*: assessing the suitability and value of existing instruments, constructing new instruments, and evaluating the performance of human instruments;
3. *Treatment integrity*: assessing fidelity of intervention; and
4. *Significance enhancement*: improving thickness and richness of data, altering analysis and improving the value of the results.

A mixed methods approach was chosen to get benefits as noted by Mertens (2009), who states mixed method research provides the following advantages:

- Triangulation;
- Complementation of findings;
- Evaluation of one set of results based on another set;
- Elimination or minimisation of alternative clarification;

- Extended range of inquisition;
- Illumination of different components of events;
- Comprehensiveness;
- Ability to answer questions that a single method cannot; and
- Generation of a wider variety of views.

To support the usage of mixed method, a ‘Mixed Methods Social Inquiry’ was formed, dividing the understanding of mixed method social inquiry or mixed method ideology into four main categories:

1. Philosophical assumptions and stances that question the fundamental ideology or epistemological assumptions of the method
2. Inquiry logics that question the traditional method of inquiry and follow various inquiry purposes, questions, logics, standards and writing forms that direct researchers’ ‘gaze’
3. Guidelines for practices that specialise the procedure and tools used to conduct research and analysis
4. Socio-political commitments involving interests, commitments or power relations around the position of the inquiry in society (Greene, 2006).

Using a mixed method strategy, I as the researcher considered the following three different elements: timing, weight distribution between quantitative and qualitative mechanisms, and the merging and analysis of data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). These decisions were made so as to optimise the chances of answering the research questions effectively. In terms of timing, I chose between parallel and sequential methods. The

parallel method involves collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data separately (Mertens, 2009). The sequential method involves gathering one type of data (quantitative or qualitative) before the other, so that the second type of data is collected and analysed based on the first (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). The order in which data is obtained is crucial as one aspect builds on the other to better answer the research questions of the study in question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Sometimes the collection and analysis of one data type is not essential for the next component and, in these cases, the weight distribution between quantitative and qualitative methods can be varied to create a study design that will best respond to the research questions.

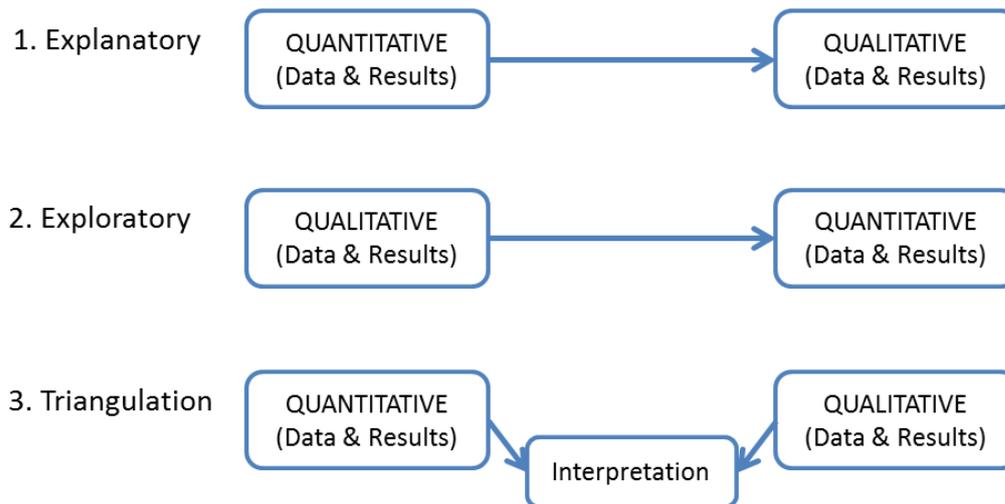
I had to decide whether the data should be merged, embedded, linked or maintained separately (Mertens, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 170) suggested three different approaches to mixed method research: explanatory, exploratory, and triangulation (Figure 3.1.):

1. Explanatory: the focus is on the quantitative method more so than the qualitative method. The quantitative data clarifies, elaborates upon or explains the quantitative findings. The qualitative data is used to form a quantitative instrument or survey;
2. Exploratory: the focus is on the qualitative method more so than the quantitative method, and comparison groups are formed using the qualitative data.

Relationships within the qualitative data can be highlighted through the quantitative data;

3. Triangulation: combines quantitative and qualitative methods equally and analyses them alongside one another to provide a more complete view, exploiting the strengths and avoiding the weaknesses of each method.



*Figure 3.1.* Types of mixed methods designs

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) discussed integration as a method of combining quantitative and qualitative data within a parallel design. The parallel mixed method is useful if researchers can combine the obtained quantitative and qualitative data effectively. Integration of data in the parallel approach yields a result with much greater value than the individual quantitative and qualitative evidence; when the two sets of data are merged, they become greater than the sum of their parts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The triangulation approach is used in this research, as it provides a more complete picture of the data provided by both the quantitative and qualitative components of the research. Quantitative data highlighted the perceived impact of instructor immediacy on self and collective efficacies. Qualitative data regarding individual students' perceptions and experiences of their learning and communication regarding instructor's immediacy practice. The quantitative data in this study provided a general understanding of instructor immediacy, student communication, and learning outcomes, and contextualised the qualitative data which draws on, and provides further insight into, participants' views and experiences.

## **Challenges of Mixed Method Research**

Mixed method research involves four key challenges: representation, legitimation, integration and politics.

Representation problems occur when the qualitative and quantitative designs within a single research project have their own set of sampling decisions and methodologies.

Eliminating these problems involves two steps. Firstly, we must ensure that sample size is sufficiently large. If the sample size is too small, results and relationships will be unlikely to be statistically significant as small samples may not be representative of the overall population (Collins, et al., 2006). For a sample as small as four participants, the data will be accurate and have a high level of confidence only if there is also a high degree of competence for the domain of inquisition in question (Collins et al., 2006). A sample of twelve will be sufficient if the objective is to highlight collective perceptions, beliefs or behaviours among a reasonably homogenous group. However, the more similar participants are in terms of experience, the faster the sample size will reach saturation.

Legitimation problems occur when there is difficulty in attaining results or making assumptions that are plausible, reliable, flexible and supportable; and of capturing real time experience using text, words or numbers (Collins et al., 2006). Legitimation involves the assessment of validity and trustworthiness in qualitative and quantitative data and its interpretations (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). In the context of mixed method research, this process should be considered to be continuous, rather than a fixed element of the study. To counter the challenges associated with legitimation, we should revise our conventional concepts of validity with diverse classification.

When research is considered trustworthily, it can be argued that the findings are 'worth paying attention to' – that is, reliable, transferable, consistent and conformable

(Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Considering these qualities individually, enables a greater understanding of their usefulness in research design:

1. Reliability is a measure of whether or not research results represent a ‘credible’ theoretical interpretation of data extracted from participants’ answers (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).
2. Transferability is the ability of inquest findings to be extrapolated to situations outside the bounds of the research project. Transferability relies on similarities between the situation in which the research took place and the situation to which it is being transferred (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By expanding our study to include different school districts and conducting the study at a constant grading level, we will be able to generalise our results to some extent.
3. Consistency is a measure of the quality of the process of data collection and analysis, and theory fabrication via triangulation, peer examination and appropriate data collection (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Consistency relies upon a thorough record-keeping, including notes, surveys and documents.
4. Conformability is a measure of the degree to which the findings of a study are supported or confirmed by other studies. By using mixed methods and keeping good records, we can improve the conformability of our study.

Integration of the components involves assessing and determining the extent to which these approaches can be combined in light of the research goals, purpose and questions. Researchers must consider variables such as sample size, weight distribution and the relative importance of quantitative and qualitative components. At the end of the analysis, if the data collected using each method are contradictory, the researcher must

think carefully about what conclusions, if any, can be drawn (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Politics refers to the tension that arises as a result of combining quantitative and qualitative methods and the difficulties in convincing consumers, including stakeholders and policymakers, of the need for mixed method research as a means of assessing the findings from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Sadly, many researchers remain resistant to mixing methods. According to Howe's (1988) incompatibility thesis, quantitative and qualitative methods should not be mixed. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) argue that research paradigms are designed to suit one research method at a time, and if the fundamental premises of two different paradigms clash, the corresponding methods cannot be used in combination. But after a century of dispute in the academic world, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) maintain that the mixed method research is 'important and useful', and does not seek to replace the existing quantitative and qualitative methodologies but rather to augment them by minimising their shortcomings.

In this study, I collected quantitative information that highlights the perceived impact of instructor immediacy on self and collective efficacies, as well as qualitative information regarding individual students' perceptions and experiences. The quantitative data will give us a general idea of instructor immediacy, student communication and learning outcomes, while the qualitative data will provide further insight into participants' views. By considering the data in combination, we will gain an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions.

In the next section, I will present more details about triangulation in my investigation

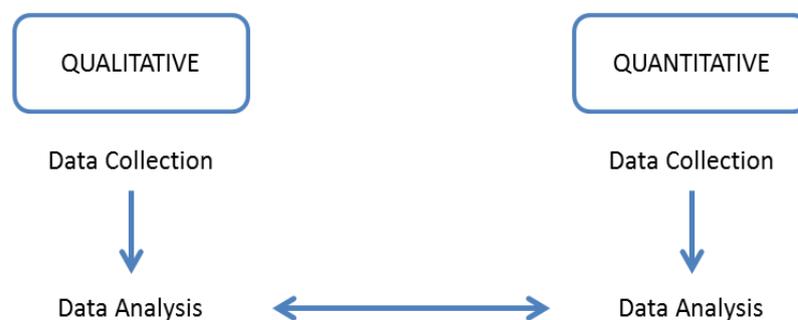
## **Triangulation**

Triangulation involves the use of multiple methodological approaches and independent sources to investigate the research topic (Yin, 2008). Researchers use at least two different data collection strategies with correspondingly different data analysis methods. The triangulation of results from these sets of data increases the trustworthiness of the research and the potential for extrapolation (Punch, 2009). It also allows contradictions and patterns of convergence to be identified and therefore allows one to better address research bias (Yin, 2008).

Triangulation is used to seek convergence, corroboration, and connection of results obtained through multiple methods. Complementarity elaborates, develops, illustrates, and explains the results from one method using results from another method. Expansion assists researchers to determine inconsistencies and contradictions in their research, offers new points of view on the study framework, and allows the researchers to recast queries or results from one method to the other. Development clarifies the results from one method in order to expand upon and inform the other method, and it augments the degree and variety of examination through different methods for different inquiry components.

Punch (2009) explains the advantages of the triangulation research method as the basis of triangulation is that results acquired from one type of data analysis can be compared against the results from another. The findings of the qualitative investigation can be used to corroborate the findings of the quantitative investigation and vice versa. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses are merged to offer a more complete answer to the research questions. In short, the process of triangulation combines both quantitative and qualitative data, compares the sets of data, and analyses whether they support or contradict each other.

My investigation followed focused on the triangulation of quantitative data because this is the most basic form of data as it surveys a large number of respondents. The number of respondents sampled for the qualitative part of the research is often only a fraction of this, but it aims to elicit more in-depth responses using interview questions alongside the survey content (Brannen, 2005). The findings were analysed from each stage separately in a similar way to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2008), using the triangulation method to promote convergence and corroboration of these individual findings and attain a deep understanding of the quantitative and qualitative data individually. The triangulation of data collection strategies and analysis methods were employed to examine the extent to which instructor immediacy behaviours affected student communication and learning outcomes. Using a process of triangulation, it was possible to verify and validate data during the data analysis phase. Figure 3.2, depicts the concurrent triangulation strategy using the conventional notation for representing mixed methods research design.



*Figure 3.2.* Concurrent triangulation mixed methods research design

The triangulation approach was adopted for this study with data drawn from two sources:

1. *Survey*: in which students evaluated their instructors' verbal and nonverbal immediacy and described their class participation, communication satisfaction, motivation, affective learning, and cognitive learning;

2. *Interviews*: in which students discussed their instructor's immediacy behaviours and their communication and learning outcomes in more detail.

Triangulating data from these two sources aimed to provide value results than if only one source were used. In the current study, two sets of quantitative data were obtained using a 'pre-test/post-test' model. Students completed the pre-test in the second week of semester in March 2011. The pre-test survey assessed instructor immediacy and student communication and learning outcomes in a course students completed in the previous semester. The same student participants completed the post-test survey in the eleventh week of semester, assessing their instructor's immediacy and their communication and learning outcomes for that class. Qualitative data were collected from the same cohort of student participants via individual semi-structured interviews. Students indicated on the post-test survey if they were willing to participate in the follow-up interview. Five students from each group were contacted via e-mail and telephone to make a time for 30–60 minute, one-on-one interview. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device, and the resultant files were transferred to a password-protected personal computer and erased from the digital recorder immediately afterward. The interviews were then transcribed using Microsoft Word.

### **Research Paradigms**

The selection of an appropriate research paradigm has been considered as necessary as it influences all stages of the research, including determining the research problem, as well as analysis and interpretation of the results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Mertens defines a paradigm as "a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action." (2009, p. 7).

Creswell (2013) has defined it as a system of beliefs and exercises that affect how researchers choose their research question and study framework.

Various paradigms exist in the social sciences and are unique in terms of the philosophical assumptions. Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) states that there are four philosophical assumptions underpinning social research as outlines in Table 3.1, these are: ontology (the nature of reality); epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are); axiology (the role of values in research); and methodology (the process of research). Selecting an appropriate paradigm for this research study demanded a grasp of the assumptions of methodology assumptions. Moreover, philosophical assumptions are embedded within the major interpretive frameworks; postpositivism, social constructivism, and pragmatism. The next section will address the role of these paradigms in my investigation.

Table 3.1  
*Philosophical Assumptions*

<i>Assumption</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is multiple as seen through many views
Epistemological	What counts as knowledge? How is knowledge claims justified? What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?	Subjective evidence from participants; researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched
Axiological	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and that

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		biases are present
Methodological	What is the process of research? What is the language of research?	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design

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*Source:* Adapted from Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011).

### **Postpositivism paradigm.**

This paradigm was developed by Comte and Durkheim (Sarantakos, 2012) and is the oldest paradigm in the social sciences. Known as the scientific method, this paradigm proposes that universal laws and truths drive one reality; they are independent, objective, and involve use of quantitative and experimental techniques to test and verify hypotheses (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

### **Social constructivism paradigm.**

Constructivists believe that the researcher cannot be separated from the subject of concern, and the researcher therefore constructs the outcome by interacting with the respondents (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Constructivists also believe that there are many constructed realities within any context, so employ naturalistic and qualitative techniques to holistically and inductively understand human experience in a context-specific technique.

### **Pragmatism paradigm.**

Social scientists have made numerous attempts to merge positivist and constructivist positions. Pragmatic researchers focus on the research question, rather than the methodology or the pragmatic propositions covered by the research method (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). According to Howe (1988), there is similarity between qualitative and quantitative methods. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2008) argue that both qualitative and

quantitative techniques are useful and state that “the research question determines which—between qualitative and quantitative or both—technique is applied” (p. 24). In terms of the epistemological position, pragmatists may be both objective and subjective: “At some points the knower and known must be interactive, while at others, one may more easily stand apart from what one is studying” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008, p. 26). Pragmatists concur with positivists that an external reality exists but they deny the presence of an absolute truth (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

Table 3.2, is presenting categorisation of interpretive frameworks consisted of postpositivism, social constructivism, and pragmatism. Since both qualitative and quantitative techniques are applied, this study is considered to lie within the pragmatist paradigm. I ensured that the basic philosophical assumptions guiding this research aligned with the pragmatist philosophy.

Table 3.2

*Interpretive Frameworks and Associated Philosophical Beliefs*

<i>Interpretive Frameworks</i>	<i>Ontological Beliefs (the nature of reality)</i>	<i>Epistemological Beliefs (how reality is known)</i>	<i>Axiological Beliefs (role of values)</i>	<i>Methodological Beliefs (approach to inquiry)</i>
Postpositivism	A single reality exists beyond ourselves “out there”. Researcher may not be able to understand it or get to it because of lack of absolutes.	Reality can only be approximated but it is constructed through research and statistics. Interaction with research subjects is kept to a minimum. Validity comes from peers, not participants.	Researcher’s biases need to be controlled and not expressed in a study.	Use of scientific method and writing. Object of research is to create new knowledge. Deductive methods are important, such as testing of theories, specifying important variables, and comparisons among groups.
Social constructivism	Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others.	Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.	Individual values are honoured, and are negotiated among individuals.	More literary style of writing used. Use of inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing, and analysis of texts.
Pragmatism	Reality is what is useful, is practical, and “works”.	Reality is known through using many tools of research that reflect both deductive (objective) evidence and inductive (subjective) evidence.	Values are discussed because of the way that knowledge reflects both the researcher’s and the participants’ views.	The research process involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis.

*Source:* Adapted from Creswell (2013, p. 36–37).

## Setting and Sampling

‘Sampling’ refers to the process of drawing a sample from a given group or population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). As my investigation used quasi-experimental research the sample was selected. According to Johnson and Christensen (2007), a mixed method sample design has two dimensions: sample relationship and time orientation. The relationship between the samples used for quantitative and qualitative analysis is referred to as the ‘sample relationship’, and may be:

- *Identical*: both quantitative and qualitative sample have the same people;
- *Parallel*: participants in each sample are selected from the same population;
- *Nested*: the group of participants chosen for one phase of the study are drawn from a larger sample used at a different phase; or
- *Multilevel*: samples are taken from various levels of the study population.

Time orientation refers to the timing of quantitative and qualitative sampling, and may be concurrent or sequential. In concurrent sampling, qualitative and quantitative data are gathered at the same time from the same individual. In sequential sampling, the two types of data are gathered at different times from different participants. Therefore, there is a total of eight mixed method sample designs (Johnson & Christensen, 2007): identical concurrent; identical sequential; parallel concurrent; parallel sequential; nested concurrent; nested sequential; multilevel concurrent; and multilevel sequential. For this study, a nested sequential design was used and participants for both quantitative and qualitative data were selected at the different time. Interview sample was chosen after student completed post-test survey. Data collected from both samples were merged and analysed at analysis later stage.

In 2005, I received a scholarship from King Khalid University to study a Masters and PhD in Australia. The cultures of Saudi Arabia and Australia lie at opposite ends of a continuum and they differ greatly in value orientations. Saudi culture endorses large power distance but Australian culture endorses small power distance; educational methods in Saudi teaching depend on teacher-centred methods whereas Australian teaching depends more on student-centred methods (Hofstede, 2005). I have learned many things during my study in Australia, especially in relation to instructor and student communication. The cross-cultural experience of classroom communication confirmed for me the remark: “What teachers do and say can have powerful and pervasive effects on students’ intentions for learning, subsequent learning behaviors, and academic engagement” (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004, p. 97).

In my position as a college instructor at King Khalid University I realised that the students required a high level of input and assistance in deciding on the courses that would be most likely to help them reach their personal, academic, and career goals. During my time at the university, my approach with regard to student education shifted. Where I had previously focused on my teaching, I began to focus on student learning instead. I learned that a range of strategies for learning and teaching can be employed to meet the needs of students with varying skill levels and ways of learning, and this need not debilitate the progress of any student. In this situation, the instructor is more than a provider of knowledge; they become a facilitator or guide for the student’s learning. Ideally, I wanted the students to feel a sense of personal advancement as a result of their participation in the course. I became a strong advocate of active learning; I encouraged discussion and interaction and ensured that such discussion occurred in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance: an atmosphere ‘safe’ enough for candid discussion of even uncomfortable topics, where all opinions will be considered.

Traditionally, Saudi Arabian education uses a didactic pedagogy that creates a formal instructor-student relationship, limits students' freedom of expression in the classroom, and hampers free-flowing interaction between students and instructors (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010). Furthermore, classrooms in Saudi Arabian universities tend to be instructor-oriented, so instructors adopt an authoritative position and enforce certain performance standards and expectations upon students (Alkeaid, 2004).

As I have observed students at King Khalid University learning in traditional pedagogical practices, and having observed classrooms in which the lecturers immediacy has a form of pedagogy, I began to construct a rationale for a case study that had at its center an analysis of the relationship between pedagogy and immediacy. My research questions were situated and developed by my being an insider in the institution and it is important to note that the nature of the research, the subsequent analysis and interpretation is informed by my insiderness in the research. My identification as a lecturer within the institution and internal membership of the academic community at King Khalid University is aligned with the paradigm of 'complete member research' whereby the researchers are already fully immersed in the culture that they study. Such research confers on the investigator the unique advantage of 'being there', possessing an intimate understanding and feeling for the various issues at play.

An insider researcher one has to acknowledge how understanding accumulated over time of the organization's practices generates insight into the participants' meaning systems. It has been argued that this intimacy can have benefits leading to more penetrating analyses of data. Commonality in descriptions of behaviour across a range of interviews, reflection on the consistency of what was said with available documents and consistency with my own understandings from insider experience were used as supports when making such judgments. In this study, my insider positioning in the

analysis and interpretation of the data was useful/ problematic/ to gain a more complete understanding of the participant's experiences or feelings, resulting in the acquisition of deeper insight into the research questions.

The target population from which this sample was drawn consisted of both undergraduate students and instructors of the Syntax II course delivered in the Arabic Language Faculty at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia in 2011. After discussion with Dr. X about my research, I obtained approval from him to be a lecturer in the immediacy group. I contacted the instructors from the Faculty of Arabic Language who teach the same courses as Dr. X for permission to conduct the research with their classes. Two instructors agreed to participate in the research. During the second week of semester, I visited each participating class to invite the students to participate in the study. I announced and explained the nature of the research project and gave a packet of documents, which included the Participation Information Sheet (see Appendix I), Consent Form (see Appendix K), and questionnaire (see Appendices A). All documents were written in Arabic.

All participants were male, due to Saudi Arabia government's policy which requires gender segregation in educational institutions. Participants were divided into three groups: two control groups (Group 1 & 2), whose instructors used traditional teaching methods, and one immediacy group (Group 3), whose instructor exhibited high levels of verbal and nonverbal immediacy.

The control groups underwent a completely different teaching experience to the immediacy group. The primary teaching method was lecturing, which is common in Saudi Arabia universities (Alkeaid, 2004).

The instructor for the immediacy group, Dr. X, was a member of the Deanship of Academic Development and Quality. He has been lecturing at King Khalid

University for ten years. He was chosen for his excellence as an instructor, comprehensive knowledge of lesson content, teaching experience, and his use of high immediacy behaviours. While teaching the immediacy group, I observed him engaging students in co-operative learning, role play and discussion; he encouraged students to talk with him both inside and outside the classroom, employing an 'open-door policy'.

The independent variables were verbal and nonverbal immediacy. In the immediacy group, both of these variables were manipulated to be high by encouraging Dr. X to use many immediacy-producing verbal and nonverbal behaviours. Dr. X received a copy of the verbal and nonverbal immediacy scale and was asked to focus on the following, specific high-inference verbal immediacy behaviours:

- Use personal examples;
- Ask questions or encourage students to talk;
- Get into discussions based on something a student brings up;
- Use humour;
- Address students by name;
- Get into conversations with individual students;
- Provide feedback;
- Ask how students feel about an assignment;
- Invite students to telephone or meet outside of class if they have questions;
- Ask questions that solicit viewpoints; and
- Praise students' work, actions, and comments.

Dr. X was also asked to use the following high-inference, nonverbal immediacy behaviours: to adopt positive facial expressions, gestures and eye contact with each

student; to move around the classroom; to adopt a relaxed posture; and to use vocal variety. During his lectures, I observed Dr. X and gave him feedback regarding the targeted immediacy-producing behaviour categories.

Of the 44 participants in control group one, 33 (75%) responded; of the 51 participants in control group two, 42 (82%) responded; and of the 46 participants in the immediacy group, 40 (87%) responded. In total, 115 (81%) of 141 students participated. Four questionnaires were returned incomplete or missing more than 5% of responses.

The sample size in an interview needs to incorporate multiple participants to allow for some comparison and contrast between the perspectives of different participants (Polkinghorne, 2005). The number of individuals recommended for the interview is small. Some authors suggest as few as four and a maximum of eight persons (Krueger & Casey, 2009), whereas other authors determined 12 interviews to be a suitable sample size (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). To allow for adequate comparison and contrast, I chose five students from each group, that is, fifteen in total, who expressed their willingness to participate in an interview for this research.

## **Ethics**

Ethical conduct in the field of education research is crucial to minimise the risk of participants feeling hurt, embarrassed, frightened, or disturbed (Drew et al., 2008). An ethical position for the administration of studies is a foundation of research. Permission to conduct this research was obtained from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix L). Permission to administer the data collection instruments was obtained from the University Deputy for Higher Studies and Scientific Research at King Khalid University (see Appendix M). Johnson and Christensen (2004)

state that informed consent provides participants with a clear understanding of a research study and their role in it by outlining the following information:

- A summary of the research purpose and a description of its probable advantages;
- A clause stating that participants have the right to privacy during the data collection process and that data will be kept confidential; and
- Assurance that participants can remain anonymous.

Thus, the objectives of the study were clearly explained to all participants, and they were assured that participation was completely voluntary, that all responses would be confidential, and that only I would have access to their individual responses. Participants were also told that they could withdraw from the project at any time. All participants were required to sign a participation consent form prior to their involvement in the investigation. The contact information of me and my supervisors was provided in case participants had any further comments or inquiries.

In order to maintain confidentiality, participants were advised not to include any identifying information on the questionnaire. To maintain confidentiality, no real names were used. Instead, codes and numbers were assigned to ensure all participants took part. All efforts were made to shield the participants' identities and eliminate any potentially adverse effects. I viewed the completed questionnaires only. They are stored securely and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research.

### **Summary**

In summary, this quasi-experimental study aims to investigate instructors' verbal and nonverbal immediacy and its impacts on student communication and learning outcomes. The study sample consists of 115 undergraduate students from the Faculty of

Arabic Language at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia reporting on the behaviours of their instructors. The students were split into three groups: one immediacy group, where the instructor exhibited higher-immediacy behaviours, and two control groups, where more typical teaching methods for the university were demonstrated.

I believe that mixed method research offers the best possible outcome in research, as it combines and brings out the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative research, and for that reason chose it for use in this research. Both numeric data (surveys) and text information (interviews) were gathered to ensure that the final database was representative of quantitative and qualitative information. In the following two sections, more details about the quantitative and qualitative phases and the results of the study are discussed.

## Quantitative Research Phase

This section is divided into five parts: quantitative data collection; instruments; validity and reliability of instruments; quantitative data analysis; and quantitative results.

The dominant research method in the field of social science in the twentieth century was quantitative (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). Quantitative methods involve collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of numerical data. Quantitative research has often been considered an objective, methodical and formal way of using that data (Mertens, 2009). Quantitative research methodology originated in the physical sciences and involves rigorous testing of hypotheses using quantitative data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

### Data Collection

I explained the objectives of the study to the participants, and went on to assure them that participation was completely voluntary, that all responses would be anonymous and that only I would have access to their individual responses. Participants were also told that they could withdraw from the project at anytime without penalty. All participants were required to sign a participation consent form prior to their involvement in the investigation. The contact information of my supervisors and me was provided in case participants had any further comments or inquiries.

After signing the consent form, each participant was given the pre-test questionnaire. They were asked to write their unique identification code, consisting of four characters (the last two letters of his first name and the last two digits of his mobile phone number), in the top right corner of the questionnaire. The code was used again on the post-test questionnaire to ensure that participants' complete questionnaires could be

matched. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire within one week and return it to me. The pre-test questionnaire asked all three groups to assess their instructor's immediacy and their own personal communication and learning outcomes in one of the courses they had attended the previous semester, and the post-test questionnaire posed the same questions about the current class.

### **Instruments**

A basic assumption of the self-report methodology used to assess instructor immediacy in this study is that students are able to objectively report the behaviours they have observed their instructor performing. However, we must consider the possibility that individual student characteristics influence the way in which they report immediacy behaviours. If students' personalities or other individual differences influence how they report immediacy, this becomes a confounding factor in making an association between immediacy and learning, and between immediacy and communication. This issue was addressed by Frymier and Thompson (1995), who examined four different studies and concluded that individual differences between students do not influence the reporting of immediacy, providing support for the use of this methodology. Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by Witt et al. (2004) indicated that 74 of 81 studies published up to 2001 used data compiled from self-report questionnaires completed by students, demonstrating the technique is widely accepted as a data collection method.

In this study, I used a 'self-report' study to collect data. Keyton (2006) defines a self-administered study, or self-report, as one in which "individuals read and select a response on their own" (p. 162). McCroskey, Morreale and Brooks (1994) state that "affect is a privately experienced phenomenon and the only way to find out how the

person feels about something is to ask them” (p. 58). McCroskey et al. (1994) add that self-report surveys are not only valuable, but are also usually valid and easy to relate to affective studies. Further, surveys are an “in-depth project, seeking to understand why people differ in their descriptions of perception of an event” (Hocking et al., 2003, p. 239). At a basic level, surveys involve the collection of information, but they can take many different forms, including interviews and questionnaires. As such, surveys may fall into different categories of research depending on the area being studied, such as assessment, evaluation, analysis and review. Many surveys question people about their beliefs, intentions, attitudes, behaviours and emotions as a way of judging how that person may perceive or evaluate certain things (Hocking et al., 2003). For these reasons, I expected that the self-report surveys, which used Likert-type scales and physiological measurements, would accurately measure participants’ perceptions.

In this study, students completed the same survey at two different times: pre-test and post-test (Appendices A–G). The survey included 59 items divided into the following seven parts:

1. Twenty items evaluating the instructor’s verbal immediacy;
2. Ten items evaluating the instructors' nonverbal immediacy;
3. Five items clarifying their participation in the classroom;
4. Eight items rating their satisfaction with their communication with the instructor in the classroom;
5. Five items rating their motivation;
6. Sixteen items rating their affective learning; and
7. Ten items rating their cognitive learning.

The pre-test survey took place in the second week of a fifteen-week semester and the post-test survey took place in the eleventh week. It was expected that by the

time participants undertook the post-test survey, they would have become familiar with their instructors' typical communication behaviours. Students were divided into three groups: one immediacy group and two control groups.

Seven instruments were used in this research: verbal immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, students' class participation, students' communication satisfaction, students' motivation, affective learning and revised cognitive learning. Five of these instruments were applied using a Likert-style scale. The Likert scale measures the extent to which a person agrees or disagrees with a certain statement (Keyton, 2006). It is a summative, multidimensional scale that presents participants with a series of statements related to the research topic and asks them to rate their level of agreement or disagreement (Hocking et al., 2003). In this research, the Likert scale was used to identify perceived knowledge. A Likert scale should always include a neutral area, as well as both ends of an 'agree–disagree' spectrum (Hocking et al., 2003).

#### **Verbal immediacy measure (VIM).**

Immediacy measurement originated in the United States as a way of bridging the dichotomy between verbal and nonverbal immediacy in the classroom. The verbal immediacy instrument (see Appendix A) was developed by Gorham (1988), and is verified as trustworthy with reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.8 (Christophel, 1990), and .94 of (Gorham & Christophel, 1992). However, the process used by Gorham (1988) to generate the scale casts serious doubt on its validity (Robinson & Richmond, 1995). The verbal immediacy scale measures an instructor's in-class instructional communication behaviour.

This measure, which consists of 20 items, is used to gauge students' perceptions of their instructor's verbal immediacy behaviours. Each item raises a specific example of verbal immediacy behaviour and students are asked to rate how often their instructor

performs this behaviour on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = often, and 5 = very often. Items 9, 12, 15 and 18 are reverse scored when entering data.

### **Nonverbal immediacy measure (NIM).**

The NIM scale (see Appendix B) measures students' perceptions of their instructors' nonverbal immediacy behaviour. This method originated when Andersen (1979) used the Behavioural Indicators of Immediacy (BII) measure and Generalized Immediacy (GI) scales to gauge apparent instructor nonverbal immediacy. The high assumption on the BII and GI led to the advancement of a 14-item low-inference NIM (Richmond et al., 1987), which was later reduced to ten items (McCroskey et al., 1995). The Revised NIM (RNIM) is regularly used in research on instructor immediacy and appears to have high reliability and validity in the US classroom (McCroskey et al., 1995). Each of the ten items included in the RNIM is used to identify specific nonverbal immediacy behaviour on the part of the instructor. Students are required to rate how often they observe their instructor conducting a particular behaviour on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = often, and 5 = very often. Items 2, 5, 7 and 9 are reverse scored when entering data.

### **The class participation scale.**

The class participation scale (see Appendix C) consists of five items and asks participants to rate how often they participate during class on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = very often. Reliability coefficients ranging from .68 to 0.84 have been reported for the summed five-item scale (Fassinger, 2000). This study achieved acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha level of .94.

**The student motivation scale.**

The SMS (see Appendix D) was operationalised with Richmond's (1990) which consist of five items and asks participants to report on their motivation levels toward a specific course and instructor. Responses are solicited using a 7-point bipolar adjective scale. Students respond on a scale of 1 to 7 to items such as interested/uninterested, involved/uninvolved. Previous reliability coefficients ranging from .89 to .93 have been reported for the summed scale (Goodboy & Myers, 2008; Myers & Zhong, 2004; Weber et al., 2005). This study achieved acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha level of .85.

**The student communication satisfaction scale.**

The SCSS (see Appendix E) consists of eight items and measures the communication satisfaction an individual perceives when referring to an actual conversation. It utilises a 7-point Likert response format ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Items 7 and 8 are reverse scored when entering data. A previous reliability coefficient of .94 has been reported for the summed scale (Goodboy, Martin, & Bolkan. 2009). This study achieved acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha level of .91.

**The affective learning scale.**

The affective learning scale (see Appendix F) created by McCroskey et al. (1985). The scale was later modified by Gorham (1988) to delineate between the affective and behavioural learning components. It consists of 16 items and asks participants to rate their levels of affect for the course content, course instructor and behaviours recommended in the course. Students respond using four 7-point bipolar adjective subscales (bad/good, valuable/worthless, unfair/fair, positive/negative). Previous reliability coefficients of .96 have been reported for the summed scale (Ellis,

2004, Gorham, 1988). This study achieved acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha level of .93.

#### **The revised cognitive learning indicators scale.**

The revised cognitive learning indicators scale (see Appendix G) consists of ten items and asks participants to report on behaviours or activities associated with learning course content. Students respond using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = very often. Reliability coefficients ranging from .83 to .86 have been reported for the summed scale (Frymier, 2005; Frymier & Houser, 2000). Items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 10 were reverse scored when entering data. This study achieved acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha level of .89.

#### **Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

Validity and reliability are essential to mixed method design, playing a crucial role in the evaluation and determination of research quality (Cohen et al., 2011). Confirmation of quality depends greatly on validation of the research instruments to verify that they are interrelated with the data and assist in answering the research question (Punch, 2009).

Validity is the tendency of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure and therefore provide an empirical representation of that variable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). Validity is determined by logical analysis of the content, characteristics and constructs of the research, in this case as it relates to education (Punch, 2009). Criteria should be measured using empirical analysis that has a standard desired outcome (Punch, 2009). Validity can be promoted in various ways, including development of participant trust, use of precise interview data, triangulation from

numerous data sources, cautious sampling, adequate instruments and appropriate data analysis methods (Cohen et al., 2011).

Reliability is also essential for good research. Reliability refers to the consistency in application and outcome from a particular measuring instrument (Punch, 2009). A reliable instrument will produce similar findings for any sample from the overall population. The main components of reliability are stability and internal consistency (Cohen et al., 2011).

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were used in this study to prove the dependability of the measuring instrument. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients measure how dependable an instrument is by assessing the consistency of results between correlational analyses on all aspects of that instrument (Ho, 2006). Ho (2006) describes Cronbach's alpha in the following terms:

This is a single correlation coefficient that is an estimate of the average of all the correlation coefficients of the items within a test. If alpha is high (.80 or higher), then this suggests that all of the items are reliable and the entire test is internally consistent. If alpha is low, then at least one of the items is unreliable, and must be identified via item analysis procedure. (p. 240)

Cronbach's coefficient alpha level is usually viewed as excellent if alpha is greater than .9; good if alpha is greater than .8; acceptable if alpha is greater than .7; questionable if alpha is greater than .6; poor if alpha is greater than .5; and unacceptable if alpha is less than .5 (George & Mallery, 2003).

During iterative development of the questionnaire through discussion with scholar peers the validity of some instruments was queried due to concerns about other variables of interest. Consequently, for the verbal immediacy scale, Item 20 ('my instructor is addressed by his first name by the students') was excluded because it had

zero variance (no students in all three groups had ever addressed the instructor by his first name).

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, a standard measure of internal consistency and, therefore, reliability of an instrument in which researchers wish to link multiple items or scores in order to improve the meaningfulness or significance of their conclusion (Morgan et al., 2004). As stated earlier, if Cronbach's alpha coefficient is greater than .70 then the instrument is considered to be internally consistent and reliable (Morgan et al., 2004).

The scales used to measure content validity in the present study were derived from the advice of a large number of trustworthy researchers in the field of Communication Studies who had used these measurement instruments in the past. Content validity scales were produced for all seven instruments by assembling the item values. The scales were found to have excellent internal consistency. As shown in Table 5, the item-total correlations, which measure consistency within individual students' responses, were all higher than .80.

Table 3.3

*Scales Reliability*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Items Excluded</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
Verbal immediacy	19	Item 20	.90
Nonverbal immediacy	10	-	.87
Class participation	5	-	.94
Student motivation	5	-	.85
Student communication satisfaction	8	-	.91
Affective learning	16	-	.93
Cognitive learning	10	-	.89

The instruments were translated into Arabic by a professional translator, then back into English by a native Arabic speaker. Once the instruments were finalised, it was submitted to five Arabic education academics skilled in both spoken and written Arabic and English, and to six Arabic education staff. I asked them to examine the Arabic translation, including the words and phrases used. All twelve academics and staff confirmed that the Arabic version of the instruments were clear and consistent with the English version.

### **Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 18) was used for the initial screening of data and the subsequent analysis. The statistical technique used was the mixed model. The quantitative data analysis repeated-measures data was used, in which multiple measurements are made on the same subject under different conditions or across time. Repeated-measures data sets can be considered to be a type of two-level data, in which Level 2 represents the subjects and Level 1 represents the repeated measurements made on each subject (West, Welch, & Galecki, 2007). Covariates measured at Time 2 of the data describe between-subject variation, while Time 1 covariates describe within-subject variation. Repeated-measures data typically arise in a quasi-experimental setting, and often involve measurements made on the same subject over time (West, Welch, & Galecki, 2007). Descriptive statistics present the results of quantitative data analysis, and are frequently illustrated by tables or figures as described.

## Quantitative Results

### Descriptive statistics and normality assumptions.

Minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation scores were computed for each variable measured in the study. Tables 3.4 present these descriptive statistics for each group. The three groups obtained similar mean scores for all variables in the pre-test. Comparing between pre-test and post-test, control groups (Group 1 and 2) did not experience much of a mean score change in any of the variables. In contrast, mean scores for immediacy group (Group 3) appear to have increased in all the variables.

Table 3.4

#### *Descriptive Statistics for all Groups*

Variables	Group	Pre-test				Post-test			
		Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Verbal immediacy	1	31	38	34.35	1.73	30	40	34.50	2.25
	2	29	40	34.93	2.23	29	42	35.17	3.06
	3	28	41	35.08	2.83	79	91	85.60	2.54
Nonverbal immediacy	1	16	25	21.00	2.33	17	27	21.50	2.66
	2	16	26	20.51	2.15	16	24	20.71	1.72
	3	17	27	21.00	2.08	40	48	43.55	1.75
Motivation	1	6	17	11.10	2.46	6	18	11.59	3.20
	2	7	16	11.00	2.18	5	21	12.50	3.48
	3	6	17	11.84	2.74	27	35	31.00	2.08
Affective learning	1	27	37	32.93	2.08	28	37	33.20	2.46
	2	26	40	32.32	2.99	26	39	32.40	2.79
	3	28	37	33.55	2.14	78	92	85.50	3.68
Satisfaction	1	12	18	15.48	1.66	13	17	15.20	1.36
	2	11	19	15.98	1.43	10	19	16.00	1.67
	3	10	21	16.18	2.71	44	55	50.00	2.08
Participation	1	6	11	8.32	1.07	7	11	8.55	0.86

Variables	Group	Pre-test				Post-test			
		Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
	2	7	11	8.49	1.01	7	11	8.62	1.17
	3	7	11	8.75	1.15	20	24	22.10	0.93
	1	11	20	16.84	2.21	13	20	17.00	1.56
Cognitive learning	2	13	20	16.84	1.84	13	21	16.93	2.04
	3	14	19	17.22	1.27	41	47	44.12	1.55

To examine whether the distributions could be considered normal, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were conducted on each of the pre-test and post-test data for each group. The results are presented in Table 3.5. Most of the distributions are not significantly different compared with a normal distribution (i.e., they could be considered to be normally distributed). However, the following data distributions were deemed to be non-normal: (a) the Student Communication Satisfaction post-test data in Group 1; (b) the Affective Learning pre-test in Group 2; (c) the Class Participation pre-test in Group 2; and (d) the Class Participation pre-test and post-test in Group 3.

Table 3.5

*Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for all Groups*

Variables	Group	Pre-test			Post-test		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	1	0.105	33	0.200*	0.073	33	0.200*
Verbal Immediacy	2	0.099	42	0.200*	0.067	42	0.200*
	3	0.08	40	0.200*	0.091	40	0.200*
	1	0.127	33	0.194	0.085	33	0.200*
Nonverbal immediacy	2	0.088	42	0.200*	0.075	42	0.200*
	3	0.1	40	0.200*	0.1	40	0.200*
	1	0.125	33	0.200*	0.146	33	0.07
Motivation	2	0.099	42	0.200*	0.089	42	0.200*

Variables	Group	Pre-test			Post-test		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	3	0.073	40	0.200*	0.118	40	0.17
Affective learning	1	0.104	33	0.200*	0.104	33	0.200*
	2	0.148	42	0.021	0.135	42	0.052
	3	0.075	40	0.200*	0.066	40	0.200*
	1	0.13	33	0.174	0.159	33	0.033
Satisfaction	2	0.101	42	0.200*	0.107	42	0.200*
	3	0.085	40	0.200*	0.06	40	0.200*
	1	0.096	33	0.200*	0.072	33	0.200*
Class participation	2	0.128	42	0.08	0.114	42	0.195
	3	0.169	40	0.006	0.169	40	0.006
	1	0.095	33	0.200*	0.079	33	0.200*
Cognitive learning	2	0.089	42	0.200*	0.092	42	0.200*
	3	0.102	40	0.200*	0.097	40	0.200*

\*  $p < 0.05$

### Correlations among variables.

Tables 3.6 to 3.8 present the correlations among variables measured in this study.

It is apparent that verbal immediacy predicts all the outcome variables in all three groups. Thus, higher verbal immediacy is associated with higher motivation, satisfaction, participation, affective learning and cognitive learning. Nonverbal immediacy predicts all the outcome variables except cognitive learning. Thus, higher nonverbal immediacy is associated with higher motivation, satisfaction, participation and affective learning. Similarly, higher motivation is associated with higher satisfaction, participation, affective learning and cognitive learning.

Table 3.6

*Correlations between Variables at Post-test for Group 1*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Verbal immediacy	1						
2.Nonverbal immediacy	0.44**	1					
3.Motivation	0.73**	0.63**	1				
4.Affective learning	0.64**	0.60**	0.61**	1			
5.Satisfaction	0.57**	0.49**	0.52**	0.50**	1		
6.Participation	0.52**	0.39**	0.47**	0.43**	0.40**	1	
7.Cognitive learning	0.41**	0.006	0.33**	0.32**	0.27*	0.24*	1

Note : \* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.001

Table 3.7

*Correlations between Variables at Post-test for Group 2*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Verbal immediacy	1						
2.Nonverbal immediacy	0.400**	1					
3.Motivation	0.700**	0.610**	1				
4.Affective learning	0.620**	0.600**	0.560**	1			
5.Satisfaction	0.540**	0.480**	0.500**	0.470**	1		
6.Participation	0.500**	0.370**	0.440**	0.390**	0.370**	1	
7.Cognitive learning	0.400**	0.005	0.310**	0.290*	0.240*	0.210*	1

Note : \* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.001

Table 3.8

Correlations between Variables at Post-test for Group 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Verbal immediacy	1						
2.Nonverbal immediacy	0.540**	1					
3.Motivation	0.820**	0.730**	1				
4.Affective learning	0.750**	0.650**	0.700**	1			
5.Satisfaction	0.660**	0.570**	0.610**	0.560**	1		
6.Participation	0.600**	0.460**	0.540**	0.500**	0.480**	1	
7.Cognitive learning	0.490**	0.002	0.440**	0.400*	0.360*	0.320*	1

Note : \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.001$

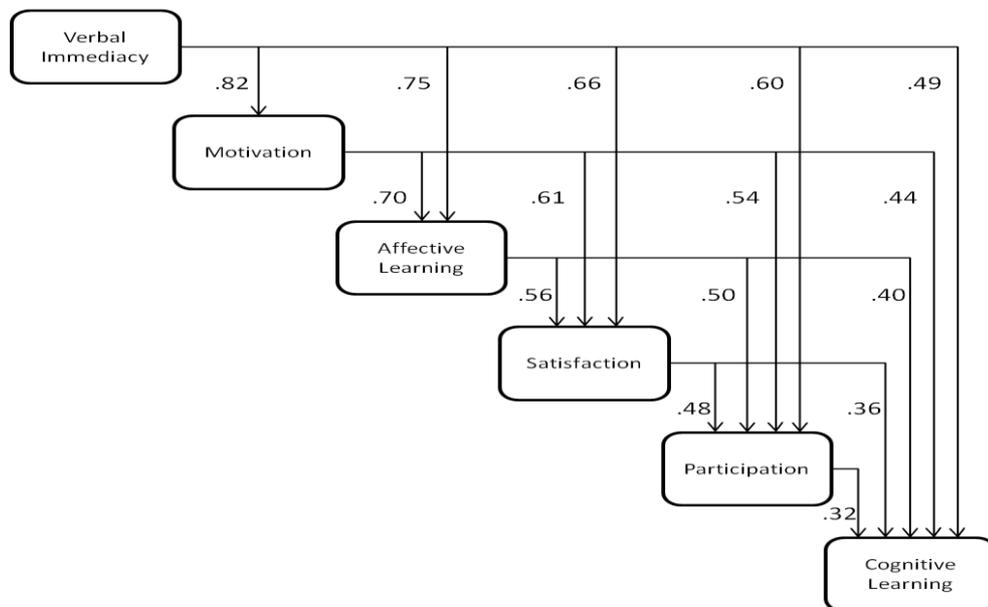


Figure 3.3. Correlations between verbal immediacy and dependent variables at post-test for immediacy group

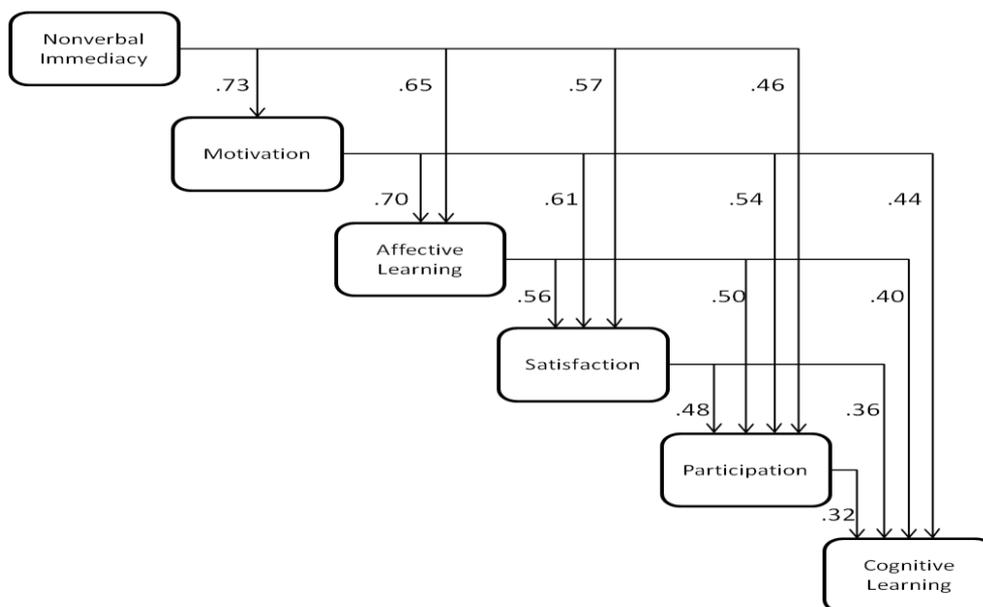


Figure 3.4. Correlations between nonverbal immediacy and dependent variables at post-test for immediacy group

## Research Question Results

**Research Question 1.** *What verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices are evident in the classroom at King Khalid University?*

To address the first research question, a number of tests were performed. Within each group, pre- and post-test scores were compared. For Groups 1 and 2 (control groups), the expectation is that there are no significant differences between the pre- and post-tests. For Group 3 (the immediacy group), the expectation is that the post-test score will be significantly higher than the pre-test score. Results supporting these predictions are presented first for verbal immediacy, then for nonverbal immediacy.

**Verbal immediacy.** Table 3.9 shows confidence intervals of 95% comparing verbal immediacy pre-test and post-tests scores for each group. For Groups 1 and 2, the confidence intervals overlap substantially, suggesting that the difference between pre- and post-test scores for these groups is likely due to chance. In contrast, for Group 3, the

confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that the difference between pre- and post-test scores for this group is not due to chance.

Table 3.9

*Confidence Intervals of Pre-test and Post-test Verbal Immediacy Scores for Each Group*

Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Pre	34.35	0.40	33.55	35.14
	Post	34.50	0.46	33.59	35.41
2	Pre	34.93	0.36	34.22	35.63
	Post	35.17	0.41	34.37	35.98
3	Pre	35.08	0.37	34.36	35.81
	Post	85.60	0.42	84.78	86.43

To further examine this trend, an ANOVA was performed with time, group and time\*group interaction as predictors. The results are displayed in Table 3.10. The main effects of time and group were both statistically significant. What is important to highlight here is the significant interaction effect between group and time ( $F(2, 115) = 24922.404, p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that the increase in verbal immediacy is significant, but only in one of the groups (i.e., Group 3). Figure 3.5 further confirms this result.

Table 3.10

*Interaction between Group and Time for Verbal Immediacy*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	115	36763.45	0
Group	2	115	1472.232	0
Time	1	115	24729.948	0
Group * time	2	115	24922.404	0

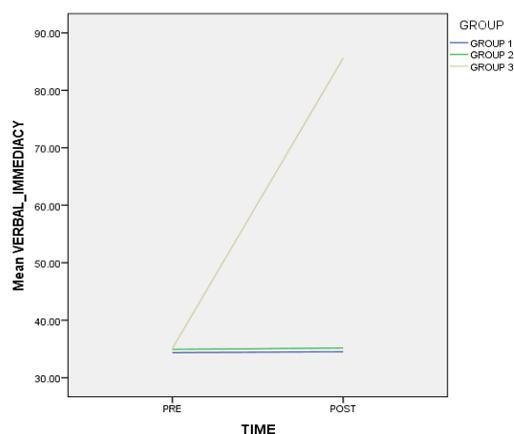


Figure.3.5. Time vs. mean score verbal immediacy

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test between each 'post-test' group also show that Group 3 has a significantly higher post-test verbal immediacy score compared to Groups 1 and 2. On the other hand, Groups 1 and 2 did not differ in terms of their post-test verbal immediacy scores.

Table 3.11

*Comparisons of Verbal Immediacy Post-tests between Groups*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-0.63	0.56	115	0.801	-1.99	0.74
	3	-25.92*	0.57	115	0	-27.29	-24.54
2	1	0.63	0.56	115	0.801	-0.74	1.99
	3	-25.29*	0.53	115	0	-26.59	-24.00
3	1	25.92*	0.57	115	0	24.54	27.29
	2	25.29*	0.53	115	0	24.00	26.59

\* p < 0.05

*Nonverbal immediacy.* Table 3.12 shows the 95% confidence intervals comparing nonverbal immediacy pre-test and post-tests scores for each group. It can be seen that for Groups 1 and 2, the confidence intervals overlap substantially, indicating that the difference between pre- and post-test scores for these groups are likely due to chance. In contrast, for Group 3, the confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that the difference between pre- and post-test scores for this group is not due to chance.

Table 3.12

*Confidence Intervals Comparing Nonverbal Immediacy Pre-test and Post-test Scores*

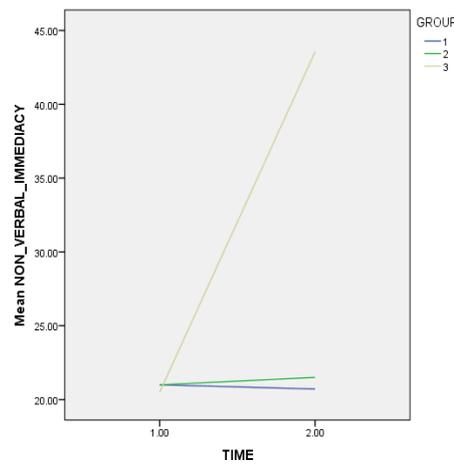
Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	df	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Pre-test	21.004	0.375	115.000	20.261	21.747
	Post-test	21.500	0.350	115.000	20.806	22.194
2	Pre-test	20.507	0.332	115.000	19.848	21.165
	Post-test	20.710	0.311	115.000	20.095	21.325
3	Pre-test	21.000	0.341	115.000	20.325	21.675
	Post-test	43.550	0.318	115.000	42.920	44.180

To further examine this trend, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with time, group and time\*group interaction as the predictors. The results are displayed in Table 3.13. The main effects of group and time were statistically significant. What is more important to highlight here is the significant interaction effect between group and time ( $F(2, 115) = 9526.430, p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that the increase in nonverbal immediacy is significant but only in one of the groups (i.e., Group 3). Figure 3.6 further confirms this result.

Table 3.13

*Interaction between Group and Time on Nonverbal Immediacy*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	115.000	16634.096	.000
Group	2	115.000	405.620	.000
Time	1	115.000	10107.783	.000
Group*time	2	115.000	9526.430	.000



*Figure 3.6.* Time vs. mean score for nonverbal immediacy

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test between each post-test group also show that Group 3 has a significantly higher post-test nonverbal immediacy score compared with Groups 1 ( $M_D = 11.023$ ,  $SD = 0.481$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and 2 ( $M_D = 11.667$ ,  $SD = 0.451$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). On the other hand, Groups 1 and 2 did not differ in terms of their post-test nonverbal immediacy scores (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14

*Comparisons of Nonverbal Immediacy Post-test Scores Between Groups*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	0.644	0.475	115.000	0.535	-0.511	1.799
	3	-11.023*	0.481	115.000	0.000	-12.191	-9.855
2	1	-0.644	0.475	115.000	0.535	-1.799	0.511
	3	-11.667*	0.451	115.000	0.000	-12.764	-10.570
3	1	11.023*	0.481	115.000	0.000	9.855	12.191
	2	11.667*	0.451	115.000	0.000	10.570	12.764

\* p &lt; 0.05

**Research Question 2.** *To what extent is instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy related to student class participation?*

To address this question, bivariate correlations between immediacy and class participation were performed. The results (Table 3.15) show that there is a strong positive relationship between verbal immediacy and class participation, i.e., higher verbal immediacy is strongly associated with more class participation. The same is seen for nonverbal immediacy, although the magnitude of the relationship is more moderate. These associations were consistent across the three groups.

Table 3.15

*Correlations between Immediacy and Class Participation (CP) (Post-test)*

Type of Immediacy	CP Group 1	CP Group 2	CP Group 3
Verbal immediacy	.520**	.500**	.600**
Nonverbal immediacy	.390*	.370*	.460**

\* p &lt; 0.05; \*\* p &lt; 0.001

To examine the relationship between experimental intervention and class participation, confidence intervals of the difference between pre- and post-test participation scores (adjusted for verbal and nonverbal immediacy) were computed. The results are presented in Table 3.16. For both control groups, the confidence intervals overlap, indicating that any difference between pre- and post-tests were due to chance. For the immediacy group (Group 3), the confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that it was unlikely that the increase in class participation from pre- to post-test were due to chance.

Table 3.16

*Adjusted Mean Score for Class Participation, Adjusted for Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy*

Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	df	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Pre-test	9.871	0.285	183.070	9.309	10.432
	Post-test	10.041	0.267	158.527	9.514	10.568
2	Pre-test	10.013	0.270	180.508	9.482	10.545
	Post-test	10.093	0.254	157.932	9.591	10.594
3	Pre-test	10.209	0.264	181.761	9.688	10.730
	Post-test	14.983	1.063	171.646	12.886	17.081

To further test whether the intervention impacted class participation, an ANOVA was performed with time (pre-test vs. post-test), group and time\*group interaction as predictors (as well as verbal and nonverbal immediacy as covariates). Table 3.17 shows that the main effects of group and time are both statistically significant. Furthermore, the interaction between group and time was also significant, meaning that the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test

participation scores depended upon the group. Figure 3.7 indicates that the increase in class participation occurred only in the immediacy group.

Table 3.17

*Interaction between Group and Time on Class Participation, Controlling for Immediacy*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	172.158	6.563	.011
Group	2	135.688	135.688	.001
Time	1	174.166	15.096	.000
Verbal Immediacy	1	176.174	29.909	.000
Nonverbal Immediacy	1	215.617	7.465	.007
Group*time	2	134.416	7.078	.001

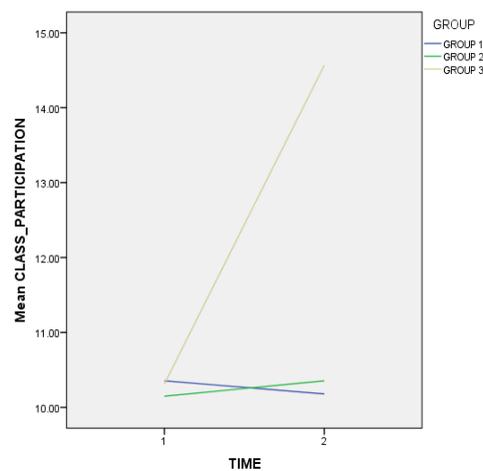


Figure 3.7. Time vs. mean score for class participation

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test are presented in Table 3.18, showing that there are no significant differences between the groups during pre-test. However at post-test, the immediacy group (Group 3) had significantly higher classroom participation scores compared with both Group 1 ( $M_D = 4.942$ ,  $SD = 1.292$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Group 2 ( $M_D = 4.890$ ,  $SD = 1.286$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 3.18

*Pairwise Comparison of Mean Difference on Class Participation for Pre-test and Post-test*

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre-test	1	2	-0.143	0.224	112.215	1.000	-0.687	0.402
		3	-0.338	0.226	111.567	0.411	-0.888	0.211
	2	1	0.143	0.224	112.215	1.000	-0.402	0.687
		3	-0.195	0.212	111.148	1.000	-0.711	0.320
	3	1	0.338	0.226	111.567	0.411	-0.211	0.888
		2	0.195	0.212	111.148	1.000	-0.320	0.711
Post-test	1	2	-0.052	0.199	111.832	1.000	-0.535	0.432
		3	-4.942*	1.292	171.426	0.001	-8.065	-1.819
	2	1	0.052	0.199	111.832	1.000	-0.432	0.535
		3	-4.890*	1.286	171.382	0.001	-7.999	-1.782
	3	1	4.942*	1.292	171.426	0.001	1.819	8.065
		2	4.890*	1.286	171.382	0.001	1.782	7.999

\*  $p < 0.05$

**Research Question 3.** *What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student motivation?*

To address this question, the immediacy scores were correlated with motivation for each group at post-test. The results (see Table 3.19) show that both types of immediacy positively and strongly correlated with motivation; that is, higher verbal and nonverbal immediacy are associated with higher motivation. Verbal immediacy (compared with nonverbal immediacy) has a slightly stronger relationship with motivation. Also, the correlations are slightly stronger for the immediacy group.

Table 3.19

*Correlation between Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy and Motivation (MO)  
(Post-test)*

Type of Immediacy	MO Group 1	MO Group 2	MO Group 3
Verbal immediacy	.730**	.700**	.820**
Nonverbal immediacy	.630**	.610**	.730**

\*\* p < 0.001

To examine the relationship between experimental intervention and student motivation, confidence intervals of the difference between pre-test and post-test motivation scores (adjusted for verbal and nonverbal immediacy) were computed. The results are presented in Table 3.20. For both control groups, the confidence intervals overlap, indicating that any difference between pre-test and post-test were due to chance. For the immediacy group (Group 3), the confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that it is unlikely that the increase in motivation from pre-test to post-test was due to chance.

Table 3.20

*Adjusted Mean Scores of Student Motivation, Adjusted for Immediacy*

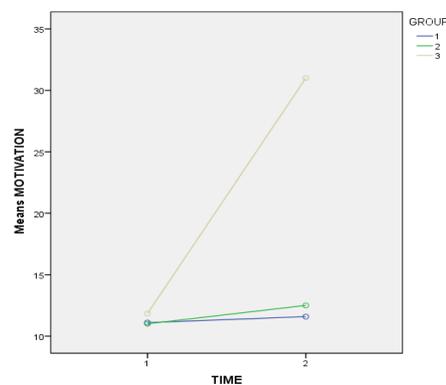
Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1	10.814	0.918	8.996	12.633
	2	13.590	0.943	11.722	15.458
2	1	10.620	0.814	9.008	12.232
	2	12.500	0.836	10.844	14.156
3	1	12.147	0.834	10.495	13.799
	2	31.000	0.856	29.303	32.697

To further test whether the intervention impacted motivation, an ANOVA was performed with time (pre-test vs. post-test), group and time\*group interaction as predictors (as well as verbal and nonverbal immediacy as covariates). Table 3.21 shows that the main effects of group and time on motivation are both statistically significant. Furthermore, the interaction between group and time was also significant, meaning that the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test motivation scores depended upon the group. Figure 3.8, indicates that the increase in motivation occurred only in the immediacy group.

Table 3.21

*Interaction between Group and Time on Student Motivation, Controlling for Immediacy*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	156.997	68.708	.000
Group	2	128.621	24.491	.000
Time	1	167.622	43.113	.000
Verbal immediacy	1	201.134	116.088	.000
Nonverbal immediacy	1	180.927	30.142	.000
Group*time	2	129.940	35.017	.000



*Figure 3.8. Time vs. mean score for student motivation*

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test are presented in Table 3.22. The results show that there are no significant differences between the groups during pre-test. However at post-test, the immediacy group (Group 3) had significantly higher motivation scores compared to both Groups 1 ( $M_D = 17.410$ ,  $SD = 2.883, p < 0.000$ ) and Group 2 ( $M_D = 18.500$ ,  $SD = 2.860, p < 0.000$ ).

Table 3.22

*Pairwise Comparison of Mean Difference on Motivation for Pre-test and Post-test*

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>c</sup>	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre-test	1	2	0.194	0.399	106.800	1.000	-2.787	3.175
		3	-1.333	0.402	106.087	0.854	-4.346	1.681
	2	1	-0.194	0.399	106.800	1.000	-3.175	2.787
		3	-1.527	0.377	105.371	0.578	-4.358	1.304
	3	1	1.333	0.402	106.087	0.854	-1.681	4.346
		2	1.527	0.377	105.371	0.578	-1.304	4.358
Post-test	1	2	1.090	0.433	108.268	1.000	-1.973	4.153
		3	-17.410*	2.883	165.174	0.000	-20.506	-14.314
	2	1	-1.090	0.433	108.268	1.000	-4.153	1.973
		3	-18.500*	2.860	163.787	0.000	-21.409	-15.591
	3	1	17.410*	2.883	165.174	0.000	14.314	20.506
		2	18.500*	2.860	163.787	0.000	15.591	21.409

\*  $p < 0.05$

**Research Question 4.** *What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student communication satisfaction?*

To address this question, the immediacy scores were correlated with satisfaction for each group at the post-test. The results (see Table 3.23) show that both types of immediacy positively correlated with communication satisfaction, i.e., higher verbal and nonverbal immediacy are associated with higher satisfaction. Verbal immediacy (compared with nonverbal immediacy) has a stronger relationship with satisfaction. Also, the correlations are stronger for the immediacy group.

Table 3.23

*Correlations between Immediacy and Communication Satisfaction (CS)  
(Post-test)*

Type of immediacy	CS Group 1	CS Group 2	CS Group 3
Verbal immediacy	.570**	.540**	.660**
Nonverbal immediacy	.490**	.480**	.570**

\*\* p < 0.001

To examine the relationship between experimental intervention and communication satisfaction, confidence intervals of the difference between pre- and post-test satisfaction scores (adjusted for verbal and nonverbal immediacy) were computed. The results are presented in Table 3.24, it can be seen that for both control groups, the confidence intervals overlap, indicating that any difference between pre- and post-tests were due to chance. For the immediacy group (Group 3), the confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that it is unlikely that the increase in satisfaction from pre-test to post-test was due to chance.

Table 3.24

*Adjusted Mean Score for Student Communication Satisfaction, Adjusted for Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy*

Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	df	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1	18.431	0.495	174.488	17.455	19.408
	2	18.008	0.453	144.274	17.112	18.904
2	1	18.904	0.467	170.241	17.983	19.825
	2	18.824	0.430	142.178	17.973	19.674
3	1	18.960	0.458	172.610	18.056	19.864
	2	36.435	1.827	151.848	32.826	40.044

To further test whether the intervention impacted satisfaction, an ANOVA was performed with time (pre-test vs. post-test), group and time\*group interaction as predictors (as well as verbal and nonverbal immediacy as covariates). Table 3.25 shows that the main effects of group and time are both statistically significant. Furthermore, the interaction between group and time was also significant, meaning that the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test satisfaction scores depended upon the group. Figure 3.9, indicates that the increase in satisfaction occurred only in the immediacy group.

Table 3.25

*Interaction between Group and Time on Communication Satisfaction, Controlling for Immediacy*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	150.565	10.017	.002
Group	2	126.232	33.206	.000
Time	1	155.349	57.996	.000
Verbal immediacy	1	165.914	28.851	.000
Nonverbal immediacy	1	194.570	14.033	.000
Group*time	2	126.663	34.282	.000

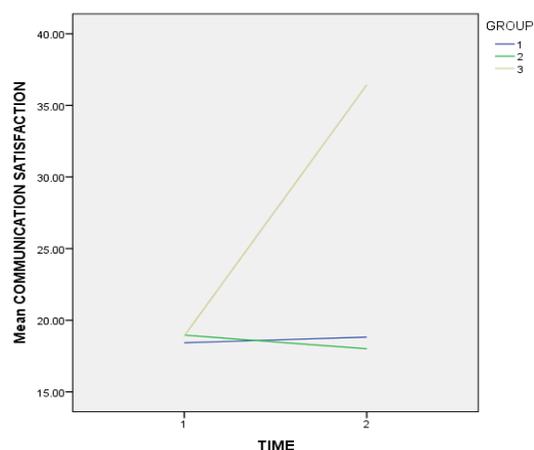


Figure 3.9. Time vs. mean score for communication satisfaction

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test are presented in Table 3.26. The results show that there are no significant differences between the groups during pre-test. However at post-test, the immediacy group (Group 3) had significantly higher satisfaction scores compared with Group 1 ( $M_D = 18.427$ ,  $SD = 2.221, p < 0.000$ ) and Group 2 ( $M_D = 17.611$ ,  $SD = 2.209, p < 0.000$ ).

Table 3.26

*Pairwise Comparison of Mean Difference on Communication Satisfaction for Pre-test and Post-test*

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>c</sup>	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre- test	1	2	-0.472	0.396	109.107	0.705	-1.434	0.490
		3	-0.528	0.399	108.434	0.564	-1.499	0.442
	2	1	0.472	0.396	109.107	0.705	-0.490	1.434
		3	-0.056	0.375	108.010	1.000	-0.967	0.855
	3	1	0.528	0.399	108.434	0.564	-0.442	1.499

		2	0.056	0.375	108.010	1.000	-0.855	0.967
Post-test	1	2	-0.815*	0.325	108.944	0.041	-1.606	-0.025
		3	-18.427*	2.221	151.939	0.000	-23.803	-13.051
	2	1	0.815*	0.325	108.944	0.041	0.025	1.606
		3	-17.611*	2.209	151.552	0.000	-22.958	-12.264
	3	1	18.427*	2.221	151.939	0.000	13.051	23.803
		2	17.611*	2.209	151.552	0.000	12.264	22.958

\*  $p < 0.05$

**Research Question 5.** *Is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning?*

To address this question, the immediacy scores were correlated with affective learning for each group at post-test. The results (see Table 3.27) show that both types of immediacy positively and strongly correlated with affective learning, i.e., higher verbal and nonverbal immediacy are associated with more affective learning. The correlations seem to be slightly stronger for the immediacy group.

Table 3.27

*Correlation between Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy and Affective Learning (AF) (Post-test)*

Type of Immediacy	AF Group 1	AF Group 2	AF Group 3
Verbal immediacy	.640**	.620**	.750**
Nonverbal immediacy	.600**	.600**	.650**

\*\*  $p < 0.001$

To examine the relationship between experimental intervention and affective learning, confidence intervals of the difference between pre-test and post-test affective learning scores (adjusted for verbal and nonverbal immediacy) were computed. The

results are presented in Table 3.28; for both control groups, the confidence intervals overlap, indicating that any difference between pre-test and post-tests were due to chance. For the immediacy group (Group 3), the confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that it is unlikely that the increase in affective learning scores from pre-test to post-test was due to chance.

Table 3.28

*Adjusted Mean Scores of Affective Learning, Adjusted for Immediacy*

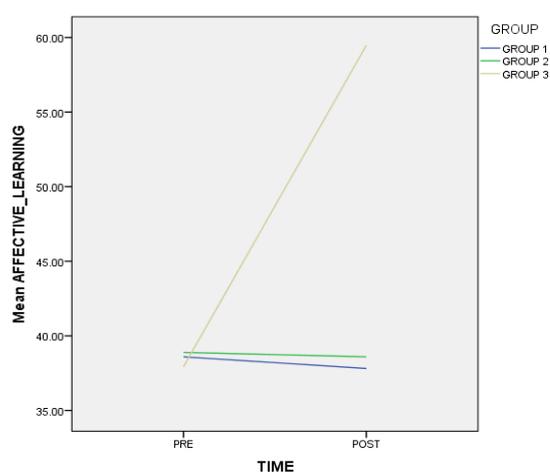
Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	df	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1	38.593	0.678	148.988	37.254	39.932
	2	38.595	0.690	145.588	37.233	39.958
2	1	37.928	0.638	145.076	36.667	39.188
	2	37.814	0.643	142.990	36.544	39.084
3	1	38.891	0.626	147.189	37.654	40.128
	2	59.474	2.713	149.982	54.112	64.835

To further test whether the intervention impacted affective learning, an ANOVA was performed with time (pre-test vs. post-test), group and time\*group interaction as predictors (as well as verbal and nonverbal immediacy as covariates). Table 3.29 shows that the main effects of group and time on affective learning are both statistically significant. Furthermore, the interaction between group and time was also significant, meaning that the significance of the difference between pre- and post-test affective learning scores depended upon the group. Figure 3.10 indicates that the increase in affective learning occurred only in the immediacy group.

Table 3.29

*Impact of Time, Group and Time\*Group Interaction on Affective Learning*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	143.457	19.051	.000
Group	2	123.066	23.542	.000
Time	1	154.138	38.255	.000
Verbal immediacy	1	183.123	43.387	.000
Nonverbal immediacy	1	166.583	25.418	.000
Group*time	2	127.268	20.312	.000

*Figure 3.10. Time vs. mean score of affective learning*

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test are presented in Table 3.30; the results show that there are no significant differences between the groups during pre-test. However at post-test, the immediacy group (Group 3) had significantly higher affective learning scores compared with Group 1 ( $M_D = 20.878$ ,  $SD = 3.309$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) and Group 2 ( $M_D = 21.660$ ,  $SD = 3.277$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ).

Table 3.30

*Pairwise Comparison of Mean Difference on Affective Learning over Time*

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>c</sup>	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre-test	1	2	0.666	0.440	112.273	0.400	-0.404	1.735
		3	-0.298	0.443	111.633	1.000	-1.374	0.778
	2	1	-0.666	0.440	112.273	0.400	-1.735	0.404
		3	-0.963	0.415	110.917	0.066	-1.972	0.045
	3	1	0.298	0.443	111.633	1.000	-0.778	1.374
		2	0.963	0.415	110.917	0.066	-0.045	1.972
Post-test	1	2	0.781	0.505	103.066	0.376	-0.449	2.011
		3	-20.878*	3.309	150.768	0.000	-28.888	-12.868
	2	1	-0.781	0.505	103.066	0.376	-2.011	0.449
		3	-21.660*	3.277	149.544	0.000	-29.594	-13.725
	3	1	20.878*	3.309	150.768	0.000	12.868	28.888
		2	21.660*	3.277	149.544	0.000	13.725	29.594

\*  $p < 0.05$

**Research Question 6.** *To what extent is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning?*

To address this question, the immediacy scores were correlated with cognitive learning for each group at post-test. The results (see Table 3.31) show that only verbal immediacy correlated positively with cognitive learning, i.e., higher verbal (but not nonverbal) immediacy is associated with more cognitive learning. The correlation seems to be slightly stronger for the immediacy group.

Table 3.31

*Correlations between Immediacy and Cognitive Learning (CL) (Post-test)*

Type of Immediacy	CL Group 1	CL Group 2	CL Group 3
Verbal immediacy	.410	.400	.490
Nonverbal immediacy	.006	.005	.002

To examine the relationship between experimental intervention and cognitive learning, confidence intervals of the difference between pre-test and post-test cognitive learning scores (adjusted for verbal and nonverbal immediacy) were computed. The results are presented in Table 3.32, it can be seen that for both control groups, the confidence intervals overlap, indicating that any difference between pre-test and post-tests were due to chance. For the immediacy group (Group 3), the confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that it is unlikely that the increase in cognitive learning scores from pre-test to post-test was due to chance.

Table 3.32

*Confidence Intervals for Cognitive Learning, Adjusted for Immediacy*

Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	df	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Pre-test	18.324	0.538	176.623	17.262	19.385
	Post-test	18.472	0.517	157.067	17.451	19.492
2	Pre-test	18.212	0.510	173.718	17.207	19.218
	Post-test	18.271	0.490	156.111	17.303	19.238
3	Pre-test	18.585	0.498	175.096	17.601	19.569
	Post-test	37.464	2.060	176.951	33.399	41.529

To further test whether the intervention impacted cognitive learning, an ANOVA was performed with time (pre-test vs. post-test), group and time\*group

interaction as predictors (as well as verbal and nonverbal immediacy as covariates).

Table 3.33 shows that the main effects of group, time and verbal immediacy on cognitive learning are statistically significant, while the main effect of nonverbal immediacy was not significant. Furthermore, the interaction between group and time was also significant, meaning that the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test cognitive learning scores depended upon the group. Figure 3.11 indicates that the increase in cognitive learning occurred only in the immediacy group.

Table 3.33

*Impact of Time, Group and Time\*Group Interaction on Cognitive Learning*

Source	Numerator df	Denominator df	F	Sig.
Intercept	1	174.802	43.021	.000
Group	2	133.062	28.787	.000
Time	1	179.756	58.026	.000
Verbal immediacy	1	192.497	12.928	.000
Nonverbal immediacy	1	214.578	0.139	.709
Group*time	2	132.124	29.346	.000

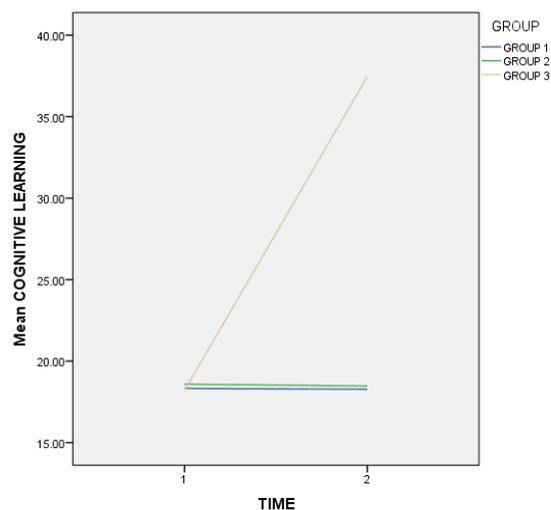


Figure 3.11. Time vs. mean score cognitive learning

The results of Bonferroni's post-hoc multiple comparison test are presented in Table 3.34, the results show that there are no significant differences between the groups during pre-test. However at post-test, the immediacy group (Group 3) had significantly higher cognitive learning scores compared to both Group 1 ( $M_D = 18.993$ ,  $SD = 2.505, p < 0.000$ ) and Group 2 ( $M_D = 19.194$ ,  $SD = 2.491, p < 0.000$ ).

Table 3.34

*Pairwise Comparison of Mean Difference on Cognitive Learning over Time*

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sig.	95% Confidence	
							Interval for Difference	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre- test	1	2	0.111	0.400	111.170	1.000	-0.861	1.083
		3	-0.261	0.403	110.468	1.000	-1.241	0.719
	2	1	-0.111	0.400	111.170	1.000	-1.083	0.861
		3	-0.373	0.379	109.940	0.982	-1.293	0.548
	3	1	0.261	0.403	110.468	1.000	-0.719	1.241
		2	0.373	0.379	109.940	0.982	-0.548	1.293
Post- test	1	2	0.201	0.381	105.730	1.000	-0.725	1.127
		3	-18.993*	2.505	176.815	0.000	-25.047	-12.939
	2	1	-0.201	0.381	105.730	1.000	-1.127	0.725
		3	-19.194*	2.491	176.334	0.000	-25.215	-13.172
	3	1	18.993*	2.505	176.815	0.000	12.939	25.047
		2	19.194*	2.491	176.334	0.000	13.172	25.215

\*  $p < 0.05$

## Qualitative Research Phase

In this section, I will divide discussion of the qualitative methods used into four sections: qualitative data collection; interview measure; validity and reliability of the interview; and qualitative data analysis and results.

Qualitative research requires evaluation of unstructured material, usually obtained via formal approaches such as interviews, focus groups, ethnography, evaluation and content analysis. Researchers undertaking qualitative data analyses develop themes by inductive and iterative means, then use these themes to categorise information and attribute holistic meaning to the results (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

According to Cohen et al. (2011), interviews are a critical research method because they can be both informal and unstructured. The interviewer has a unique opportunity to see into the heart and soul of another person and to gain a deep understanding of their perspective on a specific idea or topic (Drew et al., 2008). A qualitative interview usually seeks to elicit a wide range of in-depth data and gain insight on participants' perspectives, perceptions and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). For this reason, it can effectively extract profound information on participants' philosophies, beliefs, ideas, interpretations, motivations and emotions as they relate to the relevant topic. Researchers undertaking qualitative interviews are free to query participants in such a way as to obtain clear, responsive and additional information (Cohen et al., 2011).

Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that there are four types of interviews: semi-structured, structured, non-directed and focused. This study used a semi-structured interview design with the aim of gaining effective insight into the research question,

while allowing scope for participants to change the direction of the interview if they so desired. The interview aimed to investigate how students' perceptions of affective learning and the instructor's verbal and nonverbal behaviours related to their communication and learning outcomes.

### **Data Collection**

Qualitative data collection in this study was based on information gained through interviews. One of the most important advantages of a personal interview as a research method is that the researcher develops a rapport with the interviewee. Interviews it has been suggested, are particularly useful for tackling complex issues (Creswell, 2013) As a qualitative interview, one or more participants are asked open-ended questions and their responses are recorded for analysis using audio recording and note taking (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). A good relationship and flexibility with the participant(s) helps the researcher gain a more complete understanding of the participant's experiences or feelings, resulting in the acquisition of deeper insight into the research question (Cohen et al., 2011). Parallel to the semi-structured interview approach, interview questions were derived from the participants' previous questionnaire responses. The flow of the questions was flexible and the researcher followed the participants' pace rather than adhering to the strict schedule of questions (Creswell, 2008). The probing technique that was used to extract information from the participants is described in the following section.

Following the post-test questionnaire, five students from each group were selected who indicated willingness to participate in an interview. The interviews were conducted with students in Arabic in my office in the Faculty of Education at King Khalid University. Students were reminded of the research topic at the beginning of the

interview, and the entire session was recorded. Throughout the interview, I took notes to remind himself of areas of further queries or that required clarification, so as to avoid disrupting the flow of the interview. The students were questioned further on these topics before the conclusion of the interview.

By using a semi-structured interview, I tried to gain a more complete understanding of the participant's experiences or feelings, resulting in the acquisition of deeper insight into the research questions. Techniques such as 'minimal encouraging' were used to maintain rapport and encourage participants to continue talking and expand upon their ideas and views, giving me a better understanding of the participants' perspectives. At the end of each interview, the interviewee was thanked and given an opportunity to ask any questions with regard to the interviews and the research.

### **Interview Measure**

I designed the interview consisted of questions to investigate the individual's thoughts, feelings and recommendations relating to each of the six research questions (see Appendix H) and informed by quantitative results from the first phase of the study. The first question evaluated student's perceptions of their instructors' immediacy practice. The second question sought to gather an understanding about student's motivations to learn, based on their instructors' immediacy practice. The third question examined students' attitudes to classroom participation in classroom and their reasons for it. The fourth question investigated students' communication satisfaction with their instructors. The fifth question asked students to express their feeling and affective learning dependent on their instructors' immediacy. The last question sought to understand the effect of instructors' immediacy on student's cognitive learning.

## Validity and Reliability of Interviews

For research to produce useful, reliable results: credibility, dependability, transferability and consistency are considered to be required (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). The methods used in this study that map to these criteria are outlined in table 3.35

Table 3.35  
*Criteria for Evaluation of Qualitative Studies*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Methods to meet criterion</b>
Credibility and control of researcher bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prolonged and meaningful participation in setting</li> <li>• Triangulation of multiple data sources</li> <li>• Negative case analysis</li> <li>• Participant review of interview transcripts</li> <li>• Member checks</li> <li>• Peer debrief</li> <li>• Attention to voice</li> <li>• External audit</li> </ul>
Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed description of data collection and analysis procedures</li> <li>• Use of videotape and audiotape</li> <li>• Data made available for review</li> </ul>
Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich descriptions of setting, participant, interaction, culture, policies, etc.</li> <li>• Detailed information on context and background</li> </ul>
Promoting action and collaboration (catalytic authenticity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of collaboration with participants</li> <li>• Description of ways in which research changed the lives of participants</li> <li>• Co-authorship of publications</li> <li>• Sharing royalties and other benefits of publication</li> </ul>

(Lodico et al., 2010, p. 276)

Creswell (2008) recommends the following eight procedures to strengthen and increase the credibility of a qualitative approach:

1. Use of triangulation on different sources of data, including the use of multiple data collection methods, sources, investigators or theoretical hypotheses;
2. Member checking by sharing interview transcripts, thoughts or drafts of final findings with research participants to guarantee accurate demonstration;
3. Clarification of researcher bias by reflecting on the researcher's subjectivity and effect of the research;
4. Showing negative information case analysis by deliberately searching for negative cases or invalid evidence to filter hypotheses;
5. Prolonged time engagement and persistent observation by extending allocated research time and building trust;
6. Peer debriefing on study transcripts, reports and methodology to identify potential weaknesses in the study, including bias or error;
7. Rich descriptions that allow readers to fully understand the context of the research and take on the research perspective; and
8. External auditing to investigate the research process and product through a review of field notes kept throughout the study.

In this research, all interviews were recorded so that responses could be documented accurately. Each interview was transcribed precisely and the resulting transcripts were sent to the participants to check that the transcripts provided an accurate and correct representation of the interview. Students were asked to provide

extra commentary where needed, but no students reported inaccuracies or faults in the transcripts.

### **Data Analysis**

In this section the qualitative data analysis of the interviews is described and then followed by an overview of the inter-categorical analysis and cross-category synthesis.

In this study, the data transcribed from the interviews was analysed using the content analysis technique recommended by Cohen et al. (2011). This process starts by organising the data, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding, and finally representing the data. The process is to transcribe the data whilst listening to the interview to gain a sense of the whole, then to identify units of general meaning, delineate units of meaning relative to the research question, cluster units of relevant meaning, write a summary of each individual interview, and finally contextualise themes. These collective elements allowed me to analyse the content.

Content analysis is used to refer to “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton, 2005, p. 453). The core meanings found through content analysis serve as primary patterns or themes. The aim was to identify the significant patterns of data. Recurrent patterns or themes were quantified for their significance. Content analysis allowed the researcher to sift through the data to discover the focus of the message through the use of codes (Stemler, 2001). The central element of the analysis is to establish the codes that represent the meaning of the text. The most common technique to use when the codes are saturated is to perform frequency counts (Stemler, 2001). The codes that occur most frequently represent the patterns that merit

concentrated focus. The codes generated from the analysis need to be organised in a hierarchical manner.

### **Coding.**

Coding is the categorisation of data using the concept of a category as “a group of words with similar meaning or connotations” (Weber, 1990, p.37). Coding was developed using an analytic induction approach (Patton, 2005). Analytic induction brings about inductive analysis that starts deductively. To begin with, the data was deductively analysed with the help of the concept derived from the literature, which provided the theoretical framework that allowed the researcher to identify the unit of analysis and attach a code to it. Any emergent concepts that were not addressed in the theoretical framework were given the chance for discovery. The overlapping of categories was highly discouraged and avoided and ensuring that there is no overlapping leads to achievement of mutually exclusive categories (Stemler, 2001). The topic coding for the study was aligned with the six research questions and categorised the students’ responses according to evident immediacy practices in the classroom and their relation to or effect on the student:

1. What verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices are evident in the classroom at King Khalid University?
2. To what extent is instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy related to student class participation?
3. What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student motivation?
4. What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student communication satisfaction?

5. Is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning?
6. To what extent is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning?

The questions were coded around the following six themes: instructor's immediacy practice; class participation; student motivation; student communication satisfaction; students' affective learning; and students' cognitive learning.

### **Participants' Responses to Interview Questions**

**Research Question 1.** *What verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices are evident in the classroom at King Khalid University?*

To investigate research question 1 on evident immediacy practices in the classroom, the students were asked, "How would you describe the instructor's communication behaviours in the class?" This category identifies the immediacy practices found in groups 1, 2 and 3 from the perspective of the students. Control group students indicated that their instructors did not practice any verbal or nonverbal immediacy in the classroom. The relationship was described as formal, while the instructors were described as arrogant and dictatorial. The students also said that instructors did not know the student's names, treated them like children and did not provide their contact details. There was an assumption that the instructors were always right and should not be questioned. Learning took place by listening to the instructor during class and memorising the material they provided. Instructors were seldom available after class and showed no concern about students' learning. The students said the instructors needed more training to improve their communication skills.

In contrast, students from the immediacy group described their relationships with the instructor as friendly and the instructor was considered to be more cooperative. It was noted that the instructor addressed students by their names; there was a sense of camaraderie and the instructor shared his mobile number and email address with the students. The students were encouraged to participate in class and their comments and suggestions were accepted as well. Active learning through class discussion and critical thinking was developed. The instructor welcomed students to the office and was described as a smart classroom manager.

**Research Question 2.** *To what extent is instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy related to student class participation?*

Investigation into question 2 on the relationship of immediacy with students' participation in class was addressed by asking the question, "Did you have a choice about participating in this class? Why?" The category seeks to identify the level of participation by students from groups 1, 2 and 3. Students from control groups 1 and 2 reported that they feared to participate in the class because they did not want to upset the instructors or be ridiculed by them. They found safety in silence was preferable to being misunderstood; the arrangement of the classroom, that is, the physical layout of the room, did not encourage participation.

In contrast, students from the immediacy group 3 felt safe to participate with the instructor because they were encouraged to talk and share ideas. These students were encouraged to find information by themselves and use the instructor as their guide. This class had more interaction between the students and their instructor.

**Research Question 3.** *What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student motivation?*

Question 3 concerned the relationship of immediacy with student class motivation and was addressed by asking the participants, “Can you please tell me about the climate in this classroom? How is your motivation?” This category aims to discover the levels of motivation attained by the students in groups 1, 2 and 3. Students from control groups 1 and 2 described their classroom environment as instructor-centred, where the instructor speaks and students listen. They could not understand what was taught and found the subject boring. Not feeling motivated, the students attended class to fulfil their attendance requirements and listened absentmindedly.

However, the immediacy group 3 students described their learning as student-centred and said it involved group discussions. They learned many things and found the class to be interesting, comfortable and enjoyable. Group 3 students reported they felt motivated to study and hoped that all their classes were like this.

**Research Question 4.** *What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student communication satisfaction?*

Question 4 pertains to the effect of immediacy on students’ communication satisfaction. It was addressed by asking the students, “Are you satisfied with the instructor’s communication with the students? Why?” This category is used to discover the level of communication satisfaction attained by students from groups 1, 2 and 3. The control students felt there was little or no communication in their classes, which were highly controlled. Students remained passive without speaking or sharing ideas, while accepting everything said by the instructor. Students reported that the instructors do not like to be interrupted and, overall, the students were not satisfied with their instructors’ communication and commented that they lacked communication skills.

Group 3 students, the immediacy group, reported that they used dialogue and communication as part of their study in the class. Students were able to ask questions, as well as discuss and negotiate with their instructors. They were very satisfied with their instructor's communication skills. Students were able to develop their skills in communication and critical thinking.

**Research Question 5.** *Is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning?*

Question 5 investigated the relationship between immediacy practices and affective learning in the classroom and asked students, "Are you interested to get another course with this instructor? Why?" This category is used to understand the affective learning acquired by students in groups 1, 2 and 3. The students from control groups 1 and 2 said that they do not want to take another course from the same instructor. These students lamented that they always remained passive during class and reported that they lost interest in the subject and felt upset because they could not learn new things from the instructor. They asserted that their instructor was not keen to ensure the students understood what had been taught and had failed to help develop their communication and research skills.

Again, the group 3 students had a much more positive experience. They stated they were eager to enrol in another course taught by Dr. X. These students claimed they felt more active and confident during class; they had a more positive attitude, greater interest in the class subject and learned new things. The students were also challenged to apply their learning, while developing skills in communication and critical thinking.

**Research Question 6.** *To what extent is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning?*

Question 6 relates to the relationship between immediacy practices and perceived learning and was addressed by asking the interviewees, “Do you think that the instructor’s communication behaviours affected your achievement and results? How?” This category is used to understand the perceived learning acquired by students in groups 1, 2, and 3. Students from the control groups 1 and 2 said their cognitive learning was unsatisfactory due to their feelings of a lack of confidence and loss of interest in their learning. The students blamed this on the lack immediacy skills of their instructors and the poor relationships that they had with them. Their cognitive learning attainment was also affected; they believed that the practice of memorising lecture notes and a focus on an exam-oriented learning process where the learned knowledge is forgotten soon after was ineffective.

By contrast, the immediacy group 3 students were more satisfied with their cognitive learning. They felt they showed more confidence and achieved better results. They also claimed their learning ability and memory retention had been improved through class dialogue and negotiation.

### **Inter-categorical Analysis**

Inter-categorical analysis is a strategy that enables the conception of categorical knowledge from each of the participating group’s perspectives and for the analytical summation of experiences and perception from the different groups (Weber, 1990). This type of analysis across positions and perspectives allows for each category to be developed, comparative exploration to be made and new themes to be found (Richards, & Richards Morse, 2012).

### Q1: Participants' views of instructors' communication behaviours.

The inter-categorical analysis for the first question on evident classroom immediacy is summarised and shown in Table 3.36 below. Comparisons are made on the relationships between the instructor and the students, the degree of authority the instructor holds in the classroom, the instructor's style of knowledge delivery, the accessibility of the instructor in his office, the nature of the instructor's job (permanent or not), the instructor's personality and the influence of culture.

Table 3.36

#### *Q1 Participants' Views of Instructors' Communication Behaviours in Class*

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal instructor-student relationship</li> <li>• Instructor is 'arrogant'</li> <li>• Uses student numbers and not names for attendance</li> <li>• Instructor's email or contact number not supplied to students</li> <li>• Treats like children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship is friendly</li> <li>• The instructor is cooperative</li> <li>• Instructor addresses the students by name</li> <li>• Mobile numbers and emails are shared</li> <li>• Treats like colleagues</li> </ul>
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor has high authority</li> <li>• Instructor is dictatorial</li> <li>• Assumption that instructor is always right</li> <li>• Student comments are not welcomed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability in managing the class</li> <li>• Encourages student participation</li> <li>• Accepts student comments and suggestions</li> </ul>

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Delivery Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinks students cannot learn on their own and information must be fed to them</li> <li>• Focus on quality and quantity of information and not quality of learning</li> <li>• Focus on rote memorisation of course material vs. application of knowledge</li> <li>• Focus on lecturing: instructor speaks and students listen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses learner-centred techniques</li> <li>• Instructor behaviour helps improve critical thinking in students</li> <li>• Promotes student communication skills using class participation</li> <li>• Active learning environment is created by encouraging students to talk and discuss</li> </ul>
Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors are not available to meet students during office hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually available in office</li> <li>• Creates a welcoming environment to support students</li> </ul>
Job Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor's job is permanent</li> <li>• No motivation to improve teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated to improve teaching</li> </ul>
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors are proud and uncaring about students' needs</li> <li>• Instructors are dictatorial</li> <li>• Instructors do not help students to maximise their learning and classroom experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly and creates a welcoming environment</li> <li>• Accepts student comments and suggestions</li> <li>• Behaviour has a positive impact on student experience in the classroom</li> <li>• Manages class well and makes it interesting</li> <li>• Students interested in attending class</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style of education affected by hierarchical culture of Saudi Arabia</li> </ul>	

In terms of relationships, it was found that the students in the control groups felt the instructor treated them like children, rather than forging a formal, more collegial relationship. For example, one student said, “We see them as arrogant, but want them to communicate with us in a friendly way and to give us the opportunity for discussion.” And another student commented, “I found my instructors to be arrogant and they see us as children.” Another student stated, “Students need to feel there is rapport and respect before they are open to education but, unfortunately, most instructors deal with us like kids.” They also have formal relationship with their instructors as one student said “The relationship with the instructor is a formal relationship, so that has affected my communication and learning.” And another stated, “The instructor’s behaviour should implant a love of learning in the hearts of students, but we did not have that in this class because our instructors are away from our hearts.”

The immediacy group results revealed the students preferred a more informal and friendlier instructor-student relationship, which was accomplished through the instructor’s use of immediacy behaviours. As one of students responded, “Dr. X communicates with students as if we are part of a brotherhood; he always smiles and is funny”. Similarly, another student confirmed, “The instructor of this class was very friendly and cooperative. He deals with us as friends, so that’s made us happier and relaxed”. And another state, “Dr. X was a good example of a university instructor; he assists us to learn in an active environment by encouraging us to talk and discuss”.

With regard to the exercise of authority in the classroom, groups 1 and 2 reported they were dissatisfied with the dictatorial behaviour of their instructors and their expectation that the students would simply accept everything they said without question. For instance, one student commented, “Our instructors had such high power authority that, even when he was wrong, I felt I must agree with him and cannot make

any complaints against him.” Similarly, another student commented, “The instructor of this class is dictatorial; he does what he wants without discussion with us and we must accept what he says.” One student, comparing his time at university to army life, commented, “Our instructors are dictatorial and we live in the university as though we were living barracks”. Another student mentions, “Most instructors deal with us as if they are Pharaoh, who said, “Only what I show you is correct”. One student said, “Some instructors always thought that they were right and did not accept any comments or corrections suggested by students”. The immediacy group had a completely opposite response to Dr. X’s exercise of authority, which had as its point of difference a strong emphasis on the instructor’s use of immediacy in the classroom. This suggests that students prefer a less authoritative approach in the classroom and would like to have the opportunity to participate in class and have their views heard. An immediacy group student remarked, “He accepts our comments or suggestions and encourages us to be more active and feel free to do what we want.” There was a marked difference in the exercise of authority between the control groups and the immediacy group instructors.

The instructors’ teaching style in the control groups consisted of a one-directional, top-down delivery of knowledge in the form of lectures, with the expectation that students would learn by memorising the material. The feedback from the control groups indicated that the lack of immediacy in the classroom contributed to this dictatorial teaching style. This is supported by students’ comments such as, “The instructor requires us to memorise course materials rather than learning to apply the concepts. He pushes the students to follow what has been prepared for them by him rather than relying on their own analysis.” Another students sagely remarked that,

Most of the instructors use a lecture format as their main method of teaching. They just talk and we just listen so, where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise. With this teaching method, students will not graduate with independent character.

We don't have good research skills or dialogue skills because our education depends on the instructor feeding us knowledge.

This sort of feedback provided by the interviewees shows that, in the traditional classroom as modelled in the control groups, there is lack of quality learning as dialogue and communication skills and self-directed learning skills are not developed. In contrast, the students reported that the immediacy practices implemented in the immediacy group class allowed them to develop their skills in communication and critical thinking. Immediacy students indicated their positive experience of immediacy and the benefits on their classroom learning. One of the students remarked, "The instructor encourages students' participation; he always uses learner-centred techniques to allow us to participate and to promote our communication skills." Another stated, "He uses body language and communication skills perfectly. I admire his ability to manage the class and make all students active and happy."

Students had difficulty meeting or communicating with instructors from the control groups outside of the classroom even during office hours. One student stated, "Access to the instructor during office hours is the right of students and [the] instructor should come to meet students and look at their requests and questions, but usually we can't find them there." And another mention, "We are wondering why instructors have office hours if they don't stay there and open the doors to the students?." They also haven't any contact details of their instructor to contact with him out class if they need anything related the subject. One respondent complained, "We don't have any contact details, either his email or telephone number". While another stated, "I don't know any

instructor who give students his mobile number or email address and there are no staff details on the university's web page.”

By comparison, the immediacy group's instructor made himself available to the students both during and after office hours. Unlike the control group instructors, Dr. X was willing to share his email address and mobile number with students and encouraged the students to contact him if they had any concerns. For instance, one of students commented that, “Usually we can find him at his office in office-hours time. He creates a welcoming environment to support us, so we come to him if we need assistance.” Student responses indicate that there is a correlation between greater immediacy in the classroom and the establishment of a closer instructor-student relationship

There is also a correlation between the job permanence of the instructors and their use of immediacy in the classroom. It is probable that those instructors who are motivated to remain employed are more willing to improve their teaching, while instructors who have permanent jobs may be less motivated to do so. Control group students reported that instructors with permanent jobs appeared complacent, showed a lack of interest in improving their teaching methods, and that they needed training to improve their teaching skills. Two respondents commented that,

The big problem in Saudi universities is that they have given staff members permanent jobs, so the instructors are not keen to improve their teaching skills and they use the easiest teaching methods.

We have problems in the university, such as permanent jobs for staff and the impossibility of evaluating instructors by the university's administration or anyone else. So, they are not interested in improving their teaching methods.

We hope to evaluate our instructors at the end of each semester, but there is no benefit if all Saudi instructors have permanent jobs.

The possibility of student bias must be considered, however, as students' views about their instructors' efforts to improve their teaching may be coloured by their positive or negative relationship with or feelings about their instructor.

### **Q2: Student participation in class.**

The dictatorial lecturing style and the hierarchical nature of the control group classrooms demonstrates a lack of immediacy those classes, with the result that the students were subjected to a less effective learning experience as compared with that of the students in the immediacy group. Students in the control groups remarked that the lecturing style and subsequent memorisation of rote-delivered material was uninteresting and they felt unmotivated to study or engage with either the subject of the class. In contrast, the instructor immediacy demonstrated in the immediacy group caused the students to feel that they were part of a collaborative learning process where they were actively involved and responsible for their own learning. This high level pedagogical engagement created students who were interested in attending class, motivated to discover more about the subject and who expressed a desire to attend further classes with the same instructor. The students' positive experiences of instructor immediacy had a clear and significant impact on their learning and made them into more proactive motivated learners.

The teacher-centred pedagogical style of the control groups' instructors is typical in the hierarchical culture of the Saudi Arabia. Students are accustomed to being passive learners in a classroom where the teacher is the authority and the disseminator of knowledge. Students commented that,

Our instructor just fed us information without interaction and, at the end of the lecture, he would ask if we had understood. The answer was the same everyday; everyone remained silent and the lecturer left the class.

I was passive in all lectures. I was like part of the furniture, because we don't have opportunity to share ideas, or ask questions.

I can say most university instructors[in Saudi Arabia] don't use discussion or dialogue in learning and I think that came from our culture.

I think our culture affects our education.

Despite these methods being the norm, the positive experience of instructor immediacy in the immediacy group indicates that more effective learning could be beneficial to Saudi Arabian students, resulting in active, self-motivated learners and critical thinkers accustomed to group dialogue and open communication and negotiation. This more democratic style of classroom learning is new to Saudi Arabia. One of students said, "This class is more interactive; there is more communication between students and the instructor, and everyone has a role and works well with each other".

Table 3.37

*Q2 Student Participation in Class*

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students find it difficult to communicate due to fear of upsetting the lecturer</li> <li>• Fear of being ridiculed by the instructor in class</li> <li>• Students prefer to be safe and silent to avoid being misunderstood by instructor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraged to talk and share ideas without fear</li> <li>• Feel safe in asking the instructor anything and overcome shyness</li> <li>• Students seek information on their own while the instructor acts as a guide for them to consult</li> </ul>
Form of Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher-focused arrangement of classroom chairs does not encourage communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class is interactive with active student-instructor interactions</li> </ul>

Table 3.37 shows the inter-categorical analysis for the relationship between immediacy and student's class participation. This study identified fear and the classroom arrangement as contributing factors to the level of student participation. Feedback from students in the control groups reveals that fear of upsetting the instructor or being ridiculed by them holds back students from communicating in the class. This is apparent in classrooms that lack of immediacy, where students prefer to remain silent instead of opening themselves up to being misunderstood. For example, some students stated:

It was difficult to discuss in the classroom because sometimes we fear the instructor or feel he will be upset if we interrupt him or ask him a question and he doesn't know its answer.

Sometimes instructors ridicule the student if his answer is wrong. The key to evil is one word.

Some students fear communicating and worry the instructor might misunderstand them, so they prefer to be on the safe side and keep silent.

Feedback from immediacy group students shows that dialogue in the classroom helped students to mitigate and overcome this fear. As some students mentioned,

I felt safe about asking the instructor anything. We were welcome to talk with him about assignments, due dates, exam time, and everything related to the course.

I felt free to talk with my instructor and I found him usually keen to support my friends and me to present our opinions and our comments.

It is apparent that the instructor's 'open door' policy both in and out of the classroom created an environment that facilitated student participation.

Another factor that further hindered immediacy and student participation in the control group classroom was the physical arrangement of desks and chairs, which were

in rows facing the instructor's desk at the front of the room. This put the focus on the teacher and his lecture and made it difficult for students to start or contribute to discussion and acted as a barrier to collaborative learning or group work. One of students remarked, "The instructor's behaviour and the arrangement of the class chairs do not assist us to communicate with the instructor." By contrast, students in the immediacy group sat at desks that faced each other, encouraging active student-student and instructor-student interactions. A student confirmed this: "Dr. X always arranged the class to be in circles or U-shapes to encourage discussion and cooperative learning." With the focus removed from the teacher's desk at the front of the room, the teacher was free to move around the room and communicate on an individual or small group basis with the students, acting as more of a learning facilitator than a disseminator of information.

### **Q3: Climate in the classroom and student motivation.**

Table 3.38 shows the inter-categorical analysis for the relationship between immediacy and students' motivation. Classroom climate and teaching method are identified as factors that influence student motivation in the classroom.

Table 3.38

#### *Q3 Climate in the Classroom and Student Motivation*

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Class climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel bored and listen absentmindedly</li> <li>• Subject not understood or interesting</li> <li>• Students not motivated by class</li> <li>• Students attend class to fulfil the attendance requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class is comfortable and enjoyable</li> <li>• Class interesting and students learn many things</li> <li>• Students motivated to learn and study</li> <li>• Students hope all classes are as interesting</li> </ul>

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor-centred</li> <li>• Instructor speaks, students listen</li> <li>• Instructor writes on blackboard and explains points</li> <li>• Students not encouraged to talk in class</li> <li>• Creativity and critical thinking not encouraged or developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-centred</li> <li>• Students involved in group discussions</li> <li>• Students learn to find, organise and present information</li> <li>• Students given freedom to talk and discuss ideas</li> <li>• Students motivated to comment, share ideas and ask questions</li> </ul>

From the feedback given by control group students, lack of immediacy in the class caused them to become bored, the subject was found to be uninteresting and the students became less motivated to learn. They listened absentmindedly and attended class only to meet attendance requirements. As some students explained,

You can't believe that the students do not talk at all during a 50-minute class, except for one word (yes) when the instructor calls their student numbers when he takes attendance. Not how you want to be motivated! Of course, we feel bored and uncomfortable.

I attend the class just to be there when the instructor checks the attendance list. If the attendance were not compulsory, maybe most students would not come to class.

Clearly, the students felt unmotivated and bored in the control group classrooms due to the lack of instructor immediacy. In contrast, the findings from the immediacy group show that using immediacy in the class can help students enjoy the class; this engagement makes the class interesting, the students feel comfortable, learn more things and become motivated learners. For example, some students responded,

We found him friendly, cooperative and down to earth, so all the students liked him and we were interested in attending his class.

I found this class different from all classes which I took before. I felt more comfortable and it was more enjoyable ... this class is interesting for us; we hope all classes will become like it, as now I'm more motivated to learn and study.

I enjoyed the group discussion and I felt this class provided what students need ... we have roles and positions, so we are more motivated and interested.

Overall, students in the immediacy group were pleased and felt they were benefiting from being in a class where the instructor made immediacy part of his teaching practice.

In the control group classrooms the instructor-centred learning, where the instructor speaks and the students listen, deprived students of the opportunity to develop communication and critical thinking skills. Some students commented,

My study experience in this course is bad. I'm not motivated because I feel bored in the class. Only the lecture as a method of teaching is used every day.

The main teaching method used is a lecture, which is a boring method. Most students are not active and they unmotivated.

The lecture format teaching style, especially when used all the time, was ineffective and uninspiring, according to the students in the control groups. In contrast, the student-centred techniques that include immediacy practices experienced by the immediacy group, involved students in-group discussion and motivated them to ask questions and express their ideas. One of the students said, "We feel alive in this class with the new, student-centred learning environment. We learn by discussion and communication so we are motivated to share ideas, ask questions and give comments". The students seemed much more excited and motivated by the student-centred approach as compared with their previous experience in classrooms where immediacy was not practised.

#### Q4: Students' communication satisfaction.

The inter-categorical analysis for the relationship between immediacy and student's communication satisfaction is presented in Table 3.39. Classroom communication and instructor skills are identified as factors that influence student motivation in the classroom.

Table 3.39

#### *Q4 Students' Communication Satisfaction*

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No communication in class</li> <li>• Students remain passive in class, unable to ask questions or share ideas</li> <li>• Whatever said by instructor must be accepted</li> <li>• Students not satisfied with instructor communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and dialogue enhances study</li> <li>• Open discussion between instructor and students about course, due dates, other issues</li> <li>• Students can express opinions, ask questions and negotiate with instructor</li> <li>• Students satisfied with Dr. X's communication</li> </ul>
Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors lack communication skills</li> <li>• Students are not praised or supported by instructors</li> <li>• Instructors do not like to be interrupted by students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. X has great teaching and communication skills</li> <li>• Students develop communication and critical thinking skills</li> <li>• Students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss in class</li> </ul>

Students from the control groups stated that there was little or no communication in their classroom and everything said by their instructor had to be accepted by the students. The students reported that they were not allowed to express

ideas or ask questions and they were not satisfied with the existing instructor-student communication. As one of them mentioned,

Sometimes when a student needed to clarify some points which he didn't understand, the instructor interpreted his questions negatively, assuming that either the student was stupid, or that he was not paying attention during class. I'm not satisfied with the instructor's communication.

In comparison, students from the immediacy group exhibited a higher level of communication satisfaction because they were free to communicate with each other and consult with the instructor as a mode of study; also, they were allowed to ask questions and express their views freely in class. As they stated,

We discuss course resources, assignment due dates, exams times and new issues around the world with our instructor. We are satisfied with Dr. X's communication.

In this class, I have freedom to ask, talk or negotiate and that's making me more satisfied and I am enjoying being in the classroom more.

The open communication and discussion resulting from the instructor's use of immediacy in the classroom appears to have positive results socially, as the classroom is a more enjoyable place to be, and intellectually, as the students are able to participate in open discussion and explore ideas without fear of recourse.

**Q5: Student's affective learning and interest in learning from instructor.**

Regarding the relationship between immediacy and students' affective learning, the inter-categorical analysis was based on instructor behaviour and classroom teaching. The relationship is shown in Table 3.40 below.

Table 3.40

*Q5 Student's Affective Learning and Interest in Learning from the Same Instructor*

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Control</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel passive and uninvolved in the class</li> <li>• Lecture style causes students to feel upset and disinterested</li> <li>• Students do not learn new things from the instructor</li> <li>• Unlikely to take another course from the instructor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students active and more confident in the class</li> <li>• Class discussions create positive attitude and interest in subject</li> <li>• Students able to learn effectively from the instructor</li> <li>• Students want to take another course with Dr. X</li> </ul>
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor does not confirm students understand the lesson</li> <li>• Students personal abilities, communication and research skills not developed</li> <li>• Students alienated by instructor's attitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor challenges students to apply what they learn</li> <li>• Students develop confidence, communication and critical thinking skills</li> <li>• Students hope all classes will be taught in this way</li> <li>• Students view Dr. X as their friend</li> </ul>

The control group students reported that the expectation that they should be passive learners in class caused them to feel upset and lose interest in the subject. They stated they did not learn well in this style of classroom and would not like to take another course with the same instructor. They also complained that the instructors showed less interest in their learning. Students reported they felt alienated by their instructor's attitude. Some students commented as follows:

The lecture format makes me feel upset and not interested, so much so that I can't take another course with this instructor.

In this class we are passive and uninvolved with the course, so I don't think I will be interested to take another course with this instructor.

The instructor pushes the students away from him, from the subject, and from wanting to attend the class. So I'm not interested to take another class with him in future.

In comparison, the use of immediacy in the immediacy group class enabled more active student participation. Students said they felt more confident and able to learn more new things and they were eager to learn from the instructor again:

Of course I am interested to take another course with Dr. X; he has helped me to be more confident and active in the classroom. I have learned many things from him and I see him now as my friend.

I think using discussion during teaching is more interesting for students and has a positive effect on their attitude to the instructor and course.

The instructor challenges me to apply the course's information. I found him supportive of students' communication and I hope to study with him in another course.

These students' remarks reveal the beneficial experience of immediacy in the classroom and its effect on their willingness to participate in class.

#### **Q6: Students' cognitive learning in class.**

The discussion of inter-categorical analysis between immediacy and cognitive learning of students is outlined in Table 3.41 below. This analysis was based on the student learning and student-instructor relationships.

Table 3.41

*Q6 Students' Cognitive Learning in Class and Results Achievement*

	<b>Groups 1 &amp; 2: Controlled</b>	<b>Group 3: Immediacy</b>
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learned by memorising, easily forgotten after exams</li> <li>• Exam oriented and class participation not recognised</li> <li>• Lack of communication, practice and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning by negotiation improve learning and memory</li> <li>• Negotiating in class helps obtain higher grade and increase learning</li> <li>• Class discussion helps develop listening and communication skills</li> </ul>
Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor relationship/ lack of closeness results in ineffective learning, lack of confidence</li> <li>• Unfriendly instructor causes course to be uninteresting and produce unsatisfactory student achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue in class introduces new thoughts and improves learning</li> <li>• Better communication improves student confidence and learning</li> <li>• Instructor behaviour helps improve confidence and produce better results</li> </ul>

Students from the control groups underwent exam-oriented learning and their study consisted of memorising the material provided by the instructor. Students reported that what was learned was easily forgotten after the exam:

We learnt at the university how to memorise knowledge without thinking or challenging it, so we forget everything after finishing the course.

My study depended on memorising the subject and writing the information down on the exam paper, that's all. Because of this, I forget immediately what I learnt after I step out of the exam hall.

We need more practice rather than memorising knowledge only.

There is no credit for classroom participation and passing the course depended on the midterm exam and the final exam, so we memorised the contents of the subject and after exams we forgot everything we knew before.

In contrast, the use of immediacy in the immediacy group enabled the students to learn using collaboration and negotiation. For example, some students stated,

I think students can learn very well using negotiation and they can get high grades in the course. I still remember what I learned in the course and am able to apply it.

I think when the instructor uses dialogue in the classroom, he exposes us to new thoughts we have not previously considered. I feel my confidence is boosted with this class, so my result for this course is better than any other course.

When I am involved in class discussion, I get a better understanding of topics and that has assisted me with remembering and applying the subject and course information.

These students asserted that these methods, supported by the use of instructor immediacy, helped to improve their learning and memory, and that they developed skills in listening and communication.

According to the students from the control groups, the poor relationships between the instructors and the students were not conducive to effective learning as the students became less interested, less confident and their achievement was less satisfactory than they had hoped. Some of them commented:

If the instructor wants to deliver his messages perfectly he must, firstly, be close to the hearts of his students. Basically, our instructor has no closeness, no understanding.

Of course the instructor's behaviour affects students' achievements because he can make the course more interesting for students by dealing with them in a friendly way. That makes students more active and able to understand more, so I found it difficult to remember the information in this course.

It is difficult to remember and understand course information because there is no rapport between the instructor and the students; we are not close.

In comparison, the students in the immediacy group reported that the immediacy practised by their instructor helped to improve their learning and confidence, and

enabled better results to be produced. One of the students asserted that, “If the instructor has good behaviour, then students become more confident and able to communicate and discuss in the classroom, as well as get a good result in the course”.

The influence of the instructors’ classroom behaviour clearly has an impact on the students’ interest in the course and the subject matter, as well as their ability to learn and do well academically.

### **Cross-category Synthesis**

A cross-category synthesis was performed to help identify the themes related to immediacy practice in the participants’ classrooms. These themes were then matched with general examples and implications of the models of immediacy practice in classrooms. These are discussed in relation to the six themes that are associated with the main research questions as shown below.

#### **Immediacy practice as an acquired skill.**

Participant responses from the control groups indicated a lack of immediacy practice in their classrooms. As noted by Alkeaid (2004), the culture of teaching in Saudi Arabia is based on instructor-centred lecturing and memorising. The control group participants’ responses indicate that the use of these traditional teaching methods need to be re-evaluated and that their instructors need training to improve their communication skills and teaching methods.

#### **Immediacy increases student class participation.**

Participants in the control groups indicated that they had been passive recipients of knowledge delivered in the form of class lectures. Students reported that, although they wanted to ask questions during and after class, they refrained from doing so due to affective reasons like fear or the instructor being unapproachable. In contrast, the

learning process for the immediacy group involved classroom dialogue and direct negotiation with instructors. The use of immediacy in the classroom has been associated with increased participation and improved class attendance by students (Rocca, 2004). This was mainly because the students were encouraged to speak in class and break away from the shackles of passive learning methods to which they had been conditioned.

**Immediacy raises student motivation.**

Students from the control groups claimed that listening passively to lectures in class caused them to become bored and lose interest in the subject. As a result they became less motivated to learn. However, the immediacy class students found their subjects interesting and their class enjoyable and associated these with their active involvement in their learning due to the instructor's use of immediacy. The students asserted they were more motivated to study and learn. Similar studies have shown that being exposed to immediacy in the classroom can help to increase student motivation levels (Frymier, 2005).

**Immediacy improves student satisfaction with communication.**

Students in the control groups felt that, in addition to being discouraged to speak in class, there was also a significant relationship gap between them and their instructor. They were unable to seek clarification or express opinions either during or after class, as the instructor did not make himself available to the students or encourage one-on-one contact. Yet, the literature reveals that good classroom communication is essential for the learning process (Christophel & Gorham, 1995). These students were not satisfied as they were unable to develop their communication skills. On the other hand, the immediacy group was more satisfied with class communication because dialogue and class discussion were incorporated and used to improve their learning. Similarly, the instructor was also approachable and welcomed them during and after class.

**Immediacy improves affective learning.**

With regard to the viability of affective learning, students from the control groups responded that they were not learning new things and were losing interest in the course. They reported feeling upset with their instructors' attitudes and felt their research and communication skills were also not being developed. Studies show that pro-social behaviours like immediacy can promote cognitive and affective learning in students (Frymier & Houser, 2000; Pogue & AhYun, 2006). This is supported by the experience of the immediacy group students who asserted that they learned many new things, and developed their personalities, confidence, communication and critical thinking skills.

**Immediacy improves cognitive learning.**

The perceived learning of students from the control groups was also affected by the lack of immediacy; they focused on memorising facts to pass exams. They asserted that their learning was also affected by the relationship gap between student and instructor. Past studies show that classroom immediacy can have a positive effect on the student's cognitive learning (Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). Students from the immediacy group learned through classroom dialogue and developed many additional skills in the process. They reported that their instructor's behaviour had made them more confident and helped improve their results.

**Synthesis Response and Recommendations**

The cross-category synthesis described above indicates the benefits of immediacy in the classroom. Rather than being a culturally engrained tradition, it is apparent that immediacy is an acquired skill that can be taught to instructors to benefit themselves as teachers and their students as learners. Further, immediacy has positive

impacts on class participation, student motivation, communication satisfaction, affective learning and cognitive learning on the part of the students. The following section will take these six areas and provide a matching set of six general recommendations that could be put into place to improve immediacy in the classroom and benefit learners.

#### **Specialised training in social and communication skills.**

Traditional lecture-based teaching has long been ingrained as the standard mode of teaching at the King Khalid University. The results of this study suggest that lecturers need to learn new teaching skills to meet the needs of modern students. Instructors will need to attend special training to develop their social and communication skills so that they will be able to gradually incorporate immediacy practices into their classrooms.

#### **Classroom dialogue for participation.**

Dialogue in the classroom should be encouraged because this will help develop students' communication and critical thinking skills. Students will also be inclined to learn more about the subject by themselves and prepare before the class so that they can be more engaged in the classroom dialogue. Class participation will also help the students to overcome their fears of speaking in class and increase their confidence levels.

#### **Psychology training on how to raise student motivation.**

Training in psychology can also be introduced to help the instructors learn how to increase the level of student motivation during lessons. Simple yet effective immediacy practices – like calling students by their names and providing positive feedback – can be used to boost students' motivation.

#### **Communication training for communication satisfaction.**

Instructor immediacy can also be improved by providing instructors with training in communication. The instructors at King Khalid University will not be able to

develop communication skills in their students if they themselves lack such skills.

Instructors need to shed their authoritative and dictatorial approach in the classroom and become more approachable to the students. Class discussion must be encouraged so that students can develop their communication skills, such as asking questions and expressing their views

### **Teaching methods.**

At the time of this research, the standard teaching method at King Khalid University was still instructor-centred and the students did not have much opportunity to contribute during the lessons. In order to introduce immediacy and encourage more student participation during class dialogues, a student-centred approach must be adopted in the classroom.

### **Learning process and relationships.**

Students' passive learning processes must also be changed from merely listening during lectures, memorising for examinations, and soon forgetting everything afterwards. Students in this study claimed that increased class participation led to greater knowledge retention and overall better results. Thus, the existing pedagogy needs to be changed to encourage more student participation in the classroom.

The implications arising from the introduction of these changes are that students will be better prepared to meet the needs of globalisation. Aside from being confident in their abilities, they will be better equipped with communication and critical thinking skills. As a result, the university will produce graduates who will be better trained and more able to contribute to future nation building. The traditional communication barriers at King Khalid University that produced rigid relationships between students and their instructors can finally be demolished, making way for new teaching methodologies that encourage communication, collaboration and critical thinking skills,

which are needed in the global economy. This change can be the seed for growing the use of immediacy in the classroom and attaining a greater level of student satisfaction in learning processes.

### **Summary**

The analysis of the participants' responses regarding their experiences of immediacy in the classroom indicates that immediacy is beneficial and should be incorporated into classroom teaching. Some instructors at King Khalid University continue to teach using traditional methods and are not currently practising immediacy in the classroom. They may not be aware of its benefits but the practice of immediacy by instructors has been shown in this study to positively impact six key areas: students' class participation, motivation, communication satisfaction, affective learning, and cognitive learning.

The benefits of practicing immediacy in the classroom were also evident during the inter-categorical analysis. Deeper comparisons made on subcategories using responses from the controlled and immediacy groups revealed that, in every area, there was greater satisfaction among students who attended classes where immediacy was practiced. The students in the immediacy group where immediacy was the norm had a closer relationship with their instructor(who was more approachable), reported learning more things from this style of teaching, benefited from personal development, and became more confident. It is therefore recommended that the instructors at King Khalid University be provided pedagogic training to develop their social and communication skills to facilitate their use of immediacy in the classroom. Instructors need to be prepared to break the existing barriers in student-instructor relationships so they can be more approachable. For instance, adopting a less formal approach, addressing the

students by name, being more available to students both during and outside of class time, rearranging the seating to encourage collaboration and class discussion are all means by which this might be accomplished. Further, greater student participation in the class should be encouraged and the instructors must be trained to motivate students using positive feedback, encouragement, indirect questioning to encourage discussion, and assigning pre-reading to encourage students to prepare before they come to class. Instructors who are skilled in communication will be able to pass on those skills to their students and achieve better levels of communication satisfaction; listening to students' needs and questions is one simple way that the lines of communication can be opened. This open communication paves the way for transforming instructor-centred learning to student-centred learning. New pedagogies that promote immediacy in class can also be introduced to improve student satisfaction in learning.

## CHAPTER 4:DISCUSSION

The purpose of this investigation was to examine differences in student communication (i.e., student participation) and learning outcomes (i.e., state motivation, student communication satisfaction, affective learning and cognitive learning) attributable to instructor immediacy behaviour in the tertiary classroom. Chapter 3 presented the research design, quantitative and qualitative data and this chapter will discuss the results by combining qualitative and quantitative results in relation to the research questions and comparing with the literature review.

### **Q1: What verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices are evident in the classroom at King Khalid University?**

The results of the first research question suggest that there are some differences between the control groups and the immediacy group with regard to instructor behaviour.

#### **Use of authority.**

The first difference is with the instructors' use of authority. Instructors are able to exert different levels of authority by using their power to make decisions without student input, opposition or consultation (Elias & Mace, 2005). Some instructors allow their students to ask provocative questions and engage in class discussion, whereas other instructors may prefer their students to take a more passive role, as recipients of knowledge, and follow their instructions without being challenged. This difference is also affected by what Hofstede referred to as the power distance dimension (Hofstede,

2001). Saudi Arabia has a large power distance index, which creates an unequal distribution of power in instructor and student interactions that is mainly dominated by the instructor (Hofstede, 2005). Also, in Middle Eastern schools and universities, students are expected to show respect to their instructors as absolute authority figures (Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2005). I found that in the control groups, the image of themselves that the instructors projected onto the students was that of an authority figure. This was done through lack of personal interaction with the students, a lecturing style that positioned the instructor as the sole authority in the classroom, and the layout of the room, which placed the instructor at the physical and metaphorical head of the class. Based on the feedback received from the control groups, the students found their instructors used high power authority, as supported by the following comments from control group students:

Our instructors had such high power authority that, even when he was wrong, I felt I must agree with him and cannot make any complaints against him.

Some instructors always thought that they were right and did not accept any comments or corrections suggested by students.

The students also viewed their instructor as dictatorial. One student, comparing his time at university to army life, commented, "Our instructors are dictatorial and we live in the university as though we were living barracks". Another student stated, "The instructor of this class is dictatorial; he does what he wants without discussion with us and we must accept what he says." These statements show that the relationship between instructors and students at King Khalid University is one where the instructors hold dictatorial and authoritarian roles. This finding is in accordance with the findings of researchers which showed unequal student-instructor relationships in hierarchical

cultures like Saudi Arabia (Hofstede, 2001). This is supported by the comments of students in the control groups. One student stated, “I can say most university instructors[in Saudi Arabia] don’t use discussion or dialogue in learning and I think that came from our culture” while another student affirmed this: “I think our culture affects our education.” This result supports Hayes and Allison’s (1988) assertion that the culture of a community can form harmonising and grouping effects that can influence the way their learning methods will develop. It has also been proposed that the social experience gained from the community will determine the learning methods preferred by the culture (Hofstede, 2005). In the case of Saudi Arabia, it is apparent that the style of education, that is, hierarchical and instructor-centred, has developed out of a culture that is also hierarchical and less democratic in nature.

By comparison, students in the immediacy group found Dr. X to be welcoming and he communicated with them in a more familiar way than is usual in a Saudi Arabian classroom. Students from the immediacy group made the following comments:

The instructor of this class was very friendly and cooperative. He deals with us as friends, so that’s made us happier and relaxed.

Dr. X was a good example of a university instructor; he assists us to learn in an active environment by encouraging us to talk and discuss.

He accepts our comments or suggestions and encourages us to be more active and feel free to do what we want.

It is apparent from these comments that the students felt they benefited from the instructor's democratic, ‘open-door’ policy in his teaching. They also felt more confident as a result of having a more mutual and less authoritative relationship with an instructor that gave them a voice in the classroom and in the learning process.

### **Types of teaching methods.**

The second difference between the control groups and the immediacy group is with the types of teaching methods used. The predominant pedagogy and teaching style used in Middle Eastern cultures centres around lectures, dictation and rote learning (Chadraba & O'Keefe, 2007). Current pedagogy used in the Middle East consists mainly of textbook reading (Russell, 2004), exam-oriented student assessment and the absorption of passive knowledge; in other words, the instructor lectures, the students take notes and memorise the notes and materials from their textbooks, and assessment is based on students reproducing this information for an exam. The exams test for the memorisation of facts rather than the application of concepts, which forces students to study for a prepared curriculum instead of performing an analysis on their own. The instructors in the control groups employed traditional methods, which depended on didactic, one-way lecturing, with a focus on the quantity of information delivered, rather than the quality of learning. Descriptions provided by students in the control groups reflect this traditional and culturally-engrained style of teaching:

The instructor requires us to memorise course materials rather than learning to apply the concepts. He pushes the students to follow what has been prepared for them by him rather than relying on their own analysis.

Our instructor just fed us information without interaction and, at the end of the lecture, he would ask if we understood. The answer was the same every day; everyone remained silent and the lecturer left the class.

We don't have good research skills or dialogue skills because our education depends on the instructor feeding us knowledge.

These students all experienced and had similar responses to the lack of immediacy and the traditional style of teaching favoured in Saudi Arabia; they found

classes unengaging and felt they were missing out on a vital part of their education, that is, communication, critical analysis and dialogue skills.

Unlike the control group, the immediacy group reported that their instructor used learner-centred techniques to encourage class participation and help improve their communication skills. One of the participants commented that, “The instructor encourages students’ participation; he always uses learner-centred techniques to allow us to participate and to promote our communication skills.”

In light of these comments, it would make sense that instructors who are willing to make their classes more interesting and more effective would incorporate an active learning environment with high immediacy practice wherein students are actively engaged in building an understanding of facts, ideas and skills through activities that allow the class to participate in their own learning. Different learning strategies – such as student-centred learning, collaborative learning, role-playing, problem-based learning and discussion groups – are all classroom techniques that can be used to encourage students to participate and engage with their learning.

### **Instructor-student relationship.**

The third difference between the control groups and the immediacy group is with the kind of instructor-student relationship that is developed. Although an argument can be made for the need to respect one’s instructors and listen to what they have to say, the students in the control groups found their instructors to be distant, unavailable and unsupportive. Further, students described them as arrogant and overproud, and objected to the instructors treating them like children. Some students commented as follows:

We see them as arrogant, but want them to communicate with us in a friendly way and to give us the opportunity for discussion.

Students need to feel there is rapport and respect before they are open to education but, unfortunately, most instructors deal with us like kids.

The distance and lack of rapport caused by the overly formal relationship established by the instructors with the students is also reported to affect their learning and communication (Benson et al., 2005; Schrodt, 2013). Because there was no connection between the instructors and their students, the students felt unmotivated and disconnected from both the instructor and the subject matter. One student commented, “The relationship with instructors is formal so there is a gap between us.” Reinforcing this interpersonal divide is the fact that students reported their instructors take attendance by calling out their student number instead of their name. Further, students commented that the instructors did not provide their emails or phone numbers so they could be contacted if the students needed to communicate with them outside of class. For instance,

I don't know any instructor who gives students his mobile number or email address and there are no staff details on the university's web page.

Students also lamented that, despite the instructor having fixed office hours, they did not make themselves available to meet with students and consider their questions and requests. This made it difficult for the students to communicate with their instructors both inside and outside the class. The respondents remarked,

We are wondering why instructors have office hours if they don't stay there and open the doors to the students?

Despite not having experienced an instructor-student relationship where the students felt their instructors were available to them, the control group students still had

strong views about the kind of relationship they would like to have, as is apparent in these comments:

The relationship with the instructor is a formal relationship, so that has affected my communication and learning.

In addition to feeling distanced by the formal instructor-student relationship, control group students felt the lecturers were unmotivated to improve their current teaching methods or their relationships with students. They felt the primary cause of this was that, because university staff have permanent jobs, there is no impetus for the university administration to evaluate its instructors, nor is there any means for students to evaluate their experience with the instructors and report it to the university. Several students commented on the lack of instructor evaluation:

We have problems in the university, such as permanent jobs for staff and the impossibility of evaluating instructors by the university's administration or anyone else. So, they are not interested in improving their teaching methods.

We hope to evaluate our instructors at the end of each semester, but there is no benefit if all Saudi instructors have permanent jobs.

The big problem in Saudi universities is that they have given staff members permanent jobs, so the instructors are not keen to improve their teaching skills and they use the easiest teaching methods.

It is apparent from these remarks that the students wanted to feel a sense of brotherhood with their instructor; they want to be able to discuss their problems, ambitions, goals, and needs with their instructor so that they can feel confident about their learning and be encouraged to be active in the class.

While the control group students wished for, but did not experience, a close instructor-student relationship, the students in the immediacy group reported that they

did. Students reported that Dr. X created a comfortable and enjoyable environment for their learning:

We found him friendly, cooperative and down to earth, so all the students liked him and we were interested in attending his class.

He always creates a welcoming environment, which is enjoyable and makes us very comfortable.

He encourages students to visit him at office if they needed any help, as this student comment reveals: “Usually we can find him at his office in during office hours. He creates a welcoming environment to support us, so we come to him if we need assistance.” Further, he knew and called all the students by their names, as noted by another student: “He calls me by my name and he knows every student in the class.” Even outside of the classroom, the instructor was available to the students and even organised social meetings to build instructor-student and student-student relationships:

Sometimes he organised social meeting to have a BBQ and play soccer, so we are all closer now and we have a good relationship with him.

In this class, students know each other more and we have a good relationship; we share mobile numbers and emails and we had some fun meetings outside the university with Dr. X.

As a result of this kind of closer relationship, students felt Dr. X had a positive effect on their personalities and characters, as revealed in these comments:

I think the instructor’s behaviours can change society by developing students’ characters. I found Dr. X had a positive effect on my personality. I learnt many things from him, such as respect, rapport, modesty and trueness.

My opinion is that the instructor plays a significant role in shaping students’ personalities, so I hope every instructor is a good example for their students and is friendly and deals with them honestly.

Although it is difficult to confirm whether the students' personalities and characters were improved as a result of the positive influence of their instructor, multiple students reported this to be the case, of their own volition, which suggests there is some veracity to their views.

As can be seen from the quantitative data in Tables 3.9 and 3.12, the scores of verbal and nonverbal immediacy for the pre-test of all three groups and the post-test of the control groups were low. All groups indicated a low score for immediacy in the classroom before the experiment started.

Tables 3.9 and 3.12 indicate that the pre- and post-test results for both verbal and nonverbal immediacy show significantly higher results for the immediacy group. The student responses for all groups indicate that students benefit, or would like to benefit, from a learning experience where immediacy practices are the norm. To achieve this, instructors need more in-service training programs to improve both their teaching methods and communication skills.

Further, the majority of student responses given during the interview process support the idea that instructors would benefit from training to improve instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy strategies. Some student comments included:

I think most instructors should attend some training programs on communication skills and read more about active teaching methods.

I hope instructors take more training programs which assist them to develop their teaching methods.

Based on the responses received from the students, it is observed that none of the verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices are used at King Khalid University. This is attributed mainly to the culture in Saudi Arabia, as it is hierarchical, collectivistic and

has a high power distance. However, from the responses received, it is also observed that the students at King Khalid University sought a more interactive learning experience and would like to have more discussion and interaction with their instructors. The students also complained that the current method of learning focuses on memorising class material rather than on the practical application of what is being taught.

It is, therefore, the recommendation of this research that instructors at King Khalid University undertake some training in active teaching methods to benefit both instructors and students. As seen from the experiences of the students in the immediacy group, and from the student comments for both the control groups and the immediacy group, the application of immediacy practices would encourage student input and improve learning and communication skills.

## **Q2: To what extent is instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy related to student class participation?**

This section provides a framework for understanding the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student class participation.

Immediacy in the classroom helps students form a positive perception of the competence, trustworthiness and caring attitude of the instructor (Rocca, 2010; Thweatt, 1999). These positive perceptions can help to encourage student participation in the class. Verbal communication helps to deliver subject content, whereas nonverbal communication is useful in developing instructor-student relations (Richmond et al., 2006). Immediacy practices in a class can also encourage the development of

interpersonal attraction between the instructor and student (Rocca & McCroskey, 1999; Sidelinger, 2010). Immediacy shows the students that their instructors care and therefore enhances interaction in the class. Educational researchers (Henson & Denker, 2009; Merwin, 2002) suggest that instructors must attempt to give the students individual attention. This helps students to realise that the instructor sees them as equally important, which makes them more motivated to participate and interact in the class.

The findings of the current study support the positive and significant role of immediacy on student participation. Thus, the findings are in accordance with other studies (e.g., Dallimore et al., 2004; Frisby & Myers, 2008; Fritschner, 2000; Myers et al., 2002; Nunn, 1996). The qualitative results of Burroughs (2007) also demonstrated that college students are significantly more likely to comply with moderately or highly immediate teacher requests. The responses received from the immediacy group support previous findings through comments such as:

As a result of our good relationship with Dr. X we can talk, discuss, ask, laugh and do what we would like to do.

This class is more interactive; there is more communication between students and the instructor, and everyone has a role and works well with each other.

However, lack of immediacy in the control group caused students to complain that they do not have the opportunity to share their ideas and have to accept whatever their instructor says. These students were clearly dissatisfied with the immediacy levels in their classroom and wanted improvements:

I was passive in all lectures. I was like part of the furniture, because we don't have an opportunity to share ideas, or ask questions.

Discussion and freedom of speech are inoperative in the classroom.

How can instructors apply discussion in the classroom if they haven't got any communication skills?

In addition to the stilted levels of instructor immediacy in the classroom, it must be acknowledged that there are other reasons why students do not participate in the classroom, including a lack of confidence, a fear of being ridiculed and the physical arrangement of the class. Weaver and Qi (2005) reported that a student's confidence is directly related to their involvement and behaviour in class. This view is supported by students from the control groups who said they lacked the confidence to speak up in class and had limited communication with their instructor. As one student suggested in the following comment:

I think dialogue is the best way of teaching because with it we can gain more confidence and more ability to accept different opinions. At the moment, we can't discuss or talk in the class because we haven't any confidence.

This lack of confidence was the consequence of a fear of ridicule (Myers et al., 2002). Control group students reported that they refrained from asking questions due to fear of being ridiculed or upsetting the instructor:

It was difficult to discuss in the classroom because sometimes we fear the instructor or feel he will be upset if we interrupt him or ask him a question and he doesn't know the answer.

Sometime instructors ridicule the student if his answer is wrong. The key to evil is one word.

Student can't ask questions or disagree because they fear the reaction of the instructor. So, we keep silent all the time.

Some students fear communicating and worry the instructor might misunderstand them, so they prefer to be on the safe side and keep silent.

Conversely, immediacy allows students to be close to their instructors and get a greater understanding of the subject and build more confidence as one student commended “If the instructor has good behaviour, then students become more confident and able to communicate and discuss in the classroom, as well as get a good result in the course”. Feedback from the immediacy group’s respondents stated that they felt more freedom and safe in the classroom,

I felt safe about asking the instructor anything. We were welcome to talk with him about assignments, due dates, exam time and everything related the course.

I felt free to talk with my instructor and I found him usually keen to support me and my friends to present our opinions and our comments.

I felt free and did not hesitate to ask the instructor to clarify an issue or re-explain something.

In addition to feeling more secure, student participation was also affected by the seating arrangements. If seats were arranged in rows and columns students had less opportunity to participate in group discussion (Fassinger, 2000; Shadiow, 2010). One student confirmed that, “The instructor’s behaviours and the arrangement of the class chairs do not assist us to communicate with the instructor.” The traditional linear classroom layout detracted from communication, discussion, and student participation. However, students in immediacy group sat at desks that faced each other. One student remarked; “Dr. X always arranged the class to be in circles or U-shapes to encourage discussion and cooperative learning”.

There are many benefits of participation in classroom. Students who participate in class have been shown to learn more than students who are less participative (Handelsman et al., 2005). An increased level of participation in class was also found to help students achieve higher grades. Most students are aware that class participation is

necessary to optimise their learning process (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005; Henning, 2012; Girgin & Stevens, 2005). Brookfield and Preskill (2012) proposed that teaching by dialogue and discussion leads to improvements in students' communication skills.

This research is supported by the following comments of the immediacy group students:

We usually use dialogue and discussion in the classroom and that builds our learning and communication skills. That's what students must learn at university to be a good citizen in the community.

When I am involved in class discussion, I get a better understanding of topics and that has assisted me with remembering and applying the subject and course information.

On the other hand, the responses from control groups indicate that due to missing discussion and participation in the classroom can have a negative effect on their learning. As one student mention:

There is no credit for classroom participation and passing the course depended on the midterm exam and the final exam, so we memorised the contents of the subject and after exams we forgot everything we knew before.

Participation in class also can be promoted through better student-instructor interaction to help students become more engaged in the subjects being taught (Mazer, 2013). This helps them to become more interested in the subject and kindles their desire to learn more (Kuh & Umbach, 2004). One student from immediacy group confirmed that:

I learned some better ways to interact with others; I think my communication skills are better now than before.

Statistically, the findings were consistent with previous studies (e.g., Caynus et al., 2009; Frisby & Myers, 2008) that found a correlation between highly immediate instructors and increased student participation. The pair-wise comparison of student class participation levels (see Table 3.18) revealed that there is no significant difference between Groups 1, 2, and 3 at Time 1, but Groups 1, 3 and 2, 3 differ significantly at Time 2. The mean student class participation scores for Group 3 were significantly higher than the controls in Group 1.

As is evident in the results in Table 3.16, the pre-test and post-test results remain the same for the control Groups 1 and 2 that did not have immediacy practices. However, the post-test results for immediacy Group 3 show an increase in student participation for verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices. This shows that both verbal and nonverbal immediacy helps to increase student participation in class.

In summary, I believe, and the findings support the view, that if the instructor offers high immediacy and allows students to ask questions and discuss issues, then the students will have a more positive attitude towards their class and their instructor. Class participation is virtually non-existent at King Khalid University. At this time, the students sit in class and listen; they are not encouraged to ask questions or discuss and it appears as though students are automatons. In contrast, Dr. X involved his students in discussion; he allowed and encouraged students to ask questions and discussions to take place in small groups. All students in Dr. X's class said that they felt valued in his class. Therefore, based on feedback received from participants in the immediacy class taught by Dr. X, these students were content with the quality of learning in the class. Student feedback also showed that the verbal and nonverbal immediacy practised by the instructor in the immediacy group had encouraged and created opportunities for them to be more participative in the class. The open, friendly behaviour demonstrated by the

instructor helped them to overcome the student-instructor barriers and feel closer to their instructor. This improved both communication and participation between the students and the instructor and these results were observed both inside and outside the classroom by the students. Therefore, the onus should be on instructors to involve students more in class through class discussion, asking questions and prompting small group discussions. Such inclusive practices would encourage students to participate more in the class, rather than just sit and listen.

### **Q3: What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student motivation?**

This section provides a framework for understanding the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student motivation. The current results confirm and support the findings of previous studies (e.g., Allen et al., 2006; Ellis, 2004; McCroskey et al., 2006; Mottet et al., 2004). For instance, Pogue and AhYun (2006) reported evidence of the positive impact of instructor immediacy on student motivation. Their study found that there is no doubt that the immediacy on the part of the instructor and his credibility generates a positive classroom environment, which increases student motivation. Moreover, this motivation leads to greater student involvement in the multifaceted process of learning.

Chesebro and McCroskey (2001) also investigated the link between instructor immediacy behaviours and their relation with student state motivation, positive involvement in the classroom and cognitive learning. The study confirmed that instructor immediacy behaviours are positively related to student motivation, which

allows students to have a positive involvement with the instructor and course content and decreases any learning loss experienced by the students. For example, Christophel (1990) studied the link between students' perception of instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviours and students' state motivation and hypothesised that a positive relationship existed between the two. The hypothesis was tested with simple and multiple correlational analyses, which confirmed that instructor immediacy and students' state motivation levels were positively related. Moreover, the study reported that students who perceived that their instructor had more verbal and nonverbal immediacy exhibited enhanced levels of motivation in class. Frymier (1994) researched the role of communication apprehension among students and stated that the response level of students towards an immediate instructor varies due to the apprehension they feel while communicating with the instructor. The study further explained that students having moderate and high levels of communication apprehension were more comfortable with an immediate instructor, whereas those students who experienced low levels of anxiety associated with communicating to the instructor were found to be motivated towards learning in any case.

Wingfield and Black (2005) reported that passive learning is a part of the traditional teaching methods in which lecturing is the predominant method by which the instructors impart knowledge; the students are afforded only minute chances to contribute to the lecture content. There is a lack of discussion in passive learning and students rarely engage in any experiments related to their course of study. Moreover, the prime method of receiving information from the instructor is to memorise points delivered during the lecture. Wingfield and Black (2005) agreed that passive learning is practised widely in educational institutions but argued that it is high time to realise that students require more than the usual transfer of knowledge in order to study effectively.

The study suggested that, in order to increase the participation level of students, students must be required to take responsibility for their own learning and not left only to listen to the instructor during the session.

The findings of the student interviews revealed that Groups 1 and 2, who did not have an instructor with high immediacy, reported an instructor-centred classroom learning environment, which meant that the students played a passive, silent role:

You can't believe that the students do not talk at all during a 50-minute class, except for one word (yes) when the instructor calls their student numbers when he takes attendance. Not how you want to be motivated! Of course, we feel bored and uncomfortable.

This [teaching style] causes a lack of interest among students and fails to draw their attention towards the lecture. Therefore, the students listen absentmindedly and spend their time either sleeping or using their cell phones.

Unfortunately, the lecture method was the only way of teaching so most students watch the clock to see when the lecture will be finished. They feel bored.

The argument for students taking a more active role in their learning was reflected in the comments of the control groups (Groups 1 and 2), who complained that there was little or no opportunity to talk or discuss the lecture content during the class, as the instructor only explained the lecture material but did not ask any questions to engage the students in discussion. This gives rise to student apprehension, as students are unable to engage in meaningful learning, which can lead to low motivation levels and a lack of interest.

The feelings of one-way communication, as experienced by Groups 1 and 2, generated disappointment among the students as they believed university study is crucial for them and their future; they felt the passive learning environment prevented them from learning and left them demotivated and uncomfortable during the class, to

the extent that they had no other motivational factor to attend the class except to record their presence during the lecture. Some students in this research commented:

The best method of learning for me depends on discussion; I feel I can learn better and it leads to my mind being opened and my brain being worked. Having all classes done by the instructor writing on the blackboard and explaining the points of the lesson without asking questions or encouraging the students to talk does not help to create any understanding of the subject and it is not interesting.

The main teaching method used is a lecture, which is a boring method. Most students are not active and they are unmotivated.

We were passive during learning and felt so bored. I hope that the instructor uses student-centred learning to improve our personality, increase our confidence, and make the class more interesting.

My study experience in this course is bad. I'm not motivated because I feel bored in the class. Only the lecture as a method of teaching is used every day.

Rocca (2004) reported that attendance impacted negatively on students when immediacy practices were low. This supports the comment that students attend largely because they need to have their name marked off the roll by the instructor:

I attend the class just to be there when the instructor checks the attendance list. If the attendance were not compulsory, maybe most students would not come to class.

I attended this class just to be there when the instructor calls the roll to avoid sanctions for non-attendance.

Delialioğlu (2012) presented some possible suitable interventions designed for improving student engagement. That study argued that the design of “learning environments” and “utilization of engaging teaching practices” are some of the interventions that can be used to encourage student participation during class. The study further stated that the only suitable intervention at the disposal of instructors and

educators is to improve instructional practices in such a manner that students remain involved in academic activities during the lecture.

The students belonging to the immediacy group stated that, unlike the control groups, the learning environment in their class was student-centred, enabling them to engage in discussions, communicate their ideas and give comments. This allowed the students in Group 3 to remain active during lectures. One of the students in this group remarked:

We study in this class with a new student-centred learning environment; we learn by discussion and communication so we are motivated to share ideas, ask questions, and give comments.

In this class we learned many things; we learned how can we find, organise, and present the information... We are very motivated and interested because of this instructor.

This group, characterised by high immediacy, required that the students involve themselves and become active learners.

Cannon and Newble (2000) shed light on the notion of student-centred learning, suggesting it involves teaching methods in which students are required to learn and think critically. In this type of learning, the students are encouraged to be responsible and to engage in activities that enhance their learning and require them to stop relying completely on the instructor. The main emphasis of student-centred learning is on the student's academic activity, as opposed to the conventional practice where instructor is in full control of the classroom and has the entire responsibility for covering the content of a particular course. Richmond et al. (2006) further explained this idea, adding that student-centred learning involves active learning, as opposed to passive learning. In other words, students are encouraged to take additional responsibility and accountability for their education and, in return, they feel an increased sense of independence in their

lives as students and their relationship with the instructor changes from being dependent to interdependent.

Sarason and Banbury (2004) explained the components of active learning. They reported that active learning is a combination of different teaching methods, which include pauses between lectures so that the students can note down the important points delivered by their instructor. This allows the students to keep pace with the instructor. In addition, the instructor is required to arrange short writing exercises and group discussions during class time so that the students can communicate within groups and with the instructor in order to enhance their understanding of the topic.

Group 3, the high instructor immediacy group, reported that as a result of discussion and communication during the class, their motivation level remained high, which increased their interest during the class. In line with this, Kuh and Hu (2001) found that student engagement in the class has a significant impact on student motivation regarding their education at large. As one student highlighted:

I found this class different from all classes which I took before. I felt more comfortable and it was more enjoyable ... this class is interesting for us; we hope all classes will become like it, as now I'm more motivated to learn and study.

It was clear from their discussions that they were highly motivated by immediate behaviours of the instructors. They thrived on the affirmation as valuable partners in collaborative learning. Therefore, student engagement plays a significant role in the learning and personal development of students. Thus, it is necessary that instructors engage students in academic-related activities that provide them with the requisite satisfaction. This proves the significance of student engagement and thereby makes

clear that, in order to reduce dissatisfaction and negative educational experiences among students there is a need to keep the students engaged in the classroom at all times.

Further, Chi (2009) discussed interactive learning in the classroom. Chi's study suggested that an interactive tutoring system would be valuable as it provides feedback and guidance to students. Chi (2009) supported this argument by stating that when students interact with the instructor, their communication takes on a distinct pattern in which the instructor asks questions related to the content of a course or lecture and requests the students to respond and then provides corrective feedback to the students. This type of system maintains student activity at all times during the class and can therefore incite motivation for students to participate and learn in the classroom. This pattern of discussed interactive learning is supported by comments made by students in the immediacy group:

I enjoyed the group discussion and I felt this class provided what students need... we have roles and positions, so we are more motivated and interested.

We can communicate with the instructor... we have the freedom to talk and discuss and that makes me so happy and interested... we see that discussion can motivate us to make connections with the course content.

The above statements confirm that the instructor's immediacy behaviours and student-centred approach to be an effective learning method; they all reported being satisfied with the instructor's role as learning facilitator as well as their own roles in discussion and class activities.

The quantitative results also support the statement of the impact of immediacy on students' motivation. To begin with, the pair-wise comparison of students' motivation levels (see Table 3.22) revealed that there is no significant difference

between Group 1, 2, and 3 at Time 1, but that Groups 1, 3 and 2, 3 differ significantly at Time 2. The mean motivation scores for Group 3 were significantly higher than Group 1.

Going further, the mean scores of verbal and nonverbal immediacy for the three groups signify that verbal and nonverbal immediacy for all three groups was low at pre-test level (see Table 3.20). In the post-test phase, the mean scores of Groups 1 and 2 (the control groups) were low, but were higher for Group 3 (immediacy group). The impact of increased instructor immediacy for Group 3 resulted in an increase of the mean motivation level of Group 3 from 12.14 in pre-test phase to 31.00 in the post-test phase. The mean scores of motivation from Group 1 and Group 2 did not yield any significant changes in the pre- and post-test phases.

In summary, the literature suggests a lot of factors may promote motivation, including that of immediacy. Improved immediacy practices and greater student involvement would help to improve the motivation of the students for a subject; the students may also learn to like the instructor, which itself may improve student communication and learning outcomes. In this study, Groups 1 and 2 perceived that their instructor did not allow them to engage in classroom activities as a result of his lack of verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviours, which resulted in low student motivation levels. In contrast, Group 3 perceived that the effort of their instructor to involve students in classroom activities helped them to remain motivated in class. Consequently, it is recommended that instructors should work to improve their practice of immediacy to improve students' motivation, which, in turn, leads to increased student communication and learning outcomes.

#### **Q4: What is the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student communication satisfaction?**

This section provides a framework for understanding whether there is a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and student communication satisfaction. Instructors are known to use verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices in the classroom in an attempt to minimise the social distance that exists between them and the students. The findings of these studies give some support to the view that instructor immediacy positively effects students' communication satisfaction. For example, some studies have shown that instructor immediacy behaviours are positive predictors for student satisfaction (Arbaugh, 2001; Christophel, 1990; Goodboy & Myers, 2008; Gorham, 1988; Plax et al., 1986; Richmond et al., 1987). This is achieved by encouraging more student participation and dialogue in the classroom so that the students can develop the skills to discuss ideas, make judgments and draw conclusions (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012). Qualitative analyses were intended to provide more contextualized answers; the results revealed that students' statements are consistent with the numerical data. The immediacy group indicate that they can develop communication skills like debating, elucidating an argument and accepting new ideas with Dr. X as they said:

We study the subject using dialogue and communicate with the instructor using student-centred techniques. All the students are involved in the course and everyone can express his opinion in class with a feeling of satisfaction.

He assists us to learn how we should communicate in the classroom. I'm very satisfied with his communication.

I'm satisfied in this class, so I found myself able to present my ideas and negotiate with others.

Moreover, some studies indicate that student communication satisfaction leads to improved student tertiary experience, student communication and learning outcomes (Frymier, 2005; Kerssen-Griep, 2001; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Richmond et al., 2006; Umphrey et al., 2008). Despite this finding, university education in Saudi Arabia is still instructor-oriented (Alkeaid, 2004) and has traditionally used a didactic pedagogy. This creates a formal relationship between instructors and students with a lack of free flowing information between instructors and students and limited freedom for the students (Mahrous and Ahmed, 2010). As a result, students are dissatisfied with instructor communication and find the instructors lacking in adequate communication and dialogue skills. Comments from the students in the control group reflect this:

There is no communication with the instructor. We just talk with him when we want to schedule the mid-term exam, so I'm not satisfied about his communication.

My feeling towards the instructor's communication is bad and I'm unsatisfied.

Sometimes when a student needed to clarify some points which he didn't understand, the instructor interpreted his questions negatively, assuming that either the student was stupid, or that he was not paying attention during class. I'm not satisfied with the instructor's communication.

A strong communication process and the presence of competent communicators can help to increase the level of student satisfaction. For satisfactory communication to take place, it is necessary to fulfil the expectations of the individual and respond accordingly to queries (Frymier, 2005; Goodboy et al., 2010). Students also attested to the fact that having the freedom to ask, talk and negotiate with their instructor and with each other has made them more satisfied and the class more enjoyable. This can be surmised from the responses of students from the immediacy group, who said:

We discuss course resources, assignment due dates, exams times and new issues around the world with our instructor. We are satisfied with Dr. X's communication.

In this class, I have freedom to ask, talk or negotiate and that's making me more satisfied and I am enjoying being in the classroom more.

These student comments have a common thread, which is that open communication and student-centred learning leads to greater student satisfaction.

In the quantitative data results, the pair-wise comparison of student communication satisfaction level revealed no significant difference between Group 1, 2, and 3 at Time 1, but the groups 1, 3 and 2, 3 differ significantly at Time 2. The mean student communication satisfaction scores for the immediacy group were significantly higher than control groups. It can be seen statistically from Table 3.24 that control groups 1 and 2, which had no immediacy practices in class, did not show any change in results between Time 1 and 2. However, the immediacy group 3, which had verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices in class, showed significant increase in student communication satisfaction.

Students from the control groups 1 and 2 had instructors who did not practice immediacy in the classroom. These students clearly stated that they were not satisfied with the communication demonstrated by their instructor. Students felt uncomfortable in the class and did not feel valued; certainly, this devaluation would affect their opinion of the instructor and the course. As a result of their negative experiences, the control group students felt they were unable to develop their skills for dialogue and critical thinking.

In contrast, the students in the immediacy class, with an instructor who practiced high verbal and nonverbal immediacy, said that they were very satisfied with the communication demonstrated by their instructor. Students were encouraged to share

their ideas without fear and the instructor welcomed them for discussion both in and out of the classroom. These students felt they were also able to improve their dialogue skills as well as their critical thinking.

The main focus for a class instructor should be in building positive relations with students so that their basic role of developing students can be fulfilled. Therefore, by practicing immediacy behaviour in class, instructors and students become better connected and experience higher quality communication. Education in Saudi Arabia needs to be more communication-oriented to help its students gain dialogue skills. This teaching method enables students to be close to their instructors while gaining more subject understanding and confidence.

The literature points to positive communication through good immediacy practices and therefore once again, I suggest that we include good teaching practices through improved immediacy within King Khalid University. For instance, if an instructor speaks positively to his students, smiles more, has positive body language and does not put the students down verbally, then the students are likely to have a more positive experience participating in an environment which has positive communication.

### **Q5: Is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning?**

This section provides a framework for understanding the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning. Affective learning can be described as the positive values that students attach to an instructor's behaviours in class. It consists of affect toward the course instructor and the course content

(Ormrod, 2004). Affective learning can also be separated into five segments that consist of receiving, responding, valuing, organising and characterising (Krathwohl, 2002).

Students can receive knowledge in the classroom in a passive or active manner. In the Arabic learning model, an instructor is active in conveying knowledge during lectures, while the students remain the passive recipients of the information being put forward (Talbani, 1996). About 73% of the instructors in Saudi Arabia are found to deliver information through lectures (Alkeaid, 2004). Education in Saudi Arabian universities is instructor-centred and lecture-oriented. The instructors maintain an authoritative position while the students listen to lectures and learn through repetition and memorisation (Hofstede, 2005). This method deprives students the opportunity to develop their learning skills and effective communication.

This study revealed that the traditional teaching methods, which lack immediacy practices, do not produce affective learning results. However, immediacy has been moderately associated with behaviours including instructor's humour, confirming behaviours, clarity, and classroom justice (Finn et al., 2009). In this study instructor immediacy was most heavily influenced on students' affective learning by encouraging students to participate in class and dealing with students in a friendly manner. The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies, which found a positive correlation between the instructor's immediacy and affective learning (e.g., Allen et al., 2006; Christophel, 1990; Frymier & Houser, 2000; Mottet et al., 2006; Pogue & AhYun, 2006). Students in the control groups did not experience high instructor immediacy, which impacted on their attitude towards their instructors, as is shown in the following responses:

The instructor pushes the students away from him, from the subject, and from wanting to attend the class. So I'm not interested to take another class with him in future.

The instructor is a key factor in building the student's personality, so I hope to take my courses with an instructor who can improve my communication skills and research skills, not like this instructor.

However, the immediacy group responded wholeheartedly to the instructors' encouragement to speak up and ask questions. They earnestly wanted to actively participate in classes to develop independent thinking and the ability to express it. Students spoke positively about their experience with a high immediacy instructor:

Of course I am interested to take another course with Dr. X; he has helped me to be more confident and active in the classroom. I have learned many things from him and I see him now as my friend.

I think using discussion during teaching is more interesting for students and has a positive effect on their attitude to instructor and course.

The students' interest in and understanding of the subject and the quality of the instructor's teaching are key factors in the assessment of affective learning (Chesebro, 2003). Also, the willingness of students to enrol in a class with the same lecturer is also a key indicator of the students' satisfaction with the course (Simonds et al., 2006). Exploration of the qualitative data to gain deeper insights into the students' experiences uncovered another trend that the immediacy group was beginning to demonstrate behavioural learning. The responses from the immediacy group indicate that they are interested in taking more courses with Dr. X, as a consequence of his high immediacy practice. As one student noted, "The instructor encourages me to apply the course's information. I found him supportive of students' communication and I hope to study with him in other course".

In contrast, students in the control groups, who were dissatisfied with their course due to the lack of class participation and the instructor not practising immediacy, reported that:

The lecture format makes me feel upset and not interested, so much so that I can't take another course with this instructor.

In this class we are passive and uninvolved with the course, so I don't think I will be interested to take another course with this instructor.

As an outcome of the quantitative data analysis, the pair-wise comparison of affective learning levels (see Table 3.30) revealed that there is no significant difference between Groups 1, 2 and 3 at Time 1, but Groups 1, 3 and 2, 3 differ significantly at Time 2. The mean affective learning scores for Group 3 were significantly higher than Group 1 and Group 2 at Time 2. This leads to the suggestion that there is significant relationship between verbal and nonverbal immediacy and affective learning across Groups 3 and 1 and Groups 3 and 2, and that the instructor's immediacy does, in fact, have a positive impact on affective learning.

As Table 3.28 shows, the affective learning in the control groups is low when the instructor immediacy was poor. However, the results for Group 3 showed a significant increase in affective learning during the post-test. This shows that Dr. X's immediacy practices were effective.

The reviewed literature, quantitative results, and student comments all support the argument that improved immediacy would have a positive effect on affective learning, such that the students would be more active in class, communicate with their lecturer more, appreciate their lecturer more and value the program presented. They

would also be more active within the program, respond to questions, participate in group discussions and the students would be encouraged to learn.

Affective learning would improve within the class if the instructor simply had a more positive attitude towards the students, spoke confidently and involved the students more in class. Unfortunately, it is evident at King Khalid University that the instructors perform very few immediacy practices and, as shown above, the students in the control groups vocalised their dissent during the interview stage of this study.

### **Q6: To what extent is there a relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning?**

This question provides a framework for understanding the relationship between instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy and students' perceived cognitive learning. While positive correlations were found in this study that support previous research (e.g., Cheseboro & McCroskey, 2001; Kelley & Gorham, 1988; King & Witt, 2009; Mottet & Bebee, 2002; McCroskey et al., 2006) that indicated verbal immediacy does indeed have an impact on cognitive learning, nonverbal immediacy was not found to be a significant predictor of student cognitive learning. The current findings add new insights to this growing body of literature regarding the predictive value of instructor immediacy on student cognitive learning.

Frymier and Houser (2000) explored the role of instructor immediacy behaviours in building cognitive learning. They argued that an instructor's immediacy behaviours help to eliminate the physical and/or psychological distance between the learners, which creates a perception that the instructor is close to them. This belief

renews the instructor-student relationship, which is deemed as an influencing factor of cognitive learning. Allen et al. (2006) elaborated this idea further, stating that instructor immediacy roused the students to be enthusiastic about learning and exhibit increased classroom participation. Thus, the immediate behaviour of the instructor acts as a catalyst that diminishes the perceived distance between instructor and students and boosts student learning. The interviews revealed this view to be the case in the immediacy group, as the main source of the immediacy group's learning took the form of class discussions, which allowed students to enhance their communication skills and enabled them to better retain the course information, even after the semester was over. Students also reported that they felt more confident and ultimately earned good marks in the course. As one student responded in the interview, "If the instructor has good behaviours, then students become more confident and able to communicate and discuss in the classroom and get good results in the course."

Titsworth (2004) empirically evaluated the impact of lectures on students' perceptions of an instructor's immediacy behaviours. The study found a significant relationship between the two constructs and suggested that the students who attended highly immediate lectures perceived the lecturer as having higher immediacy behaviour. This means that, in order to enhance cognitive learning, the instructor has to show immediacy, which leads students to perceive that their instructor has high immediacy behaviour.

The qualitative results also highlighted that instructors who apply high immediacy behaviours and attempt to encourage students to contribute to classroom activities and discussions are perceived positively by the students. This result is consistent with the findings of (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001; Henning, 2012), whereby the immediacy has a great deal of potential to elicit positive outcomes from classroom

learning as such behaviours helped to reduce the anxiety students experience during lectures. When instructors provide a comfortable and friendly learning environment, students report greater perceptions of control in the classroom, resulting in reduced apprehension, which allows them to learn and practically apply their learning. This leads the students to believe that the instructor is concerned about them, cares for their learning and genuinely wants the students to participate actively in the classroom (Comadena et al., 2007).

The findings from the immediacy group also demonstrated that the instructor's immediacy behaviour encouraged students to learn and benefit from the course. In order to encourage students to approach the instructor and take an active part in educational activities, instructors should exhibit high immediacy behaviours, as there is a strong correlation between these behaviours and students' ability to recognise, recall and understand course content. This result is analogous to the results found by Allen et al. (2006). Some students mention that:

I think students can learn very well using negotiation and they can get a high grade in the course. I still remember what I learned in the course and am able to apply it.

When I am involved in class discussion, I get a better understanding of topics and that has assisted me with remembering and applying the subject and course information.

However, the control groups in the current study held the view that the instructors' expertise and knowledge did not benefit them; once they established a friendlier rapport with the instructor, they found they were able to understand the course contents more easily. Some control students reported that,

If the instructor want to deliver his messages perfectly he must, firstly, be close to the hearts of his students. Briefly, our instructor has no closeness, no understanding.

Of course the instructor's behaviours effect students' achievements because he can make the course more interesting for students by dealing with them in a friendly way. That makes students more active and able to understand more, so I found it difficult to remember the information in this course.

It is difficult to remember and understand course information because there is no rapport between the instructor and the students; we are not close.

The students of Groups 1 and 2 also reported that a lack of closeness between the instructors and the students contributed toward a lowering in confidence, which hindered the students' learning and prevented them from trusting or respecting their instructor. This, in turn, created apprehension among the students due to the instructors' immediacy behaviours and its negative impact on student learning. This is in line with the findings of Chesebro and McCroskey (2001), who reported that student apprehension impeded cognitive learning and those students who report increased anxiety levels during class fail to process the lecture effectively, which results in insufficient learning. Apprehension spoils the learning experience as the students find it difficult to assimilate the information successfully, resulting in decreased learning. As one student said, "I think we need more confidence and more learning, which will come if we find an instructor who can be close to us".

Groups 1 and 2 reported that the main method of retaining the knowledge imparted during the lectures was memorisation. Due to the absence of critical thinking and class discussion, the majority of students experienced a learning loss at the completion of the course. The control group students perceived that the lack of discussion prevented them from fully understanding the subject matter and, in order to pass the exams, they had to rely on memorisation of study material to earn good marks.

This is in line with the comments of several students in the control groups, who felt that rote memorisation did not result in long-term learning:

We learnt at the university how to memorise knowledge without thinking or challenging it, so we forget everything after finishing the course.

My study depended on memorising the subject and writing the information down on the exam paper, that's all. Because of this, I forget immediately what I learned after I step out of the exam hall.

We need more practice rather than memorising knowledge only.

There is no credit for classroom participation and passing the course depended on the midterm exam and the final exam, so we memorised the contents of the subject and after exams we forgot everything we knew before.

The quantitative results also confirmed that there was no significant difference between the cognitive learning of Groups 1, 2 and 3 at Time 1, but there was at Time 2 (Table 3.32). The mean scores for Group 3 were significantly higher than Group 1 and Group 2 at Time 2 (Table 3.34).

Going further, the mean scores of cognitive learning for the three groups signify that the impact of increased instructor verbal immediacy for Group 3 resulted in an increase of the mean cognitive learning for Group 3 from 17.22 in the pre-test phase to 44.12 in the post-test phase (Table 3.4). The mean scores of cognitive learning for Group 1 (Table 3.4) and Group 2 (Table 3.5) did not yield any significant changes between the pre- and post-test phase. This indicates that the increased focus on verbal immediacy during the treatment phase, resulted in a significant difference in the mean scores for cognitive learning.

The findings of this study were not consistent with previous studies that found a strong relationship between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning (Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Mottet & Bebee, 2002; McCroskey et al., 2006). However, although

several models have been proposed to link between instructor nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning, there is no empirically validated theory to explain the positive relationship between them. Some studies found a significant relationship between the two variables while others did not. For example, Witt & Wheelless (2001) contested the effects of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning and stated that no substantial evidence has been obtained to prove the positive impact of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning. This assertion was backed by findings that failed to prove any significant correlation between instructor nonverbal immediacy and students' academic performance in the initial days of a semester. However, positive correlation was found between instructor nonverbal immediacy and final course grades.

The absence of a correlation between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning in this study could be the result of various factors: (a) cognitive learning measurement problems; (b) cultural differences; and/or (c) the categorising of cognitive learning. First, there are much differences of opinion among instructional communication scholars relating to the appropriate means to measure cognitive learning. Chesebro and McCroskey (2001) suggested that research investigating the impact of instructors' immediacy behaviours on students' cognitive learning has mostly relied on students to provide self-reports on the level of their classroom learning. Smythe and Hess (2005) contested the validity of such measurements, arguing instead that the evaluation of immediacy and cognitive learning based on self-reports must be scrutinised for validity.

Gorham (1988) also posited that tertiary students have considerable experience in the school environment and often make comments such as "I got a C but I learned a lot" or "I didn't learn anything but I got an A". Gorham (1988) believed that a student's perception of how much s/he learned is a better indicator of student cognitive learning

than a test result or a course grade. Therefore, the method in which a researcher operationalises a student's level of cognitive learning impacts the findings of a study.

The second factor is cultural difference. As Witt et al. (2006) stated, "Nonverbal behaviours are highly inferential and vary based on culture and context. Therefore, any relationship observed in the United States may not exist when considering other cultural or language groups" (p. 151). Clearly, there are vast cultural differences between American and Saudi culture, so it is to be expected that the results of this study on the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning in Saudi Arabia will not be consistent with most American studies.

The third factor is the categorising of cognitive learning. As noted by King and Witt (2009), "The question still remains regarding the extent to which perceived learning is a valid indicator of students' cognitive learning" (p. 118). Witt et al. (2006) also notes, "many of the authors of original data reports would categorise the learning loss measure as a measure of cognitive learning" (p. 156). These different methods of categorising were identified in a meta-analytic investigation of 81 studies (Witt et al., 2004), which revealed statistically different results between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning and perceived learning. Studies that investigated nonverbal immediacy and perceived learning found average  $r=.510$ , while nonverbal immediacy with cognitive learning found average  $r=.166$ . So, disagreement exists as to whether this should be referred to as 'perceived learning' rather than cognitive learning.

Therefore, nonverbal immediacy behaviours do not independently affect cognitive learning. It affirms closeness between instructor and student. Thus nonverbal immediacy is a key element in relationship building. It is through nonverbal immediacy that the student-teacher relationship grows and it is through this relationship that affective on cognitive learning.

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 2, there are four models to describe the association between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning: the direct effects model; the arousal model; the motivation as mediator model; and the affective learning as mediator model. Allen et al. (2006) stated that instructor nonverbal immediacy had an indirect impact on cognitive learning. The study of Allen et al. presented a model proposing that an instructor who exhibits a high level of nonverbal immediate behaviours would cause augmented levels of affective learning, which would lead to enhanced cognitive learning. Within similar research, Smythe and Hess (2005) provided evidence for an indirect link between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning by reasoning that the nonverbal immediacy behaviours of the instructor increase student motivation, which results in the advancement of cognitive learning. The study tested a hypothesis relating to the link between instructor nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning and confirmed that there was a positive link between the two.

In this study, the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and cognitive learning (see Figures 3.4) is showing suggested model. It's beyond the scope of the current thesis to then investigate causal relationships within the model. So this model should be tested in future research to confirm the relationships between nonverbal immediacy and relevant dependent variables, and the correlations between dependent variables.

In conclusion, the data collected from the student interviews indicated that learning is indeed affected by the levels of instructor immediacy. Students in the control group reported that their learning would be better if the instructor involved them more in the class. The immediacy group praised their instructor, who practised high immediacy and suggested that their learning experience was positive and that learning had improved.

These results reinforce that if instructors expect to improve students' cognitive learning skills, they would be well advised to involve their students more in class activities. It is not sufficient to say that learning by rote involves cognitive learning; all that is involved then is the fact that a student needs to recall, not understand, the material presented in class to gain a pass. By involving the students in class discussions and activities, the instructor will find that the student gains a deeper understanding of the concepts presented and is more likely to be motivated to learn more. The continued practice of passive classroom learning – as has been the tradition in Saudi Arabian classrooms – will unfortunately encourage students to remain alienated from their own learning; particularly if they see no value in the learning process.

### **Summary**

In summary, instructors should practice an open-door policy while engaging students in conversations both inside and outside the classroom. They should focus on verbal immediacy practices, such as using personal examples, encouraging students to ask questions and speak, facilitating discussions, using humour, addressing students by their names, engaging individual students in conversation, offering feedback, asking how students feel and meeting outside class time to answer questions. Moreover, instructors should give attention to nonverbal immediacy practices, including facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, relaxed posture, moving in the classroom and vocal variety. This will enable students to engage with the instructor and the subject material, prompting critical analysis of remarks made in class and encourage students to offer their opinions so that ideas are shared and collective learning is facilitated in the class. The application of verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices will have positive results

on students' communication and learning outcomes accept the effect of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of instructor immediacy on student communication and learning outcomes. I found that instructor immediacy behaviours at King Khalid University resulted in positive student communication and learning outcomes. Teacher immediacy appeared to be a salient factor in the development of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students at King Khalid University and aided the promotion of student learning and success.

The results of this study show that a significant portion of the responsibility for creating a positive classroom environment lies with instructors. This supports a larger body of growing evidence that personal communication between instructors and students is a defining factor in effective teaching (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Much work has gone into determining ways in which instructors can create a positive classroom environment, including integration of collaborative opportunities for students into the classroom, engagement in casual and personal conversation, balancing of intellectual stimulation with interpersonal relationships and utilisation of techniques to foster positive relationships with and between students (Aguiar et al., 2010; Kamansky, 2004; Mazer, 2013; Struyven et al., 2010; Wulff & Wulff, 2004).

Furthermore, the results from the investigation show that students were overtly dissatisfied with communications with their instructors who failed to use appropriate immediacy behaviours. When students felt negative emotions towards their instructor, their learning and motivation became compromised. Students were unforgiving of instructors who did not meet their expectations but students had positive memories of

meaningful interactions with instructors who took a personal and professional interest in them and their learning. These findings provide a much-needed contribution of knowledge into the role of instructor immediacy in promoting students' participation in class at King Khalid University. They reveal part of the reason why students do or do not gain satisfaction from participation in class activities and discussions. The current study provides practical techniques for instructors to promote prosocial behaviours within the classroom and hence develop relational closeness with students. This investigation has shown that immediacy reduces perceptions of distance, thereby facilitating communication between students and instructors.

Students in this study acknowledged a correlation between the actions of instructors in class and students' interactions with the faculty outside of class. Many students believed that positive interactions between instructors and students began with positive in-classroom practices; if the instructor made an effort to develop a rapport with his students in class, it typically extended to enable positive communications with students outside of class time as well. Students gave examples of the sort of classroom behaviours that encouraged more outside-of-class interactions. These included the use of a variety of teaching techniques and the expression of one's personality in the classroom. Students spoke positively of casual interactions with instructor around campus and visit him in this office. Students were often motivated to visit instructor in this office because of questions arising from classroom discussions or assignments. Students felt comfortable discussing their personal problems and concerns with instructor that they perceived as being approachable. Thus, instructor with high immediacy created an open and positive environment in which students felt able to actively participate in their education, which made them more motivated and interested in doing so.

It became evident in this study that, as long as the verbal immediacy level was high, variations in nonverbal immediacy did not produce significant changes in cognitive learning. When an instructor smiled, gestured, moved around or used variety in vocal delivery, the nonverbal immediacy cues appeared to have minimal effect on students' cognitive learning. These findings show that verbal immediacy predominates over nonverbal immediacy in the classroom. In the collectivist Saudi society, where individuals are attuned to preserving social harmony, it should be considered that nonverbal immediacy may be used to cover negative motivations as much as to communicate positive ones.

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that culture plays a key role in the interpretation of some instructor immediacy behaviours. Although several studies report considerable cultural similarities in the assessment of instructor immediacy behaviours, this study highlighted cultural differences in the interpretation of particular verbal immediacy behaviours, such as allowing students to address their instructor by their first name. Students couldn't imagine possible to call the instructor by his first name even he deal with him friendly because it is unthinkable in Saudi culture and so sensitive to power distance. The results of this study do not support the statement of the effect of nonverbal immediacy on cognitive learning. As Neuliep (1997) remarked, "Although it may be universally valid to argue that instructor immediacy facilitates learning, the operationalisation of immediacy may vary considerably across cultures" (p. 449).

## Implications

*“To improve is to change. To be perfect is to change often.”*

*~ Winston Churchill*

Chesebro (2003) concluded that instructors should make students their first priority, teach accordingly and practise effective communication behaviours. For classroom instructors who wish to maximise their students' learning, the findings of this investigation are extremely important. It is clear that students learn more from instructors who use frequent verbal immediacy in their delivery, but nonverbal immediacy, such as smiles, gestures, eye contact and vocal expressiveness, also impact positively on motivation, satisfaction, participation and affective learning. This study has revealed that tertiary students are heavily influenced by instructor communication patterns, illustrating the importance of the instructor's role in facilitating student communication and learning outcomes. As overall student engagement becomes ever more important in the higher education classroom (Docan-Morgan, 2011), so the implications and suggestions of this study become more vital in helping instructors to increase engagement by increasing their immediacy behaviours.

Past research (Edwards & Edwards, 2001; Jordan & Wheelless, 1990; Mottet et al., 2004) concerning verbal immediacy suggested that word choice and sentence structure can serve as expressions of like or dislike that, in turn, affect the perceived closeness of a given relationship. Gorham (1988) identified additional behaviours that foster perceptions of verbal immediacy, including spontaneous humour, verbal praise of classroom comments, attention to student-initiated classroom topics and willingness to participate in instructor-student conversations outside of the classroom. The results of the current study support these previous findings and suggest that instructors should aim

to implement these verbal immediacy behaviours in their classrooms. This implementation process should begin with self-awareness: an instructor's knowledge of his or her own verbal tendencies in the classroom. This knowledge allows an instructor to begin to develop verbal immediacy behaviours that will enhance the relational closeness between instructor and students.

Nonverbal immediacy behaviours – such as eye contact, smiles, nods, relaxed body posture, forward leans, movement, gestures and vocal variety – all work in combination to reflect empathy, interpersonal warmth and psychological closeness. In turn, these factors all enhance the development of relational closeness. The results of the regression analyses in this study reveal that nonverbal immediacy behaviours bear a positive association with student motivation, affective learning, communication satisfaction and participation. From these results we can infer that instructors should strive to incorporate nonverbal immediacy into their classroom management styles. Just as instructors who wish to improve their verbal immediacy behaviours should begin by increasing their self-awareness, instructors wishing to improve their nonverbal immediacy should start by recognising their own nonverbal mannerisms in the classroom.

Research has repeatedly been shown that learning is fostered by the creation of a supportive climate (Cole et al., 1999) and it is strongly recommended that professors work to create such an environment in a variety of ways. Again, instructors should engage in immediacy behaviours that demonstrate their interest in, and support of, the students. Appropriate self-disclosure can show students that they have common ground with their instructor. Instructors may do this by provide high immediacy behaviours, or they may engage in small talk with students before or after class. Instructors may then

make a note of individual students' comments so that they may continue those conversations later and continue to work on building rapport with the students.

The development of rapport among students may also increase the likelihood that they will behave in ways that will further develop their learning (Frisby & Martin, 2010). In this research the instructor played a key role in helping students to achieve positive learning outcomes; it is therefore pedagogically necessary for instructor to strive to improve their understanding of relationships between students. Such relationships have the potential to either encourage or hinder particular behaviours that contribute to student learning, including participation and out-of-class communication.

Conversely, instructors should avoid verbal aggression if they are to encourage student communication satisfaction and student participation in the classroom. It is evident that students in this study did not appreciate verbal aggression in the classroom and they appeared to show their intolerance of this behaviour by choosing not to participate. Instructors should recognise that when they challenge students, the potential exists for those students to perceive that behaviour as verbal aggression.

The quality of education imparted to future Saudi instructors was recently questioned by the Ministry of Higher Education. Highlighted areas included curriculum quality, teaching strategies, and classes offered. The Ministry of Higher Education acknowledges that a wide gap exists between the knowledge level of graduating students and the level required to prepare the next generation of critical thinkers. To eliminate this discrepancy, educators and administrators within the department are working to determine the type of curricula, teaching methodologies, and other activities that will foster higher order thinking and dialogue skills. It is evident in the literature that the benefits of active learning and, in particular, immediacy in the instructor-student

relationship are worth considering and incorporating into Saudi education methodologies and practises.

It is hoped that this study will promote debate about effective pedagogy in Saudi Arabia based on empirical research that evaluates not only pedagogy, but also the resulting communication skills and social values of students. In this way, some first steps may be taken towards transforming the education system into one that is more democratic and capable of developing university students' dialogue skills to a level where they are able to take leading roles in society. The increased communication between instructors and students and between students results in significant educational benefits, such as increased class participation, greater motivation and satisfaction, and greater affective learning as well as cognitive learning. Adopting an active learning approach will facilitate improved teaching and greater learning outcomes at home in Saudi Arabia, and overseas when students pursue scholarship studies at foreign institutions. Therefore, Saudi educators and instructors are encouraged to introduce teaching strategies that support cooperative and social learning into their classrooms. Based on the new educational reform, students are encouraged to perform complex and logical activities, such as decision-making, which relies on critical and innovative deduction, rather than on the memorisation of facts.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia should provide in-service training programs for instructors on the methods and benefits of student-centred teaching and learning. Similar to my experience in teaching, such training would show instructors how to build rapport with their students, to engage them in active learning, and enhance their students' self-efficacy. Adopting immediacy behaviours through an active learning approach would facilitate improved teaching and greater learning outcomes in Saudi Arabia.

Nonetheless, most instructors acknowledge that the inner motivation of students plays an important role in the teaching and learning process (Comadena et al., 2007; Ellis, 2004; Gendrin & Rucker, 2007). Perhaps, as suggested by Frymier (1994), instructors can increase student motivation through the use of appropriate combinations of verbal and nonverbal immediacy, and thereby enhance student motivation.

Whitaker (2004) supports the theory that positive instructor-student relationships are important to the motivation process. He discovered that students reported feeling unmotivated to communicate when they perceived their instructor as incompetent. This suggests that students do not want to get to know incompetent instructors, either inside or outside of the classroom. Students were also hesitant to build interpersonal relationships with instructors who used power authority. Overall, what instructors do and say in the classroom strongly influences on students' motivation participate.

In light of the finding that out-of-class support can have a strong influence on student satisfaction and motivation, my study recommends that tertiary instructors should consider carefully how they respond to students who come to them seeking support. Some instructors may believe that the provision of support for students dealing with stressful circumstances falls outside of the scope of their professional duties; however, these instructors need to be aware that when a student comes to them for help with a stressful situation, they have an opportunity not only to help that student manage their problems as they relate to their studies, but also to increase that student's satisfaction and motivation.

Instructors also need opportunities to critically analyse their own teaching methods so as to make confident and professionally informed decisions about the way they interact with students. In this way, they will encourage greater participation and higher levels of cognitive engagement with their students. Professional development

sessions provided by the university could assist instructors to develop their immediacy skills and improve their classroom teaching.

To avoid the monotony of the traditional lecture format, class time should be broken up to allow for participation activities. Creating a supportive climate has repeatedly been shown to increase participation (Lourdusamy et al., 2003; Myers et al., 2009). Students should be given opportunities for interaction and discussion early in the semester to increase their confidence. Student confidence affects classroom dynamics, and it is therefore essential to understand how student confidence can be enhanced in order to energise the classroom (Rocca, 2010). The influence of student confidence on learning could extend beyond direct class participation and into various other measures of learning as well. For instance, students could be given assignments out of class to bring in and discuss, work with other students in small groups, or be required to journal their thoughts relating to the topic. These sorts of activities require students to engage in and out of class with the subject matter, often to get ready for an upcoming class, which allows students to develop the confidence that comes with advance preparation. To encourage student involvement and class discussion, instructors should increase their 'wait time', vary the types of questions asked, listen with respect and refrain from passing judgment. Seats should ideally be arranged in a U or circular pattern, but can be alternated with row/ column seating to accommodate those who are apprehensive about communicating (Rocca, 2010).

Lack of time can sometimes make a lecturer favour one-way communication, yet students often feel bored or have difficulty following the course content when this approach is used. Instructors need to learn how to manage the course content to best meet students' learning capacities and improve their teaching strategies in a way that provides more time for interaction and two-way communication in the classroom.

This study has shown that students are more academically successful when they engage actively in the learning process. Thus, it is important for educators to find a way to help students connect with the course content. In order to get students involved, they must be engaged in high impact activities, which will encourage students to work extensively on purposeful tasks, engaging with a range of concepts and ideas; ‘knowing that’ builds on ‘knowing how’. Essentially, these high impact activities – such as collaborative learning activities, peer learning and role-play activities – require students to interact with faculty and peers frequently and substantively. The ultimate aim is to move students towards increased involvement and therefore increase their chances of academic success. Instructors should not only implement their own instructional communication methods in the classroom but also tap into individual student characteristics and use them as an additional resource for fostering academic success.

Dialogic teaching places increased emphasis upon learner-centred university teaching that helps all students become independent thinkers through the use of dialogue and effective classroom communication. This system of teaching requires the enhancement of the pedagogic knowledge of the university teaching community and attention to a key central value: student-focused teaching practice. If instructors encourage students to become self-regulated learners, students will perceive themselves as involved participants who are empowered and able to effectively control their own learning experiences in a variety of ways. Students who are given the opportunity to take ownership of their own learning tend to have positive perceptions about their learning capabilities and to value learning in general (Pogue & AhYun, 2006).

When an instructor encourages his students to ask questions, he provides an opportunity for students to engage in collaborative work with others. In this way, students try to connect new concepts with their own interests, experiences and

knowledge. For example, if a student makes a point during a class discussion, the instructor should prompt him to elaborate and think further about the topic, perhaps by asking, “What makes you say that?” and, further, “What in your reading assignment points to this example? What do you think is the most important thing we can learn from your point?” Such authentic questions in response to student contributions provide insight into a broader spectrum of student learning as they challenge the individual student and the class as a group to engage in a discussion and pursue their own learning (Campbell & Mayer, 2009). Instructors should ensure that students are allowed enough time to actually respond to, and follow up on, their initial contributions, rather than quickly answering their own questions and returning to a lecture format instead of encouraging discussion. In addition, instructors should make more use of authentic open-ended questions and speculative statements that promote a range of responses and encourage student questions and statements in response to the relevant topic.

By knowing what behaviours contribute to increased affect and knowledge, instructors can modify their behaviour accordingly. Additionally, they can strive to use combinations of communications resources and media that best transmit different types of information and important social cues. These can include Facebook, Twitter, and Wiki. Other pedagogical tools, such as group projects, case studies and role plays add value to learning by giving students the opportunity to express themselves, make decisions, enjoy the companionship of their peers and improve their communication and interpersonal skills. Educators should help students see the alignment between the course design (learning objectives and teaching tools) and the students’ own goals for the future. They should create an environment where students feel free to interact, a comfortable space that enhances both student-student and instructor-student relationships.

Educators should be mindful of the critical role their contribution plays in the future lives of their students. The training they provide may be the only formal communication instruction these students ever experience. While many factors affect the course of a student's life during and beyond tertiary study, competent communication is critical in determining how students will react to and manage life's challenges. Instructors with high immediacy are, in effect, modelling how to be effective communicators and how to employ their interpersonal skills to assist their students to achieve success.

Training of university instructors is becoming increasingly common in many countries (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Given the significant effect of relational behaviours and perceptions of relationships on student learning, it is important to expand instructors' knowledge about the theory and practice of immediacy-producing behaviours in order to enhance student learning campus-wide. Instructors should attend some workshops that focus on the interpersonal aspect of the classroom environment to learn specific strategies that will facilitate positive relationships with students. It is reasonable to expect that this will directly result in positive learning outcomes. To take this concept a little further, universities should explore programs to develop teaching methods that improve students' thinking rather than just providing them with an authoritative figure capable of delivering a curriculum. Such training would give instructors the skills to motivate students to participate in the classroom by providing them with an atmosphere and environment conducive to learning. Above all, instructors need to be fully aware of the significant effects that their immediacy behaviour has on students' communication.

In summary, the most important practical implication from this study is that, if instructors want to increase students' enjoyment of the course, motivate them to learn

the subject matter and improve their communication and cognitive learning, then the focus must be on increasing instructors' immediacy behaviours. Instructors can use verbal immediacy behaviours, such as personal examples, self-disclosure, humour, engagement in conversations with students before, after, or outside of class, encouraging students to talk, requesting student input, addressing students by name, praising students' work, and being available for students outside of class if they have any questions or concerns. Instructors may also consider using nonverbal immediacy behaviours such as eye contact, physical gestures, relaxed body posture, directing body position towards students, smiling, vocal expressiveness, movement, and proximity. Both verbal and nonverbal immediacy practices have the immediate benefit of creating a connection between the instructors and the students that enables discussion, dialogue, communication; all of these improve learning outcomes and assist students in becoming self-motivated, active learners.

### **Limitations**

When interpreting the results of this study, it is important to note that this research has some limitations. Firstly, this study focused purely on self-report data collection and did not combine this with observational data. Self-reports are not necessarily always indicative of actual behaviour in the classroom (Smythe & Hess, 2005). Similarly, several factors may influence students' perceptions of their instructors. For example, dislike of the subject matter or poor exam grades may negatively affect a student's perception of an instructor, despite the instructor's efforts to be immediate and effective.

A second limitation involved the degree of validity and generalisability of the scales in Saudi culture, because all the scales are American constructs and therefore

specific to culture in the US. Although the scales all yielded satisfactory reliabilities in this study, their validity in, and applicability to, Saudi culture are not entirely certain. Divergent expectations of instructor roles and responsibilities in Saudi Arabia might engender different interpretations, evaluations and predictions of appropriate instructor behaviours, and hence require different ways of measuring them. The results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

A third limitation relates to cognitive learning, which may reflect issues such as student attendance, effort, written and oral communication, the extent of learning, procrastination and pre-existing content knowledge. However, this study did not focus on actual student grades. This study relied on prior research by Frymier (2005), which found that students' ability to assess their own cognitive learning parallels observers' and instructors' reports of cognitive learning, particularly when meaningful feedback is given to students. Therefore, students' perceptions of cognitive learning were utilised as the data for this study. Exam scores were not collected nor were students asked to supply their grades.

A fourth issue is concerned with the translation of study instruments. Since all the scales used were originally developed in English, they were translated into Arabic for this study. Although the methods of translation and back-translation employed were designed to maximise equivalence, scale translation remains a potential concern since it is difficult to achieve complete semantic equivalence and strong translation invariance.

A fifth, students were not separated into different demographics. Issues relating to demography may be better understood by studying immediacy and learning outcomes using a variety of instructors with different populations of learners to explore the similarities and differences in the way they learn. Many teaching assistants in Saudi universities hail from different countries and some of them do not speak Arabic.

Finally, because of Saudi cultural sensitivity, it was not possible to access female participants, since women are segregated from men in all government universities in Saudi Arabia. An investigation of the impact of immediacy on female university students is needed to know how immediacy affects female students' communication and learning outcomes.

### **Future Studies**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward for future studies. This section describes some of the relevant issues and concepts that might be pursued in future research regarding the impact of instructor immediacy on student communication and learning outcomes.

This study focused on students' self-reports and did not use feedback from instructors. Further inquiry may take a qualitative approach in order to uncover instructors' opinions of immediacy behaviours. Such a study might also examine instructors' observations of their own immediacy behaviours in the classroom.

The major finding in this study was that instructor immediacy is a significant predictor of student motivation, affective learning, communication satisfaction, participation and cognitive learning. The regression analysis in this study should be replicated to substantiate these findings and further research should be conducted to extend the regression testing using different covariates in the models.

In future research, studies should include multiple instructors delivering course material with high immediacy. More variability in instructors could potentially yield data leading to different conclusions. Additionally, researchers may examine whether or not the breadth and depth of instructor immediacy contributes to students' persistence

and whether the sharing of social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter between faculty members and students influences student attrition rates.

Furthermore, future researchers might examine whether immediacy functions collectively with other dimensions of an instructor's teaching style to enhance student affect. For example, immediacy cues are likely to occur simultaneously with instructor clarity, credibility, confirmation, teaching style, dynamism and other features of an instructor's communication style. Previous research has not looked in detail at the extent to which these features of instructor behaviour co-occur with immediacy cues, and what sort of unique and combined effects immediacy cues have on student communication and learning outcomes. This may serve as a focus for future research. Future research also needs to address how student characteristics or traits influence their participation and perceptions of communication satisfaction with an instructor. This will help provide a richer understanding of how student characteristics, academic interests and confidence (to name a few factors) moderate the association between perceptions of immediacy cues and affect. Researchers should also consider how student perceptions of learning may influence student communication satisfaction.

Scholars who are interested in evaluating instructor immediacy behaviours in Saudi Arabia should explore both public and private institutions in different regions. The use of a sample population that includes students from different parts of the country would provide results with improved validity and generalisability.

The current study was conducted with undergraduate students enrolled in the Syntax II course at an Arabic language school. Additional research could investigate immediacy in different courses, as well as with postgraduate students as compared with undergraduate students. It may be that, for example, students of the humanities or social sciences respond more favourably to instructor immediacy than engineering or

mathematics students. Research is also needed to look at the effect of the educational level and majors of both students and instructors. These questions are yet to be explored in any detail.

Future research should also explore the influence of instructor and student ethnicity on student reactions to instructor immediacy behaviours. Similarly, the effect of gender could be explored by examining Saudi universities in which male instructors teach female students via closed circuit television. As information and communication technologies continue to evolve, the examination of instructor immediacy behaviours within these technologically mediated environments will become increasingly important. An area of particular interest in this regard would be a study on how immediacy affects online learning outcomes

As part of this research, I examined the validity of cognitive learning measurements used in past immediacy research. Most research tended to measure student perceptions of learning loss, rather than actual performative measures demonstrating cognition. Learning loss indicates the difference in students' perceived learning between their actual instructor and their 'ideal' instructor. In future research, taking exam scores and/or class grades into consideration, along with students' perceptions of learning, would provide information about actual cognitive learning as opposed to perceived cognitive learning. As there is much disagreement among instructional communication scholars relating to the appropriate means to measure cognitive learning; the design of future instructional communication studies may be strengthened by including confidence testing as an additional measure of cognitive learning.

## Reflections

To summarise, the current study showed that when student communication and learning outcomes were compared between students in immediacy versus control groups, a substantial difference existed between the respective student communication and learning outcomes data. This suggests that immediacy behaviours have a positive impact on student communication and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that if the instructional goal is to increase student interaction and improve their learning outcomes, instructors should actively demonstrate frequent positive and immediate behaviours towards their students. University administrators should increase awareness among educators of the importance of immediacy behaviours by providing professional development programs for faculty members through workshops and seminars.

It is my hope of this research that by encouraging instructor-student contact, co-operation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task and high expectations for students, and by demonstrating respect for the diverse learning styles of students, educators can contribute to students' learning in a profound way. Ultimately, educators and students should develop a keen appreciation for the discipline of communication and all that it has to offer, regardless of one's area of study, and to transfer the skills and knowledge they have gained to the many contexts in which they communicate on a daily basis.

The role of educators is to strive to help each and every student reach his highest potential level of achievement and, to this end, educators need to be the best thinking, most capable citizenry possible. Educators need to communicate with students at their level and help each and every person reach his full potential to adopt a meaningful role

within the society. It must be recognised that students represent the future; each and every person has the potential to help find solutions to some of the biggest problems currently facing the planet, as well as the unknown problems that will plague us in the years to come. It all starts with immediacy: the oxygen of learning.

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## APPENDICES

### Survey Questionnaires

## Appendix A

### **Verbal Immediacy Scale**

### Verbal Immediacy Scale

Please choose one of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR. Please use the following 5-point scale:

1= Never; 2= Rarely; 3= Occasionally; 4= Often; 5= Very Often

My instructor:

1. Uses personal examples or talks about experiences he has had outside of class.
2. Asks questions or encourages students to talk.
3. Gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this does not seem to be part of his lecture plan.
4. Uses humor in class.
5. Addresses students by name.
6. Addresses me by name.
7. Gets into conversations with individual students before or after class.
8. Has initiated conversations with me before, after or outside of class.
9. Refers to class as “my” class or what “I” am doing.
10. Refers to class as “our” class or what “we” are doing.
11. Provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc.
12. Calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk.
13. Asks how students feel about an assignment, due date, or discussion topic.
14. Invites students to telephone or meet with him outside of class if they have questions or want to discuss something.
15. Asks questions that have specific, correct answers.
16. Asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.
17. Praises students’ work, actions or comments.
18. Criticizes or points out faults in students’ work, actions, or comments.
19. Will have discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole.
20. Is addressed by his first name by the students.



## Appendix B

### **Nonverbal Immediacy Scale**

### **Nonverbal Immediacy Scale**

Please choose one of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies

TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR. Please use the following 5-point scale:

1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Occasionally; 4 = Often; 5 = Very Often

My instructor:

1. Gestures while talking to the class.
2. Uses a monotone/dull voice when talking to the class.
3. Looks at the class while talking.
4. Smiles at the class while talking.
5. Has a very tense body position while talking to the class.
6. Moves around the classroom while teaching.
7. Looks at the board or notes while talking to the class.
8. Has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class.
9. Frowns at the class while talking.
10. Uses a variety of vocal expressions when talking to the class.


مقياساتواصلالغير اللفظي للمعلم

رجاء اختر الدرجة التي تعتقد مناسبتها لوصف معلمك  
 ١ = أبدأ لا استخدمها ٢ = نادراً ٣ = أحياناً ٤ = غالباً ٥ = كثيراً

معلمي:

الدرجة العبارة	١ = أبدأ لا استخدمها	٢ = نادراً	٣ = أحياناً	٤ = غالباً	٥ = كثيراً
١					
٢					
٣					
٤					
٥					
٦					
٧					
٨					
٩					
١٠					

## Appendix C

### **Class Participation Scale**

### **Class Participation Scale**

1= Never; 2= Rarely; 3= Occasionally; 4= Often; 5= Very Often

1. I would contribute comments or questions in class.
2. I would volunteer comments or questions in class.
3. I would volunteer comments when I know the answer.
4. I would contribute without hesitation.
5. I would express personal opinions.



### مقياس مشاركة الطالب أثناء الدرس

رجاءً اختر الدرجة المناسبة التي تصف بها مشاركتك أثناء الدرس  
 ١ = أبداً لا استخدمها ٢ = نادراً ٣ = أحياناً ٤ = غالباً ٥ = كثيراً

الدرجة العبارة	١ = أبداً لا استخدمها	٢ = نادراً	٣ = أحياناً	٤ = غالباً	٥ = كثيراً
١					
٢					
٣					
٤					
٥					

## Appendix D

### **Student Motivation Scale**

### Student Motivation Scale

Please circle the number toward either word, which best represents, your feelings towards this class.

- |                 |               |                       |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Unmotivated  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | motivated             |
| 2. Uninterested | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | interested            |
| 3. Uninvolved   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | involved              |
| 4. Not Excited  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Excited               |
| 5. Dreading It  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Looking Forward To It |



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW  
SCHOOL OF  
THOUGHT**

مقياس الدافعية لدى الطالب

رجاء اختر الرقم الذي يبين شعورك نحو هذا الصف الدراسي

ليس لدي دافعية	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لدي دافعية
غير مهتم	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	مهتم
غير مبالي	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	حريص
غير مبتهج	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	مبتهج
متهيب منه	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	متطلع إليه

## Appendix E

### **Student Communication Satisfaction Scale**

### **Student Communication Satisfaction Scale**

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neutral; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = moderately agree; 7 = strongly agree

1. My communication with my teacher feels satisfying.
2. I dislike talking with my teacher.
3. I am not satisfied after talking to my teacher.
4. Talking with my teacher leaves me feeling like I accomplished something.
5. My teacher fulfills my expectations when I talk to him.
6. My conversations with my teacher are worthwhile.
7. When I talk to my teacher, the conversations are rewarding.
8. My teacher makes an effort to satisfy the concerns I have.


مقياس مدير ضا الطالب بعنتو اصلا لمعلممه

رجاء اختر الدرجة المناسبة لوصف مدير ضا كعنتو اصلا لمعلممك  
 ١ = غير موافق بشدة = ٢ = غير موافق = ٣ = غير موافق بالحدما = ٤ = متوسط  
 ٥ = موافق بالحدما = ٦ = موافق = ٧ = موافق بشدة

الدرجة العبارة	١ = غير موافق بشدة	٢ = غير موافق	٣ = غير موافق بالحدما	٤ = محايد	٥ = موافق بالحدما	٦ = موافق	٧ = موافق بشدة
١ أشعر بالرضا حول تواصلتي مع المعلم							
٢ لا أحبذ الحديث مع المعلم							
٣ لا أشعر بالرضا بعد تحدثي مع المعلم							
٤ بعد حديثي مع المعلم أشعر كأنني قدمت انجازاً							
٥ أستأذي يفي بتوقعاتي عندما أتحدث إليه							
٦ محادثتي مع أستاذي جديرة بالاهتمام							
٧ عندما أتحدث مع أستاذي تكون المحادثة ذاتقيمة							
٨ أستاذي يعمل على تهدئة المخاوف لدي كي أتحدث							

## Appendix F

### **Affective Learning Scale**

### Affective Learning Scale

Very Strong Feeling= 1 - Strong Feeling= 2 – Fairly Weak Feeling= 3 – Undecided/  
Don't Know= 4 - Fairly Weak Feeling= 5 - Strong Feeling=6 -Very Strong Feeling= 7

*I feel the class content in the last class I attended is:*

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Worthless	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Valuable
Unfair	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Fair
Negative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Positive

*My likelihood of taking future courses in the content area of the last class I attended is:*

Unlikely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Likely
Impossible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Possible
Improbable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Probable
Would not	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Would

*Overall, the instructor in the last class I attended is:*

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Worthless	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Valuable
Unfair	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Fair
Negative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Positive

*Were I to have the opportunity, my likelihood of taking future courses with the instructor in the last class I attended*

*would be:*

Unlikely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Likely
Impossible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Possible
Improbable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Probable
Would not	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Would


**مقياس التعلم الوجداني المكتسب**

شعور قوياً جداً	شعور قوي	شعور متوسط	لا أعلم	شعور متوسط	شعور قوي	شعور قوياً جداً
٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١

**اشعر أن المحتوى الدراسي لآخر مادة كان**

ممتاز	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	سيئ
قيم	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير قيم
مناسب	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير مناسب
إيجابي	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	سلبي

**رغبتي في دراسة مادة في نفس مجال المادة السابقة سيكون**

مرجح	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	منغير المرجح
ممکن	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	مستحيل
متوقع	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير متوقع
مرغوب فيه	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير مرغوب فيه

**عموماً المعلم في هذه المادة كان**

ممتاز	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	سيئ
قيم	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير قيم
مناسب	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير مناسب
إيجابي	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	سلبي

**إذا أتحت لي الفرصة لأخذ مقرر آخر مع نفس المعلم سأكون**

مرجح	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	منغير المرجح
ممکن	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	مستحيل
متوقع	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير متوقع
مرغوب فيه	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١	غير مرغوب فيه

## Appendix G

### **Revised Cognitive Learning Indicators Scale**

### Revised Cognitive Learning Indicators Scale

Choose the one item that represents your agreement with each statement

Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1

1. I have learned a great deal in this class.
2. I have learned more in other classes than in this class.
3. My knowledge on this class topic has increased since the beginning of class.
4. I can clearly recall information from this class.
5. I would be unable to use the information from this class.
6. I have learned nothing in this class.
7. I can see clear changes in my understanding of this topic.
8. I am unable to recall what I have learned in this class.
9. I have learned information that I can apply.
10. I did not understand what I learned in this class.



### مقياس التعلم المعرفي

رجاءاً اختر الدرجة المناسبة لوصف ما تعلمت في هذه المادة

١ = غير موافقة بشدة	٢ = غير موافق	٣ = لأعلم	٤ = موافق	٥ = موافقة بشدة
---------------------	---------------	-----------	-----------	-----------------

الدرجة العبارة	١ = غير موافقة بشدة	٢ = غير موافق	٣ = لأعلم	٤ = موافق	٥ = موافقة بشدة
١ تعلمت أشياء كثيرة في هذه المادة					
٢ تعلمت أشياء من فصول أخرى أكثر مما تعلمته في هذه المادة					
٣ زادت معلوماتي في موضوعات هذه المادة منذ البداية					
٤ يمكنني بوضوح تذكر معلومات هذه المادة					
٥ لأنكون قادر على الاستفادة من محتوى هذه المادة					
٦ لم أتعلم شيء من هذه المادة					
٧ أستطيع أن ألاحظ مدى فهمي لهذه المادة					
٨ لأستطيع استرجاع المعلومات التي تعلمتها في هذه المادة					
٩ لقد تعلمت مواضيع يمكنني تطبيقها					
١٠ لا أعلم ماذا استفدت من هذه المادة					

## Appendix H

### **Interview Protocol with Students**

### **Interview Protocol with Students**

1. How would you describe the instructor's communication behaviours in this class?
2. Can you please tell me about the climate in this classroom? And how is your motivation?
3. Did you have the choice for participation in this class? And why?
4. Are you satisfied with the instructor's communication with students? And why?
5. Are you interested to get another course with this instructor? And why?
6. Do you think that the instructor's communication behaviours affect your achievement and results? And how?

## أسئلة المقابلة الشخصية

كيف تصف تعامل الدكتور وتواصله معكم أثناء التدريس في هذا الصف هل بالإمكان أن تخبرني عن الجو العام للدراسة في هذا الصف؟ وكيف هي دافعيّتك للتعلّم؟ ولماذا

هل كانت لديك الفرصة للمشاركة والتفاعل في هذا الصف؟ ولماذا

هل أنت راضٍ عن تواصل الدكتور وتعامله معكم؟ ولماذا

هل لديك الحرص والرغبة لدراسة مواد أخرى مع هذا الدكتور في المستقبل؟ ولماذا

هل تعتقد أن أسلوب تعامل الدكتور مع الطلاب يؤثر على نتائجهم وانجازاتهم؟ وكيف ذلك

## Appendix I

### **Information to Participants**



## **INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH**

### **You are invited to participate**

---

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia” This project is being conducted by a student researcher Ahmad Asiri as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Associate professor Katie Hughes and associate professor Tony Kruger from Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development

### **Project explanation**

---

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between the instructors’ verbal and nonverbal immediacy and college student communication (i.e., student participation, student communication satisfaction, student dialogue skills) and learning outcomes (i.e., affective learning, cognitive learning) at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia

### **What will I be asked to do?**

---

The first part asks respondents to evaluate the instructors’ verbal and nonverbal immediacy. The second part asks students to clarify their participation motivation, satisfaction when communicating with an instructor in the classroom and the student’s dialogue skills which they had. The third part seeks to know the student’s learning outcomes (affective learning and cognitive learning). Data will collect during weeks 9 and 10 of a 15-week semester. After post-test, I will choose from who willing to participant in the interview; five students from the experimental group and five students from each control groups, so that will be 15 students for interview. Interviews will be one-to-one, lasting approximately 45 minutes. With permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded and I will take field notes.

### **What will I gain from participating?**

---

Student’s communication and learning outcomes will be traced: participation motivation, student satisfaction, dialogue skills, cognitive learning, and affective learning. Participation refers to how student participant in the classroom. Student satisfaction refers to the degree to which students experience fulfilment when communicating with an instructor. Dialogue skills refer to discussion, criticism and critical analysis. Cognitive learning ranges from the simple retention of information to

complex synthesis of material. Affective learning involves student feelings, emotions, and degrees of acceptance toward the subject matter. So this data sees instructors the effects of immediacy on student's communication and learning outcomes and that's lead to improve the quality of teaching.

**How will the information I give be used?**

---

The researcher will use the information as data for his research.

**What are the potential risks of participating in this project?**

---

None

**How will this project be conducted?**

---

The study will be carried out in three phases. In the first phase, the experimental group will receive in the first week of semester pre-test of survey questionnaires. The second phase will be during weeks 9 and 10 both of the experimental group and control group will receive post-test. The third phase will be interview with students.

**Who is conducting the study?**

---

Victoria University, Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development, School of Arts, Footscray Park

Student researcher: Ahmad Asiri T: 0406074996 T: +966535259394

E:[ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au)

Principal supervisor: Associate professor Katie Hughes T:99194573

E:[Katie.hughes@vu.edu.au](mailto:Katie.hughes@vu.edu.au)

Co-Investigator: Associate professor Tony Kruger T: 99195336

E:[Tony.kruger@vu.edu.au](mailto:Tony.kruger@vu.edu.au)

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Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal Researcher listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics and Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4148.

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Appendix J

**Consent Form for Instructor Participant**



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW  
SCHOOL OF  
THOUGHT**

## **CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH**

### **INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS: (Instructor)**

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study into “The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia”

### **CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Certify that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:

“The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia” being conducted at Victoria University by: Ahmad Asiri

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Ahmad Asiri and that I freely consent to participation in this study

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher Ahmad Asiri +61406074996 +966535259394 e-mail [ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4148.



### نموذج الموافقة للمشاركة في مجال البحث

معلومات للمشاركين: (المعلمين)

نود أن ندعوك لتكون مشاركاً في البحث "تأثير تواصل المعلم على مشاركة الطلاب الجامعيين وتحصيلهم العلمي في المملكة العربية السعودية"

أنا \_\_\_\_\_ من \_\_\_\_\_

أشهد بأنني متطوع وموافق للمشاركة في دراسة "تأثير تواصل المعلم على مشاركة الطلاب الجامعيين وتحصيلهم العلمي في المملكة العربية السعودية" القائمه بجامعة فكتوريا بواسطة أحمد عسيري

أشهد بأن أهداف الدراسة مع المخاطر والضمانات المرتبطة بالإجراءات المدرجة أدناه للتوصل إلى نتائج البحث قد شرحت لي وبينت من قبل أحمد عسيري وعليه فأنا أوافق بحرية على المشاركة في البحث

أشهد بأنه اتاحت لي الفرصة للسؤال وأدرك بأنه يمكنني الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أي وقت وأن هذا الانسحاب لن يعرضني للخطر بأي شكل من الأشكال. وأنا على علم بأن المعلومات التي أقدمها سيتم الحفاظ على سريتها.

**التوقيع**

\_\_\_\_\_

**التاريخ**

\_\_\_\_\_

أي سؤال حول المشاركة في هذه الدراسة يمكنك توجيهه إلى الباحث أحمد عسيري

+966535259394 +61406074996 [ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au)

وإذا كان لديك أي استفسارات أو شكوى حول الطريقة التي تم التعامل بها معك يمكنك الاتصال بـ

The Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee,

Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix K

**Consent Form for Student Participant**



**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH**

**INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS: (Student)**

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study into “The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia”

**CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:

“The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia” being conducted at Victoria University by: Ahmad Asiri

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by: Ahmad Asiri and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Fill the questionnaire, which takes about 35 minutes.
- Participation in the interview, which takes about 30-60 minutes.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher

Ahmad Asiri +61406074996 +966535259394 e-mail [ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au) If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4148.



### نموذج الموافقة للمشاركة في مجال البحث

معلومات للمشاركين: (الطلاب)

نود أن ندعوك لتكون مشاركاً في البحث "تأثير تواصل المعلم على مشاركة الطلاب الجامعيين وتحصيلهم العلمي في المملكة العربية السعودية"

أنا \_\_\_\_\_ من \_\_\_\_\_  
أشهد بأن عمري لا يقل عن ١٨ سنة وأنا متطوع وموافق للمشاركة في دراسة "تأثير تواصل المعلم على مشاركة الطلاب الجامعيين وتحصيلهم العلمي في المملكة العربية السعودية" القائمه بجامعة فكتوريا بواسطة أحمد عسيري  
أشهد بأن أهداف الدراسة مع المخاطر والضمانات المرتبطة بالإجراءات المدرجة أدناه للتوصل إلى نتائج البحث قد شرحت لي وبينت من قبل أحمد عسيري وعليه فأنا أوافق بحرية على المشاركة في الاجراءات التالية:

- تعبئة الاستبانة والتي تستغرق نحو ٣٥ دقيقة.
- المشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية والتي تستغرق نحو ٣٠-٦٠ دقيقة.

أشهد بأنه اتاحت لي الفرصة للسؤال وأدرك بأنه يمكنني الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أي وقت وأن هذا الانسحاب لن يعرضني للخطر بأي شكل من الأشكال.  
وأنا على علم بأن المعلومات التي أقدمها سيتم الحفاظ على سريتها.

التوقيع

التاريخ

أي سؤال حول المشاركة في هذه الدراسة يمكنك توجيهه إلى الباحث أحمد عسيري

+966535259394 +61406074996 [ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:ahmad.asiri@live.vu.edu.au)

وإذا كان لديك أي استفسارات أو شكوى حول الطريقة التي تم التعامل بها معك يمكنك الاتصال بـ

The Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee,

Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4148.

## Appendix L

### **Ethics Approval from Victoria University**

# MEMO

TO	A/Prof Katie Hughes Office of the PVC (Students & Learning & Teaching) Footscray Park Campus	DATE	9/03/2011
<hr/>			
FROM	Dr Tony Watt Chair Arts, Education & Human Development Human Research Ethics Subcommittee		
<hr/>			
SUBJECT	Ethics Application – HRETH 11/4		

Dear A/Prof Hughes,

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical approval of the project entitled:

**HRETH 11/4**     The Impact of Instructor Immediacy on College Student Communication and Learning Outcomes in Saudi Arabia

The proposed research project has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)', by the Chair, Faculty of Arts, Education & Human Development Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been granted from 9/03/2011 to 31/12/2011.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above approval date (by **9/03/2012**) or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be downloaded from the VUHREC web site at: <http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php>

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me on 9919 4119.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Kind regards,

**Dr Tony Watt**

Chair

Faculty of Arts, Education & Human Development Human Research Ethics Subcommittee

## Appendix M

### **Approval to Collect Data from King Khalid University**

Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia  
*Al-Gawazi For Translation*  
 License No. 477



المملكة العربية السعودية  
 مكتب الغوازي للترجمة المعتمدة  
 ترخيص وزارة التجارة رقم ٤٧٧

*In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious The Most Merciful*



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
 King Khalid University  
 Ministry of Higher Education  
 General Administration of Employees and Teachers staff affairs  
 Administration of Training & Expedition

*You Excellency , The Saudi cultural attaché in Australia God save him !*

Referring to your letter No. 438800 , dated : 01/11/1431 H corresponding to 08/10/2010 A.D ;  
 Concerning the scholar : **AHMAD ABDULLAH ALMOBASHER ASIRI** . to carry out an  
 scientific expedition in K.S.A for three months from 30/03/1432 H .

The university informs you that we have consented for the scholar: **ASIRI ,  
 AHMADABDULLAH M** to carry out an scientific expedition in K.S.A for three months to  
 complete the examination of PhD from 30/03/1432 H , under the supervision of the department.  
 By the end of the expedition , he will prepare the required report .

*With our best regards and appreciation,,,,,*

University Depute for higher studies and scientific research  
 Dr. Saeed Abdullah Sabr

( Signed )

No. 37/14 \* Date : 08/01/1432 H \* Attachments : --

*It has been translated according to the attached document without any liability of our office in whatever this document contains*

الشارع : الملكة العربية السعودية - فرع خميس مشيط - شارع البريد - مقابل مركز جرش - للتقنية - ١٧ / ٢٢٠١٤٤٤ - جوال : ٥٦٣٢٨٤٤٤٤  
 فرع أبها : شارع الجامعة - مقابل صروف تلك الزمان - ١٧ / ٢٢٤٨١١٤ - جوال : ٥٦٣٨٤٤٤٤٤

