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Social-Emotional Climate in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study Investigating the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback to Instructors

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SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN THE COMMNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM:
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF REAL-TIME
STUDENT FEEDBACK TO INSTRUCTORS

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This dissertation, by Angela E. Quitadamo, has
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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN THE COMMNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM:
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF REAL-TIME
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Community college students often have obligations outside the classroom (supporting dependents or working part-or full-time jobs), preventing them from participating in extracurricular activities and fulfilling their social-emotional needs on campus. As a result, they rely heavily on classroom interactions with their instructors to gain a sense of belonging and motivation necessary for optimal cognitive growth. This action research study was conducted at a rural community college in New England to learn if an informal feedback tool, given to students, could provide real-time data to instructors to enhance the social-emotional classroom environment. An inquiry group (IG) comprised of the researcher and instructors met four times over the course of a semester. The IG reflected on the student data, spoke in-depth about their reactions to the data, offered feedback about the assessment, and discussed the changes they would make in response to the real-time, course-level data in their courses. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze and interpret the qualitative data from the inquiry group and student assessments. Four themes rose to prominence: True Feelings, Engaging Students, Instructor Approachability, and Remote Learning. At the close of the study instructors completed a summative evaluation and met again to review the synthesized data. This study showed how a more reflective and transformational view of classroom assessment with a focus on engagement

benefited students and instructors. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA:

Antioch University Repository and Archive, http://aura.antioch.edu/and OhioLINK ETD Center,

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/.

Keywords: social-emotional climate, thematic analysis, action research, community college, real-time feedback, informal assessment, instructor engagement.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Glossary

Term	Definition
Action research (AR)	Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) defined AR in an educational setting as a form of collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situation in which these practices are carried out (p. 5).
Belonging	Goodenow (1993) defined belonging as "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 80).
Classroom assessment technique (CAT)	"Simple tools for collecting data on student learning in order to improve it. CATs are 'feedback devices,' instruments that faculty can use to find out how much, how well, and even how students are learning what they are trying to teach" (Angelo and Cross, 1993, p. 25).
Emotion work	Titsworth et al. (2010) defined emotion work as "the extent to which students must expend emotional energy and perform emotional labor (i.e., faking or feigning emotions) in the classroom" (p. 438).
Feedback	Information or description provided by teachers to improve students' performance (Al-Ghamdi, 2017, p. 38).
Feedforward interview	Kluger and Nir (2010) defined the feedforward interview (FFI) as "a flexible interview process that aims to improve . . . and that can be used for different organizational objectives, in different organizational settings. FFI includes three steps which focus on the elicitation of a specific story regarding "full of life" experience at work, a reflection on the emotions involved, an analysis of the facilitating conditions of that story, and a feedforward question comparing plans to the just-discovered facilitating conditions" (p. 242).
Formative evaluation	Wiliam and Leahy (2007) defined formative assessment as "teachers' ability to use assessment to adapt their instruction to meet pupil learning needs in real time" (p. 29). Adams (2004) noted that formative assessments are typically anonymous is nature, are reflective, and provide the instructor the opportunity to adjust teaching to ensure key learning occurs before moving on to another topic (p. 127).
Intrinsic motivation	A behavior that provides its own reward (Deci, 1971).
Motivation	"An inner desire to make an effort" (Dowling & Sayles, 1978, p. 16).
Prosocial motivation	"The desire to expend effort to benefit other people" (Grant, 2008. p. 48).

Term	Definition
Real-time feedback	Data-driven, goal-orientated information shared between a principal and subordinate.
Social-emotional learning (SEL)	The process by which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, n.d.).
Summative evaluation	"The process of assessment leads to summative assessment, that is, a judgment which encapsulates all the evidence up to a given point. This point is seen as a finality at the point of the judgment. A summative assessment can have various functions which do not impinge on the process" (Taras, 2005, p. 468).
Teacher credibility	McCroskey (1998) defined teacher credibility as the "attitude of a receiver that references the degree to which a source is seen to be believable" (p. 80).

Chapter I: Introduction

The landscape for higher education in the United States has undergone dramatic change. The population of traditional-aged college students has been declining since 2010—2011 (Prescott & Bransberger, 2012, p. 5), as has state support of public postsecondary institutions. The State Higher Education Executive Officers' Fiscal Year 2017 report indicated that "for the first time, more than half of all states relied more heavily on tuition than on educational appropriations" (p. 8). Unfortunately, despite the responsibility of higher education costs, many students struggle to recuperate increased expenses through unrealized improved employment opportunities.

The National Student Clearinghouse found only 39.3% of community college students obtained certificates or degrees within 6 years of starting their academic programs (Shapiro et al., 2017). In 2014, 31 million students had college credits but no degrees (Shapiro et al., 2017). In response to such poor completion rates, 35 states moved away from funding formulas in place to distribute budgets for public postsecondary institutions based on enrollment (students in seats) towards completion metrics (degree completion). As found by Hillman et al. (2018), more states might follow suit in the face of ongoing research findings.

There have been multifaceted responses from the college administrators tasked with improving graduation rates. Expensive software solutions and predictive analytics for identifying the students at risk of dropping out are now widely available. Strausheim (2017) cited 24 companies that provided student success solutions. Additionally, many campus leaders have moved toward professional advising models and away from faculty-focused advising. Sweeping

initiatives for individual student-level outcomes (e.g., tutoring, mentorship, meta majors) help to mitigate the impact of academic factors on students transitioning into college.

A variety of factors have an impact on classroom learning; however, postsecondary interventions might not be the best way to address many social and emotional factors. For example, elementary and secondary teachers spend a significant amount of time focusing on teacher-student relationships (Brinkworth et al., 2018), with students and instructors co-creating the classroom environment through peer-to-peer interactions. College instructors could gain valuable insights from their secondary school colleagues about evaluating classroom climates and engaging in peer evaluation. Despite the findings of instructional communication researchers on student perceptions' impact on learning (Myers & Bryant, 2004; Teven & McCroskey, 1996), existing applications for addressing student success tend to only present student-level interventions.

Colleges often enroll academically underprepared learners who are not ready for postsecondary education. Educators use deficit model interventions to "fix" perceived student deficiencies. An uncommon belief is that students have particular strengths that they can use to survive the transition into higher education. As championed by Harper (2014) in research on Black male students, antideficit models are the paths forward:

> Commonly asked questions such as, "Why are they so disengaged?" for example, must be replaced with inquiries regarding the impetus for engagement among those who participate actively in their classes, study in disciplined ways, collaborate frequently on academic matters with peers outside of class, participate actively in a variety of clubs and organizations, and take advantage of enriching educational experiences. (p. 135)

Harper advocated for studying what interventions work with students who persist in school rather than focusing on those who do not. If instructors could expand their role as teachers, be more inclusive, and build a sense of belongingness within the classroom, they could help students achieve more success in college.

Viewed through the lens of transformative leadership, teaching activities are a means of empowering students to achieve their learning goals. Transformational leadership in a classroom is the relationship between the leader and followers (instructor and students) and the co-created environment with instructor-to-learner and peer-to-peer relationships. As Hechanova and Cementina-Olpoc (2012) noted, "The participatory nature of the academe allows for greater engagement in a shared vision" (p. 17). Educators are leaders inside the classroom; however, not all teaching work should be transformational. For example, there is some transactional work in education, such as assigning grades for student work.

Instructional communication literature shows the transformational aspect of learning. There is significant research on teaching and learning correlated to content and student learning outcomes, yet little inquiry into how students perceive their instructors' intentions and actions. Instructional communication researchers study the impact of teachers' behaviors on students' emotions. Instructors could use this information, combined with research on students' sense of belongingness (e.g., Fassinger, 1995; Goodenow, 1993; Zumbrunn et al., 2014) to learn the best ways to motivate, engage, and assist students. The purpose of this study was to explore how to provide real-time, actionable feedback to faculty about student engagement in community college courses by assessing the effectiveness of a faculty feedback tool in capturing student engagement levels and enhancing instructional quality.

Scholars have studied real-time feedback and performance evaluations outside of education, finding other opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Human resource management (HRM) scholars and practitioners have documented how industry leaders adapted performance evaluation techniques to be more formative. Though performance reviews for employees differ from traditional student evaluations of teaching (SET), there are takeaways that I used to inform my research. Future focus reviews are a new practice in which supervisors focus on the positive future and use real-time data rather than past-facing evaluations. Researchers (e.g., Berry, 2014; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Budworth et al., 2014; Pollitt, 2006) documented the trend in future focus reviews where followers viewed supervisors as coaches rather than evaluators. Employees and supervisors co-create goals and work together for a set time so the employees can achieve their objectives.

HRM researchers are not the only scholars of motivation. Grant (2008) found psychologists and organizational study scholars have delved deeply into this subject. The typical views of faculty are as instructors, content-level experts, and mentors. Because faculty members are also employees, researchers should attempt to understand and promote the behaviors that motivate employees to do their best work. Grant (2008) highlighted the work of faculty to define intrinsic and prosocial motivation:

> When intrinsically motivated, the teacher's effort is based on the enjoyment of the task of lecturing, which provides joy and pleasure in the process of performing. When prosocially motivated, the teacher's effort is based on a desire to educate students, which provides meaning and fulfillment in the outcome of student learning. (p. 49)

The overarching idea is that supervisors focus on what followers can change rather than what has occurred, which requires momentum, hope, and engagement from supervisors and employees. HRM researchers have also studied motivation, the foundation of my research objective. My hope was that a more interdisciplinary approach would motivate instructors and students to innovate in small ways that have significant impacts on the learning experience.

Statement of Purpose

I created a classroom assessment technique (CAT) that (a) educators could administer at the close of a class, (b) takes students less than 2 minutes to complete, and (c) contains content specific to the material covered that day, so everything remains fresh in students' minds. If educators use the CAT formative tool multiple times a semester, they could collect data students can use to rate their instructors' teaching. Educators administer traditional SETs on the last class of a course, the results of which instructors do not receive until partway through the next semester. Instructors cannot course correct with this model. Faculty members can use feedback to alter future courses; however, the students providing evaluations have already moved on. Traditional SETs also cause problems because the responses are more overarching than specific. Students who answer SETs reflect on the entire semester, often evaluating instructors based on general feelings of the course.

CAT, a tool for rating an instructor's abilities, student preparedness for class, and peer interactions, could significantly improve student efficacy at the course level. The CAT would also provide faculty members the opportunity to better apply their talents, especially as traditional SETs might reflect bias against female and non-majority instructors (Boring et al., 2016; Mitchell & Martin, 2018). The CAT's appeal is that it might motivate faculty members to

create classroom environments in which learners are open to the course content and improve their academic achievement. Only instructors had access to the CAT tool, the results of which can provide academic freedom and potentially helpful data for course development.

As a first-generation college student from a working-class background, I know the importance of a college education to career success. Students without a working knowledge of college culture are at a disadvantage. Students with financial, food, and housing insecurity might perceive they do not have the rigor to succeed in college and could decide to end their academic careers. One responsibility of faculty members is building up students' sense of belonging and urging them to engage on campus. However, engagement with instructors in social-emotionally aware classrooms could have a significant impact on struggling students who do not have the time to engage with campus departments.

There is more diversity in terms of student age in community colleges than in four-year institutions in which the majority of students enroll directly out of high school. Additionally, community college students might have obligations outside the classroom (supporting dependents or working part- or full-time jobs), preventing them from participating in extracurricular activities and fulfilling their social-emotional needs. As a result, community college learners rely on classroom interactions with their instructors to gain a sense of belonging and motivation necessary for optimal cognitive growth.

In a quantitative study of support, belonging, motivation, and engagement in the college classroom, Zumbrunn et al. (2014) argued for "a model that presents belonging as antecedent to motivational constructs/variables" (p. 678). If students do not feel a sense of belonging in the classroom, they might not find the motivation that improves their academic achievement.

Zumbrunn et al. highlighted the impact of teaching behaviors on a sense of belonging. Indeed, instructors cannot singlehandedly create belonging; however, by allowing small group work and making the course content relevant, they are more likely to foster inclusion, engagement, and achievement (Zumbrunn et al., 2014). The converse is also true: If students have teachers who do not foster belonging, they could have negative experiences leading to low persistence and credential attainment.

A feedback tool would allow students and teachers to gather data and gauge behavior during the semester. Unlike a SET, which provides summative feedback, teachers and students might better benefit from a formative feedback instrument. CAT could help alleviate the fearfulness of evaluations or the time commitment needed to evaluate in-depth qualitative feedback. Drawbacks of the SET include limited time for faculty members to reflect on feedback and a focus on teaching administration instead of engagement. Both full- and part-time community college instructors could benefit from the CAT tool to implement real-time changes based on real-time feedback.

A typical full-time public college instructor teaches four or five courses per semester without teaching assistants. Courses taught by part-time instructors could present additional challenges on the social-behavioral front, as part-time instructors may not have availability outside of class meetings. Additionally, part-time faculty members do not have offices, with limited exposure to campus culture and few or no professional development opportunities. Maimon and Schneider (2018) noted that part-time instructors are also "unavailable for informal interactions in the hallway, in the cafeteria, or at co-curricular activities" (p. 55), places where students and faculty members often build relationships.

During a hectic semester, instructors can quickly review CAT results, unlike those of traditional SETs. A dense, quantitative feedback tool, such as the SET, could be too time-consuming an instrument due to instructors' full-time teaching duties. However, instructors can immediately access the relatively simple data from the CAT tool, and busy students are more likely to complete a short assessment. Course reflection is beneficial for students, as "self-reflection directs learners' efforts, which makes their resource use more effective during learning, rather than just strengthening the likelihood that they will enact their resource-use intentions" (Chen et al., p. 783). Thus, a short self-reflection tool could have benefits for both students and instructors.

Research Questions

Many factors affect student learning. The focus of this study was the impact of the classroom environment on student learning, with the environment comprised of the instructor, peers, and student social-emotional elements. I was interested more in the co-creation of this environment than in individual student-level outcomes. I wanted to understand better how instructors can use real-time data to create and sustain an optimal learning environment. A qualitative approach was the most suitable method for answering the two research questions (RQs):

RQ1: In what ways could instructors use a formative feedback tool, informed by the field of practice and real-time student data, to enhance the social-emotional classroom environments in community colleges?

RQ2: What parameters might have an effect on the impact of such a formative feedback tool?

I conducted an AR study in partnership with community college instructors; we reviewed the CAT results in a small focus group (inquiry group), discussing ways to apply the data in the classroom. The audio-recorded discussions underwent transcription and review for thematic analysis. Finally, I presented a summative evaluation to instructors to capture their experiences of integrating the CAT in the inquiry group. Educators can use the CAT feedback tool throughout the semester for a more accurate understanding of student learning and experiences than provided by an end-of-semester global review. Community college instructors who are acutely aware of the challenges their students face outside of the classroom and deeply committed to student success can use the CAT to gather real-time data to adjust the classroom climate and fulfill students' needs.

Significance to Theory, Research, and Practice

This research included academic disciplines that typically do not overlap. HRM, instructional communication, sociology, cognitive psychology, and leadership all provide insights into creating an intentional social-emotional environment suitable for learning. Scholars can publish and present their theories in content-specific journals, which practitioners might not see. Woods (2008) suggested that "researchers . . . make the application of research findings clearer to have [a] real impact on practice, and practitioners should challenge themselves to invest time to understand ideas that might initially appear complex" (p. 14). The findings from this study advance practice, bringing together information from multiple academic disciplines. Thus, the findings could provide beneficial information to multiple communities.

The created tool was a formative assessment, not a formal scale. The purpose of this assessment was to produce a tool practitioners can quickly apply in their classrooms. Instructors

do not need analytics, teaching assistants, expensive software, or payment to use the created instrument; rather, the CAT is a free intervention educators can use alone or in conjunction with colleagues or centers for teaching and learning. Resource-challenged institutions need tools to maximize student success with minimal investment of students' and instructors' time.

Positionality

I have worked for over 12 years with first-generation, low-income students in the New England city where I grew up and still reside. I initially helped high school students prepare, apply, and navigate the financial aid process of college enrollment. After seeing many students struggle with transition and dropout, I wondered if I was doing students more harm than good. If the students acquired loans but did not achieve the credentials to increase their earning potential, what had they gained? As finances posed a significant obstacle for students, I left my job in college access to work as a financial aid counselor.

After a year in the financial aid community, I gained a more holistic view of the challenges students and families face in persisting in college. Sometimes the issue was financial; often it was not. Students struggled with various issues, most of them noncognitive risk factors. Problems that seemed small to administrators appeared insurmountable to students without access to emergency funds, transportation, childcare, or referrals to counseling or health services; as such, these issues could have prevented students from course or college completion. Though support was available, many students lacked points of contact to learn about these resources. Additionally, the students who struggled with nonacademic challenges were often reluctant to ask for assistance.

I accepted a position at a state university as the first director of student retention. My new position enabled me to use my knowledge of the transition from my college access days, financial aid procedures, and system-level thinking to remove institutional barriers to student success. This career move led me to consider strengths-based models for success. From my cross-divisional role at the university, I saw that many faculty, administrators, and frontline staff perceived student deficits as the main cause of their struggles with degree completion. With this construct of student deficits, faculty members expected students to fail and believed that failure was entirely the fault of the students. With the student-deficit construct, university faculty are not responsible for poor infrastructure, lackluster customer service, and unnecessarily bureaucratic processes. Several years ago, I began to explore strengths-based student support with a core group of faculty and administrators. I hoped that a literature-informed perspective would contribute to encouraging the campus community to adopt a student-centered approach to persistence and retention.

Limitations

As this was a qualitative study, the results are not generalizable; however, the findings could be transferable. Though the CAT might be a useful tool on many levels for instructors, this study was only the first step in exploring its usefulness. The additional applications of the CAT will require further research.

This piloted tool was only for in-person courses and might not be a solution for many students' preference for online learning. Future scholars could explore the use of CAT in an online-only classroom modality. Because students needed access to smartphones, computers, or tablets to participate, the study might have excluded learners without smart devices. However,

the design of the tool was necessary because online survey delivery is a vital means of facilitating real-time data transmission to faculty. The use of paper surveys would have created an administrative burden that would have potentially negated the usefulness of this tool.

Finally, the CAT provided only anonymous student data. Although anonymity allows students to share their opinions without fearing for their grades, the confidential approach prevents instructors from identifying and helping struggling students. Instructors could mitigate the problem slightly by sharing resources such students may need with the entire class. By making supplemental resources available to the class, instructors would also reach the students who did not complete the CAT.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter II presents the literature review. The interdisciplinary nature of this study required an in-depth look into the literature on HRM, instructional communication, psychology, and assessments. Each discipline presents information useful for designing a CAT that instructors can use to assist students in learning course content. Chapter III includes the methodology, rationale for the design, and the methods I utilized in the study. Following the presentation of findings in Chapter IV, Chapter V is a discussion of the results, study limitations, and future research possibilities.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter includes literature from multiple disciplines, contextualizing the complexities of capturing student feedback on the factors affecting course-level learning. Students in the United States typically give feedback through SETs, quantitative measures that have strengths and challenges. As discussed in this chapter, instructors might reject past-facing measures of soliciting feedback, instead seeking to gather more information that affects students' real-time learning. Some instructors use feedback models for actionable data about their students while focusing on academic content. As such, I investigated instructional communication and sociological literature to discover other measurable factors that impact learning. The surveys are often lengthy and difficult to deploy at scale.

I turned to HRM literature to determine how educators can craft more user-friendly measures for instructors. Organizational managers have experimented with forward-facing, real-time data collection to co-create positive environments where managers and employees can thrive, processes that might have implications in the educational environment. The chapter ends with a review of motivation and leadership theory. Instructors are leaders in their classrooms, and for a change in practice to occur, they must adjust their teaching and learning practices. Viewing this work through the transformational leadership framework could enable instructors to embrace a teaching model for expanding content delivery. If instructors' value the importance of social and emotional classroom experiences as precursors for competency in their subject areas, there more students might achieve their educational goals.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

The most common way students in the United States provide their professors with feedback on teaching effectiveness is through the SET. Instructors typically administer SETs at the end of their courses, receiving anonymous results sometime in the following semester. The main benefit of the SET to institutions is the "use of a common form, containing a fixed set of items administered to students in all classes and departments to facilitate comparison across faculty in all units" (Narasimhan, 2001, p. 180). Administrators use the evaluations for tenure and promotion purposes.

Some researchers find that SETs provide useful datasets and insight into how to improve teaching (Ballantyne et al., 2000; Benton & Cashin, 2012; Golding & Adam, 2016; Theall & Franklin, 2001). Murray et al. (1996) studied SETs over 21 years and found the evaluations resulted in improved teaching ratings. However, Kember et al. (2002) only found improvements in four of 25 departments over 4 years of study. Lang and Kersting (2007) and Blair and Noel (2014) also documented the limited usefulness of student impact on improving course-level teaching.

Researchers have conflicting opinions on the usefulness of SETs, questioning whether SETs measure teaching effectiveness or student satisfaction. Boring et al. (2016) indicated that "SET measure students' gender biases better than they measure the instructor's teaching effectiveness. Overall, SET disadvantage female instructors. There is no evidence that this is the exception rather than the rule" (p. 11). Boring et al. (2016) argued that faculty members should only use the SET for teacher effectiveness purposes and never for personnel matters, as evaluators cannot separate bias from the completed SETs.

Sojka et al. (2002) examined other variables with an impact on SETs, such as instructor workload, students' perception of teacher engagement, grading leniency, and course topic. Beyond considering the content area as a variable, Richardson (2005) also noted that a single SET "takes for granted a didactic model of teaching" (p. 404).

Sojka et al. (2002) sought to understand student and faculty perceptions of SETs, finding that students did not think SETs had an impact on faculty tenure and promotion or resulted in changes in teaching styles. Faculty members, on the other hand, felt as though students gave higher ratings based not on content, but on whether they found the instructor entertaining or lenient with grading (Sojka et al., 2002). The authors pointed out an underlying distrust between the students and their instructors. Neither faculty members nor students thought the other took the SETs seriously (Sojka et al., 2002). The authors suggested compromising to overcome the perceived distrust, a solution later presented in this chapter.

Richardson (2005) conducted a literature review of formal SETs, finding the stability of instructors' ratings over time "demonstrates the stability of the students' ratings, [and] it also implies that the performance of the teachers was not improving with experience" (p. 389). Richardson (2005) postulated that "students' evaluations may change teachers' self-perceptions even if they do not change their teaching behavior" (p. 389). Uttl et al. (2017) conducted meta-analyses of over 100 multisection studies, finding that "when prior learning/ability are taken into account . . . the SET/learning correlation is zero" (p. 40). Uttl et al. argued that high SET scores did not correlate with student learning. However, administrators continued to use SET data to promote instructors with high SET ratings.

The questions regarding SETs date back as far as the assessments. Uttl et al. (2017) asserted that SET proponents have remained because they are widely applied and inexpensive, giving students a role in faculty assessment. Similarly, Richardson (2005) said, "The use of quantitative inventories to obtain student feedback has therefore been dictated by organizational constraints, particularly given the increasing size of classes in higher education" (p. 402). The timing of the SETs is an issue as well, as end-of-semester assessments do not allow students an opportunity to benefit from their course evaluations. Narasimhan (2001) called for student feedback earlier than the end of the course for better value to the students. An additional issue with the SET commonly raised by researchers is that the methodology does not match the inquiry. Quantitative measure provides for uniform collection and scoring; however, does it present the intricacies of teaching and learning.

Richardson (2005) argued that SETs are uncritical and unsophisticated measurements for students' as instructors are often attempting to engender critical thinking skills that are not assessed via SETs. Uttl et al. (2017) came to a similar conclusion, finding that using the SET as a single questionnaire to measure teaching effectiveness was "unrealistic, given well-established findings from cognitive sciences" (p. 40). Uttl et al. asserted that educators at higher education institutions focused on student learning should not give any weight to the SET. Students, faculty members, administrators, and boards of trustees should consider the distinction between teaching and learning and student satisfaction as an institutional aim.

Beyond the concerns of the SETs, there is no uniform way in which instructors use the information collected. Richardson (2005) found strict practices for collecting SET data but not for how instructors should interpret the results at the course level.

Richardson observed overall confusion about the ownership of the SET data:

Teachers may be less disposed to act on the findings of feedback, and students may be

more disposed to be skeptical about the value of providing feedback to the extent that it

appears to be divorced from the immediate context of teaching and learning. (p. 408)

When instructors connect SETs to evaluations that could affect their employment,

adverse reactions are not uncommon (Narasimhan, 2001). Instructors should be encouraged to

work confidentially with peers or experts to improve their teaching, easing their fears of losing

tenure and promotion opportunities. A more holistic approach to the SET process could help

alleviate natural tensions about evaluation. Students routinely get the message that learning

occurs in the face of failure, but instructors do not often model that in their professional

development.

A final challenge regarding SETs is how students assess the courses. Narasimhan (2001)

noted that increased access to higher education has "resulted in a more heterogeneous body of

students, and the 'modular' system has altered the mix of full-time and part-time students" (p.

179). The students are changing, but the assessments are not. The SETs do not provide students

the opportunity to give their perspectives, do not account for student attendance or participation,

and require all students to use the same method of rating courses and instructors (Narasimhan,

2001). There are high stakes for instructors who administer the SET as well as many variables,

such as which students show up on the day of SET administration. True support and assistance

for instructors on behalf of the administration for identified issues could contribute to a climate

of trust and improve course-level teaching.

Opponents of SETs view the assessments as measures of student satisfaction rather than teaching effectiveness (Richardson, 2005; Uttl et al., 2017). Conducting SETs solely at the course level prohibits students from incorporating their overall educational experiences into the assessments, although many of these experiences impact their course-level learning. Administrators have access to student satisfaction surveys, but these surveys have a cost to purchase and require more time away from teaching and learning in the course. Student satisfaction surveys might also have unaffordable or impractical administrative burdens for smaller institutions that do not have staff members to administer, review, and turn the information into actionable data.

Moving Beyond or Supplementing SETs

Golding and Adam (2016) identified how instructors successfully used SET data to improve teaching, starting with the instructors' perceptions of the data. Instructors who had a reflective teaching approach and felt that they could always improve expressed the most interest in using the data to better their teaching (Golding & Adam, 2016). Instructors' intrinsic motivation to improve their craft enabled them to see the data as formative rather than summative (Golding & Adam, 2016). This perspective is key to my work, perhaps mitigating much of the concerns about teaching evaluations (see Arthur, 2009; Stein et al., 2013). Golding and Adam noted that "when teachers took a formative approach, their attention was on how to use the results" (p. 7). Though this approach is helpful, given the previous issues researchers have associated with the SETs, I do not think the reflective approach alone is a solution for the concerns with the SET. Thus, I sought to determine whether instructors could mitigate the shortcomings of the SETs by supplementing it with additional assessments.

Some scholars acknowledging the weaknesses of SETs suggested that instructors use semiformal and formative assessments during the semester instead of relying on past-facing tools, such as the SET. Instructors should seek feedback beyond casual interactions via e-mail, individual comments, and social media (Flodén, 2017). Instructors move to more formative assessments by using midterm evaluations (Veeck et al., 2016), which can provide useful information about student expectations and satisfaction (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006) and teaching improvement (Wickramasinghe & Timpson, 2006). Instructors could administer standardized or informal midterm assessments.

Standardized midterm evaluations are student-centered, giving learners the "opportunity to express their views and see their possible changes during the remainder of the semester" (Spencer & Pedhauzar Schmelkin, 2002, p. 406). Brown (2008) indicated that standardized midterm evaluations had a positive impact on student satisfaction. However, such evaluations have some of the same challenges as the SET, such as administrative costs, additional time away from learning, and the inability to score SMEs before the course ends (Warner & Simmons, 2015). As an alternative approach, informal midterm assessments are not typically a single form administered centrally from the institution. Instructors have the flexibility to choose the evaluation best suited for their course and can receive immediate feedback from their students. Some researchers advocate for informal midterm assessments (e.g., Algozzine et al., 2004; Hobson & Talbot, 2001). Warner and Simmons (2015) found that administering informal midterm assessments resulted in increased instructor SET scores at the end of the semester.

Veeck et al., (2016) noted another positive impact of midsemester assessments: Instructors could solicit information to impact learning barriers or gain suggestions for

improving their instruction, as "it specifically requests developmental feedback as opposed to judgmental feedback" (p. 159). Finally, midsemester assessments appeal to instructors who hope to improve their teaching, allowing for administration on the teachers' schedules at the course level, away from the pressure of supervisors or administrators. Instructors can adjust their courses in student-centered ways without fearing personnel decisions. Also, an educator can administer the assessment in one class and share the results in the next class to offer real-time feedback to students. The qualitative measure of asking specific questions pertinent to that day's learning and overall classroom environment could also be a means of mitigating some of the gender bias noted in traditional SETs through a focus on the process over the instructor.

Warner and Simmons (2015) asserted that informal midterm assessments provided results for students and instructors; also given was the opportunity for procedural justice for students by including their voices in the learning process. Students want to know they are part of a fair system. As Tyler and Blader (2003) noted, "The opportunity for 'voice' had interpersonal or 'value-expressive' worth that was not linked to any influence over the decisions made" (p. 351). Brown (2008) noted that students who felt their opinions mattered performed better in class. The concept of course-level procedural justice provides the trust that both students and instructors want. Allowing students to voice their views helps them to feel connected and co-create the learning environment.

As Tagg (2008) noted, "Most college students are constantly evaluated in their classes, but receive inadequate feedback" (p. 18). An informal midterm assessment provides students the opportunity to connect with their instructors; in addition, given the opportunity to address students' concerns, instructors can adjust their approach, if needed. Warner and Simmons (2015)

found that "providing timely feedback to student concerns is a positive experience for the students" (p. 76). Flodén (2017) showed that students preferred feedback centered on interactions and learning outside of the lecture format, such as small group discussions and group work. However, Flodén noted that small group discussions and group work were expensive activities for larger intuitions with established business models built on lectures and high student-teacher staffing ratios. Small group discussions and group work are fitting activities for the community college model, with a maximum of 25 students for lecture courses.

To create the feedback tool used in this study, I looked at Wiliam and Leahy's (2007) definition of formative assessment: "teachers' ability to use assessment to adapt their instruction to meet pupil learning needs in real time" (p. 29). According to Adams (2004), formative assessments are typically anonymous and reflective, enabling the instructor to adjust instruction to ensure that key learning occurs before moving on to another topic. The key idea is that feedback impacts student learning in the classroom, "crossing the three instructional processes with the different agents (teacher, peer, learner) . . .. Teaching is adaptive to the pupil's learning needs" (Wiliam & Leahy, 2007, p. 32). The CAT fits with the observations of the instructional communications researchers discussed. More generally, Wiliam and Leahy suggested that teachers create a classroom environment with various feedback loops to support student learning.

Informal formative assessments, such as the one I conducted, require additional clarification. Ruiz-Primo (2011) stated that the term

Informal does not imply a focus on the naturally unpredictable events that arise in any classroom, but rather on the small-scale, frequent opportunities teacher have for

collecting information about their students' progress towards the learning goals they have in mind. (p. 16)

Informal formative assessments may be cost- and time-effective measures in individual classroom settings but costly to study at the scale necessary for quantitative measurement.

Angelo and Cross (1993) compiled a handbook of best practices of formative assessments in CATs, an immensely helpful resource in my conceptualization of a feedback tool. I know that I wanted to provide feedback to instructors, but I did not seek to develop a scale that would not provide real-time feedback. Rather, I sought to give instructors a way to gauge the social-emotional climate in their classrooms that did not require intensive work or take too long to digest, giving them the change to react before the next class meeting. CATs provided the framework I needed to move forward with the feedback tool.

The introduction of an informal formative assessment for gathering information about the course-level, noncognitive variables with effects on student learning should not have the one-size-fits-all model of prior campus-wide assessments. The evaluation incorporated the probing, impactful questions indicated in the literature. Instructional communication experts (Zumbrunn et al., 2014) have suggested that students' sense of belonging, perceptions of teacher efficacy, and credibility are impactful variables for instructors to measure and nurture.

Belonging Comes First

Educational psychologists have identified belonging as an essential construct for college instructors to consider. Zumbrunn et al. (2014) noted that "student perceptions of classroom academic and social support—particularly on student feelings of belonging . . . may affect consequent motivation, engagement, and achievement" (p. 680). Zumbrunn et al. (2014)

highlighted the impact of teaching behaviors on influencing students' perceptions of fitting in. Instructors cannot singlehandedly create a sense of belonging; however, they can foster a sense of belonging and engagement and motivational factors by allowing students to work in small groups and making course content relevant (Zumbrunn et al., 2014).

Fassinger (1995) noted that students and teachers co-create the classroom climate. Although instructors can structure their classroom environments to foster belonging, both students and teachers contribute to co-creating the overall environment. In studying the positive impact of student engagement on persistence with university students, Soria and Stubblefield (2014) discovered that "students who feel engaged in the classroom, have frequent academically related interactions with their peers and feel a sense of belonging at their institutions" (p. 101).

Goodenow (1993) defined belonging as "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 80). Also, important to note is that the lack of classroom belonging does not necessarily result in a neutral environment. Goodboy et al. (2018) studied instructor misbehaviors and their negative impact on student learning, finding that

> Instructor antagonism substantially reduced student affect. Although some instructors might not consider the repercussions of belittling their students and putting down their classroom contributions, by doing so, they risk reducing students' affect and creating an unnecessary roadblock to learning. (p. 322)

If teachers do not foster belonging, students might have negative experiences that prevent academic achievement and result in low persistence and credential attainment.

Instructional communication scholars have studied social supports, one of which is belonging. Burleson and MacGeorge (2002) defined social supports as "verbal (and nonverbal) behaviors intended to provide or seek help" (p. 384). Seemingly, students should feel they belong at college, encouraged by faculty members to seek help when necessary. Student success professionals and instructors often struggle to get learners to utilize support, such as tutoring. The classroom environment is a pivotal factor in fostering student belonging and encouraging them to use support services, such as tutoring. Instructors focus on their academic content; however, Zumbrunn et al. (2014) has shown that educators addressing issues in the classroom before delving into content would have a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Since the discipline began in 1972, instructional communication scholars have worked to understand teaching behaviors with a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Myers, Goodboy et al., 2014). The purpose of the field of instructional communication is to understand the competencies needed to communicate effectively. There is vast applicability of instructional communication for educators beyond the field of communication. A key emphasis in instructional communication literature is the importance of perception. An instructor could intend a teaching behavior one way, and students could perceive it differently. Teven and McCroskey (1996) described the importance of perception in the concept of perceived caring:

> It is important for a teacher to learn how to communicate in such a manner that students will perceive that he or she cares about them, whether or not that is the case in reality. It is not the caring that counts; it is the perception of caring that is critical. (p. 1)

Teacher credibility is another key construct studied in the instructional communication field. McCroskey (1998) defined teacher credibility as the "attitude of a receiver that references

the degree to which a source is seen to be believable" (p. 80). Given the impact of perception, Myers and Bryant (2004) identified "instructor communicative behaviors [that] students believe convey instructor credibility (i.e., competence, character, caring)" (p. 26). Competence is the instructor's content expertise. Students perceive instructors with character as authentic, honorable, and trustworthy (Myers & Bryant, 2004). When caring instructors display learner-centered rather than self-involved behaviors, they show genuine interest in their students.

Waldeck (2007) studied personalized education as a construct and found that it is "primarily a function of teacher communication behavior . . . substantially correlated with student affective learning" (p. 429). Personalized education is an important concept for instructors outside of the instructional communication field. Studies have shown that how instructors communicate content has an impact on how well students learn. Waldeck (2007) defined instructor interpersonal competence as "teachers' efforts to communicate friendliness, warmth, approachability, and dynamism to students and communicate in ways that promote teacher-student equality and friendship" (p. 423).

Waldeck (2007) identified instructor accessibility as an impactful factor for student perceptions of personalized education. Students reported that when they could access instructors in and out of class via multiple mediums (e.g., telephone phone, e-mail, or office hours), they experienced high-quality interactions. The construct of instructor accessibility makes sense from a student perspective, as much of the work in college occurs outside the classroom. A full-time teaching load at a community college could be as much as four to five courses per semester. Instructors might not have the ability to support over 100 students in the ways Waldeck identified as impactful on students' perceptions. It could be even more of a challenge for

part-time instructors who teach at multiple schools without having campus office hours or continuous student interactions.

Titsworth et al. (2010) defined emotional support as "the extent to which students perceive that their instructor is available and able to provide emotional support about topics that are directly and indirectly related to school" (p. 438). The emotional support construct may be a challenge for instructors who believe their instructional duties only consist of the delivery of academic competencies. However, when instructors do not provide emotional support, students may engage in emotion work. Titsworth et al. (2010) defined emotion work as "the extent to which students must expend emotional energy and perform emotional labor (i.e., faking or feigning emotions) in the classroom" (p. 438). Students who engage in emotion work might divert effort from learning; thus, instructors should engage in activities to minimize emotion work.

Students who engage more tend not to participate in emotion work. For this reason, I ventured into sociology literature to understand more about engagement. Fassinger (1995) indicated that peers have more of an influence on students' participation than instructors. Rather than a specific impactful trait on student participation, "Professors' perceptions of classroom interaction could have important consequences, such as shaping the tactics used by faculty members to encourage classroom involvement" (Fassinger, 1995). Fassinger (1995) showed the importance of receiving formative feedback so instructors can influence their teaching tactics to achieve more participation. The researcher observed that primary and secondary school teachers routinely used formative feedback to impact their classes and suggested that postsecondary teachers could benefit from similar peer-to-peer feedback.

A quick assessment, ideally a qualitative evaluation, could enable instructors to receive and respond to rapid student feedback. The response to feedback would likely be a means of helping students see the impact of their input on teaching and learning, which Richardson (2005) noted as a key missed opportunity in the assessment process. The level of agility provided by quick assessments, though not commonplace in higher education, is a factor used and studied in talent management. HRM literature indicates how employers use frequent feedback tools to supplement or replace annual reviews; thus, I decided to use HRM literature to inform my study.

Real-time Feedback: Human Research Management Perspective

Scholars adapt changing HRM trends to inform how to assess, challenge, and motivate in higher education. The purpose of the HRM feedback literature is how to deliver information to people in impactful and efficient ways. I am particularly interested in how managers capture and use real-time data to make in-the-moment decisions. Long scales that require an immense amount of time to collect, organize, and interpret data are not well suited for resource challenged institutions. Managers do not have such time, as they need to make informed decisions and act quickly. I used this efficiency and understanding of human behavior to inform my study.

Neville and Roulin (2016) studied why individuals did or did not accept feedback, especially when it was negative. The authors suggested that people avoid negative feedback because they find it threatening to their self-worth. Humans protect their psychological immune system through self-deception, self-serving attitudes, and trivialization (Neville & Roulin, 2016). Buffering the bad feedback with the good is not enough, as "negative feedback swamps positive feedback in cognition" (Neville & Roulin, 2016, p. 283). Organizational behavior dictates that employees should seek out stories about when they were their best selves and made significant

contributions to the workplace. Multiple sources should provide examples to construct a lasting narrative that might provide a foundation for the employee to view feedback as a critique to act upon rather than criticism to deflect.

Roberts et al. (2005) developed the Reflected Best Self exercise (RBS), asserting, "The RBS exercise helps you remember your strengths—and construct a plan to build on them" (p. 80). The four steps of the RBS exercise are identifying respondents and asking for feedback, recognizing patterns, composing a self-portrait, and redesigning one's job. Regarding RBS, used globally in corporate and college settings, Roberts et al. (2019) noted "people benefit significantly from positive feedback about their strengths and contributions" (para. 2). RBS is not an annual review because the power of this exercise is the emphasis on individual strengths to plan for future success.

Neville and Roulin (2016) suggested that an employee can drive the review in a feedforward interview (FFI). In an FFI, the manager looks for positive feedback from the year, not negative. By omitting the negative from this conversation, employees can focus on the future and work to achieve their goals in ways they find exciting. The hope is that employees will counter the negatives by default by achieving goals with passion. Employees co-create their professional pursuits with their supervisor, who becomes less of a judge and more of a coach and assistant. Additionally, these strengths-based approaches bypass the psychological immune system.

Annual Reviews

Employers are moving away from evaluative and sometimes punitive annual reviews toward models in which managers co-create plans with employees to meet goals. Supervisors

should coach employees rather than highlight shortcomings. A strengths-based model provides employees the opportunity to set individual and team goals, giving supervisors the tools they need to set those goals.

Kinley (2016) stated, "The re-imagining of performance management is leading us to re-emphasize the importance of good old-fashioned management skills" (p. 94). I sincerely wonder if higher education will be in a similar situation regarding student retention initiatives. Good-old-fashioned teaching, in which educators place students at the center and tend to their full suite of needs as learners, could well be the answer. The traditional approach to teaching will be an expensive answer, however, leading industry leaders to move away due to the propensity of part-time instructors. The American Association of University Professors (2018) indicated that "at all US institutions combined, the percentage of instructional positions that is off the tenure track amounted to 73% in 2016" (p. 1). Part-time instructors might lack connections to institutions that would positively impact their teaching and opportunities for student relationships. If instructors are not on campus full-time due to responsibilities at other institutions, they have significantly fewer opportunities for informal student interactions.

Many instructors are familiar with past-facing annual reviews that may, on occasion, have adversely affected their performance evaluations. In the 1990s, schools had forced rankings, often with negative outcomes (Kinley, 2016). Forced rankings resulted in lowered employee engagement, innovation, and teamwork, qualities shown by some instructors' reactions to SETs. In 2015, the *Harvard Business Review* featured Deloitte for a revamp of performance management, followed by Accenture and General Electric. However, Kinley (2016) noted that beyond the headlines, the evaluation was not as obsolete as it appeared; even so, it is unclear

what will replace performance evaluations. Kinley pointed out that performance appraisals have not vanished, but forced rankings have. Employers across various industries are replacing annual reviews with more frequent meetings and goal-setting.

Meinert (2015) studied the impact of more frequent interactions, encouraging HRM professionals and managers to look for ways to motivate, train, and retain employees to impact overall company performance. Meinert explained that forced rankings were an effective measure in the 1980s that eventually became unwieldy and resulted in the loss of good talent. Forced rankings led employees to compete rather than unite for common goals. The process also had errors in implementation, as often-subjective reviews caused tension between employees and managers, leaving both groups dissatisfied with the process. Even so, managers and employees continued to use forced rankings because their businesses required evaluation. Employees must know what their managers expect them to do; accordingly, managers must evaluate employees' performance with feedback if they want to increase efficiency.

Meinert (2015) argued that rather than abandoning problematic reviews, informal check-ins between managers and employees were more productive. Managers should spend time encouraging and coaching rather than completing lengthy forms for human resources professionals. Changing the annual review process requires managers to have the training and power to use corrective action, when necessary. Check-ins result in a system based on shared accountability for the evaluation and support of teams rather than a focus on individuals. Bersin (2013) faulted the annual review process because managers often failed to provide timely, ongoing feedback. With so many peers in companies, one perspective to evaluate performance is a lost opportunity for critique. Employers should solicit employee input on performance,

including self-reflection (Bersin, 2013). Organizations could rate managers by their ability to encourage employees to increase performance.

Ferris et al. (2008) proposed a framework to include the full context of a workplace when conducting performance evaluations, facilitating the capture of "complex social, emotional, cognitive, political, and relationship context" in organizations (p. 146). Of particular importance to my interests in higher education, Ferris et al. (2008) indicated that research on job performance should include more than performing the job duties described on the individual level; scholars should expand the research to include the social context, which consists of "behaviors not formally prescribed by any particular job but instead informal aspects of all jobs" (pp. 149—150).

Ferris et al. (2008) looked at performance evaluation research and theory, which includes the social information not formally included in the evaluation process, with an impact on the rater of the evaluation. Additionally, the context of the work environment is important: Stable times and employees might have stable evaluations, but transitional times could result in varied reported evaluations due to the variables experienced by the rater and the rated individual. Social and political perspectives might also affect evaluations, "influence the relational identity of ratees and detract cognitive resources from task performance and relationships, modifying individuals' subsequent relationship satisfaction and quality" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 155). Ferris et al. (2008) postulated that an increased frequency of evaluations could cause fewer emotions and have less of an impact on task performance. The use of more frequent assessments was one of the aims of my study and of interest to higher education due to similar issues with SET.

Ferris et al. (2008) called for continued exploration of accountability and the effect of theoretical frameworks to supplement the evaluation process, rather than dismantling the purpose to benefit both workers and organizations. I found this perspective particularly valuable in terms of my experience in higher education. My work and interactions with colleagues indicate that instructors emotionally invest in their academic disciplines as passion projects while serving as institutional employees with more procedural processes. Working to bridge the social, emotional, and cognitive gap with the work necessary for institutional personnel could affect all parties. Faculty members can involve students by examining these issues from a micro-level in the classrooms, which is the core of their role as instructors.

Not all HRM scholars support abandoning the annual review, instead raising important criticisms. Whereas many large employers have eliminated annual ratings, others have made smaller-scale changes (Adler et al., 2016). Adler et al. (2016) outlined seven problems with performance ratings: disappointing interventions, disagreement among raters, weak criteria for evaluating rankings, contextual effects on ratings, conflicting purposes, feedback is not accepted or acted on, and weak research-practice relationships. The authors discussed the potential consequences of eliminating ratings, as well. Employers who dismiss ratings might lack support should lawsuits arise around promotions, salaries, or terminations (Adler et al., 2016). Additionally, if institutional employers disband their performance management ratings, they may struggle to calculate merit, thus needing to determine value in less transparent ways. Given the high stakes of employee ratings, Adler et al. (2016) suggested that employers could improve performance management by removing the synonymous relationship between ratings and managing performance. Employers could weave ratings with other key indicators using a more

holistic approach, conducting real-time observations rather than a single annual review. Managers could incorporate well-functioning performance management systems by focusing on an organizational culture of development (Adler et al., 2016).

Van Woerkom and de Bruijn (2016) deemed traditional institutional evaluations attempts to fit everyone into similar boxes without consideration for employees' unique abilities. The authors deemed antiquated the idea that every employee must be competent across a broad spectrum of traits due to increasingly team- and project-based work environments. Van Woerkom and de Bruijn posited that a unique understanding of team strengths could enable managers to craft teams by incorporating all members' strengths. Supervisors should help employees identify strengths, as people are often unaware of their natural talents until brought to their attention. Van Woerkom and de Bruijn suggested using best-self-portraits and FFI to inspire workers, as "employees who perceive organizational support for strengths use become more confident and engaged" (p. 278). Finally, the authors indicated that 83% of employers correlated evaluations with compensation, which could have resulted in inequalities in institutional workforce diversity. Van Woerkom and de Bruijn proposed the use of a single instrument for all and emphasized the need for individualization.

Employers could also consider using the strength-based performance appraisal to revive performance evaluations. Bouskila-Yam and Kluger (2011) examined FFI and reflected best self-research, finding ways to work with existing strengths, happiness research, a 3:1 ratio between positive and negative feedback, the win-win approach, and increasing collective efficacy in a case study of the SBPA appraisal process. The key change in this SBPA process was not to rely only on the appraisal, as a single, unsupported intervention cannot create change in employee

performance. The goals of using the strength-based performance appraisal include improving results for an entire organization, focusing on the employees' strengths, valuing employee contributions by recognizing their strengths, and adding value to the organization (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011).

Kumar and Raghavendran (2013) also studied the importance of disruption in the evolution of HRM. The authors found the talent management process mirrored the supply chain of manufacturing. Due to technology disruptions (e.g., manufacturing or assembly line disruptions), "Talent management got caught in a vicious cycle of process and metrics, believing that process and metrics added value to the business and justified its presence in the organization" (Kumar & Raghavendran, 2013, p. 16). These metrics included neither the measurement of the whole person nor an understanding of human behavior. The talent managers who ignored whole-person measurements or human behavior did not engage employees to their full potential. The metrics provided risk-averse measurements that caused a culture of mediocrity. In traditional performance evaluations, managers placed themselves above their employees rather than creating opportunities for collaboration. Kumar and Raghavendran suggested that talent managers include intrinsic motivations rather than strictly extrinsic motivations; rather than employment management, institutional employers should get involved in performance enablement.

Motivation

An undercurrent in much of the HRM literature is motivation. Most employee evaluations correlate with compensation, an extrinsic motivation. Ultimately, people expect to receive payment for their work. However, as the literature has shown, compensation is not the

only reward leading people to do their work or exceed expectations. I must consider motivation for this study because I work in public higher education—specifically, in a collectively bargained union environment. Add to this setting the concept of academic freedom, and the idea of mandating a CAT is a nonstarter; rather, the CAT must be an appealing assessment for instructors' intrinsic motivation. Teaching is a calling, a desire to share expertise and assist students in learning and growing as scholars so they can become critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

A study of organizational behavior scholarship showed the impact of prosocial motivation on employee persistence, performance, and productivity. Grant (2008) described prosocial motivation as "the desire to expend effort to benefit other people" (p. 48), with intrinsic motivation occurring in the present and prosocial motivation is future-focused. Ultimately, the two motivations can occur together or separately, as illustrated by an instructor lecturing to a college class. Grant discovered that "prosocial motivation is more likely to predict persistence, performance, and productivity when it is accompanied by intrinsic motivation" (p. 54). Because the desired outcome for this CAT was to create a classroom climate optimal for student learning, it was essential to access instructors' intrinsic and prosocial motivation. If instructors can see the connection between the utilization of a new technique and improved student success, they might be more likely to try the CAT. Using the CAT might also increase their interest and present additional teaching and learning experiments.

Technology and Feedback

HRM literature contains examples of using software to collect real-time data to inform supervisors and monitor progress toward goals. Mobile software provides the opportunity to

gather data throughout the year rather than once a year. Silverman (2016) investigated General

Electric's use of annual merit awards as incentives throughout the year, along with other

enticements such as additional time off. General Electric replaced annual reviews with a

summary of more frequent meetings documented throughout the year with new software. The

company acquired a software solution, FastWorks, to help managers and staff embrace the new

model. In the new model, managers fostered a culture of innovation by acknowledging the

employees who asked questions, assisting workers to understand how to complete tasks correctly

instead of just rewarding people who performed their duties without understanding why. These

practices were in line with those used by other thought leaders in the corporate model.

Some employers have begun to conduct more frequent, ongoing evaluations instead of

just an annual review (Wilkie, 2015). Managers use real-time data to adjust goals instead of

evaluating only past performance. Additionally, managers can use longitudinal data to assess

employees' work over time against themselves rather than against other individuals. Managers

have the opportunity to use context to inform the process, an option not available in previous

models that previously happened only once per year.

Managers must receive training, and their supervisors must support the new process and

data to provide useful real-time feedback. Compiling, updating, and benchmarking the new

performance management system takes time. To further explore the perceived and much-hyped

performance management revolution, Wilkie (2015) investigated essential themes of the new

system implementation. These concepts of supporting managers to collect and use real-time data

are important to higher education, as well. Faculty may respond initially with resistance when

being asked to adopt new technology and moving toward implementation on a larger scale. But setting realistic expectations and supporting users with robust training can ease the transition.

Universities are highly bureaucratic and political systems. As administrators join and leave universities and long-term faculty remain, new initiatives fade and instructors may default to former practices. McBride (2010) reflected that faculty members often resist new initiatives, stating, "A history of broken promises, poor communication, a lack of respect for employees, and low commitment to or support for past initiatives leave some faculty with little to no desire to disrupt their professional lives and classrooms for another reinvention of procedures" (p. 262).

Even with interest in new technology, if not properly supported throughout training and ongoing support, faculty members might face time constraints preventing them from participating. Houghton et al. (2015) described this difficulty as "the perception of time poverty" (p. 534). Teaching course load, service to the university, and research requirements can often result in the overextension of faculty members' time and abilities to take on new tasks. Change agents can view new technologies as part of the broader context of culture change to counter initial resistance.

Due to innovations in software, workflows, and expectations, resistance to change is natural. Karp and Tveteraas Helgo (2009) suggested that leaders do not need to predict and react to resistance; instead, they should expect resistance, loosen control, and focus on relationship-building in their organizations. Rather than trying to control followers, leaders should influence patterns of social change and set in motion the change process. From there, administrators can model the behaviors and communication necessary for faculty members to see

parts of their former stable selves; work in the new, initially chaotic process; and find space to embrace the change and add to the iterative process.

Transformative leaders encourage followers to shape change, meeting employees' intrinsic needs by empowering and engaging them with high-quality connections. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) argued that authentic transformational leadership has four components: "idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration" (p. 181). Transformational leaders engage in individualized, considerate, and supportive interactions with their subordinates (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011). Leadership theory is an applicable approach to optimizing the social-emotional climate at the course level.

Leadership Theory in the Classroom

Researchers have explored students' perceptions of the behaviors associated with transformational leaders. Bolkan and Goodboy (2011) studied 166 undergraduate students in a midsized Eastern U.S. university communications course and discovered eight behaviors students perceived as associated with individualized consideration: "[Faculty] availability, providing individual feedback, verbal immediacy, personalized content, conveying interest, special considerations, remembering student history, and promoting participation" (p. 15). These components fit with the overarching definition of transformational leadership, as faculty members connect with and motivate students. Bolkan and Goodboy's (2011) students applied their learning beyond the immediate grade outcome, making connections so they could see themselves as part of the institution rather than just learners collecting grades. Additionally, the students connected their goals to the course and university-level outcomes. Followers in a transformational experience meet goals not merely for extrinsic rewards (e.g., cash bonus,

promotion, or grades), but because they share a goal with the leader. Followers and leaders

motivate each other to achieve a shared vision (Northouse, 2013). Deichmann and Stam (2015)

observed that transformational leaders "highlight existing opportunities for change and promote

follower confidence in the idea that they can successfully shape that change" (p. 206).

The view of transformative leaders might be as visionaries or role models. Bolman and

Deal (1997) posited that transformational leaders use four practices to inspire: symbols, framing

experiences, discovering and communicating a vision, and telling stories to achieve goals. In the

hands of a leader such as Martin Luther King, Jr., the transformational vision was social justice;

in comparison, Adolf Hitler had a much more destructive and frightening vision. Bass and

Steidlmeier (1999) referred to the latter as an example of pseudo-transformational leaders, who

"are predisposed toward self-serving biases. They claim they are right and good; others are

wrong and bad. They are the reason things go well; other persons are the reason for things going

badly" (p. 187).

Leaders can be both transactional and transformational. According to Burns (1978),

transformational leaders "approach their followers with an eye to trading one thing for another:

jobs for votes, subsidies for campaign contributions" (p. 4). However, transactional leadership is

not without merit. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) posited that the best leaders were

transformational and transactional (p. 188). Transactional leaders honor contracts, loyalty, and

justice; transformational leaders want to increase intrinsic rewards for a transformative

experience. Bass and Steidlemeir suggested that transformative actions are a means of enhancing

transactional aims and outcomes. Deichmann and Stam (2015) argued for the appropriateness of

"an institutionalized setting, such as an ideation program, in which previous ideas are stored and

new ideas are managed, as this type of leadership focuses on standardization and efficiency" (p. 206). This sort of institution could undoubtedly be higher education. Northouse (2013) indicated the assignment of grades for coursework to be a transactional process. When the followers understand the actions required of them and meet their goals, the system works. If followers succeed, they will continue to work within the system to achieve their long-term goals.

In my work with students and faculty, I hope to bridge the two perspectives of transactional and transformational leadership. Are there ways to modify a role traditionally associated with transactional leadership to inspire a long-term, systematic function on behalf of the follower via transformative motives? I believe that instructors can still fulfill their primary role as leaders and experts while fostering students' intrinsic goals, creating a feedback loop in which they inspire students to achieve more than success in a single course. By forming a more concrete connection to students' academic careers, transactional instructors could perhaps support their students' development.

Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) asserted that "transformational leadership is positively related to student learning outcomes, student participation, and perceptions of teacher credibility" (p. 301). The authors utilized seven scales from various disciplines. Bolkan and Goodboy suggested that future scholars take their work further by identifying the specific teaching behaviors showing transformative leadership inside the classroom.

Chapter III: Methodology

I conducted this research in a rural community college to learn if an informal feedback tool could provide real-time data to instructors to enhance the social-emotional classroom environment. The students used the tool; however, the focus of this study was the faculty members who received the data and served as the study's participants. Although students and instructors co-create the social-emotional classroom climate, it is the instructor's responsibility to monitor student learning and create an optimal environment where learning can occur. Enabling such an ideal learning culture is a challenging task in addition to teaching course content, especially if creating a space with a sense of belonging was not a driving objective of the course. The concept of belongingness on behalf of students as a precursor for effective learning is not a well-known subject outside of instructional communication or cognitive psychology. The framing of this study and the literature underpinning the CAT affected the research as much as, if not more heavily than, the data collected from the students via formative assessment. Participating in the study could have contributed to an altered classroom climate.

AR was the approach selected to keep the inquiry team in a feedback loop with the researcher. AR provided the opportunity for me and the participants to engage in the research and adjust throughout the study. The local focus at a single community college required using the data to inform the process in real-time. Participants' reflections were also a key reason for the selection of AR. The study could cause the participants to change the ways they engage in their classroom management; as such, the research was the action. A more rigid methodology would have limited the research's scope. AR provided the flexibility needed to address the research questions: The learning occurred during the study impacted the study's next steps. A more

prescribed approach would have produced only limited feedback from the participants. As partners in research, the instructors co-generated the knowledge with the researcher and critically examined their teaching practices.

Action Research as a Research Base

The study required a qualitative method to answer the research questions. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) defined qualitative research as

A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. (p. 3)

I focused on the work conducted at the course level. Argyris and Schon (1991) noted that AR "bounds episodes of research according to the boundaries of the local context. It builds descriptions and theories within the practice context itself, and tests them there" (p. 86). As the instructors and I worked for the same college and with the same students, we shared a "local" focus—specifically, the students we served. As a member of the college, I am an internal member, but I was not technically centered in the research because I do not teach. I did not include myself as an insider practitioner in the classroom research; that title remained with the faculty. Instead, I viewed my role as an external practitioner-researcher, as defined by Herr and Anderson (2005). By choosing a collaborative research methodology, I hoped that the synchronicity of my study, combined with the instructors' expertise, provided benefits for the college. The participants and I shared the same setting, and our differing roles enabled us to reflect on the best ways to create a course-level culture of belonging for students.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) defined AR in an educational setting as

A form of collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situation in which these practices are carried out. Groups of participants can be teachers, students, principals, parents, and other community members—any group with a shared concern. The approach is only Action Research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realize that the Action Research of the group is achieved through the critical examined action of the individual group members. (p. 5)

Contrary to other methodologies for studying phenomena from afar (without interventions), scholars who use AR intervene in the phenomena an ongoing process to see what actions cause changes, reflect on the impact, plan for additional action, and conduct additional actions throughout a cycle to improve learning and outcomes (Herr & Anderson, 2005). This study required the engagement of instructors as co-researchers to determine the real-time impact of knowing more about the social-emotional classroom climate on their teaching. Next, the instructors and I reviewed the plan to deploy the CAT and finalized the times to meet as a group and discuss the findings. After conducting the CAT and meeting as a group, we made revisions and repeated the process. Finally, the inquiry group members talked about the findings and participated in an assessment to determine the success of the study and to close the loop (as shown in Figure 3.1). AR provides instructors the ability to professionally develop by researching their practices and the opportunity for institutional change at the local level. The purpose of the research was not generalizable findings but rather the identification of an issue

that may have an impact on positive change at the college. The study results might be

transferable to other institutions.
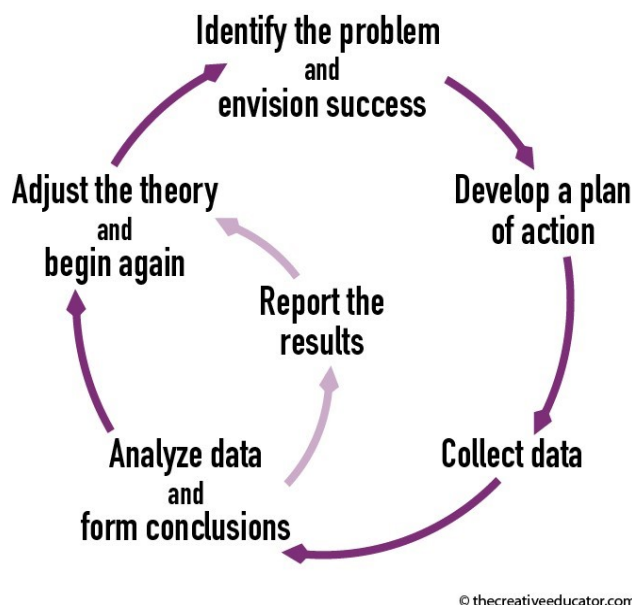
Figure 3.1. The action research cycle. Reprinted with permission of Melinda Kolk of tech4learning.com

Though John Dewey (1933) is not the author credited for beginning AR, he did write

about the democratization of education. Dewey was an advocate for engaging in reflective

thinking to solve real problems. As Pasmore (2001) noted, "Dewey urged educators to teach

students how to think, rather than teaching facts. He urged that education should be made a more

collaborative process" (p. 39); as such, Dewey's work remains relevant in education. John

Collier and Kurt Lewin worked in organizational design, with Lewin (1946, 1948) going on to

theorize and conduct AR. Lewin's field theory, "B = f (p,e), or behavior of an individual is a

function of both personality and environment . . . became a central tenant of the socio-technical

school" (Reason & Bradbury 2008, p. 40). Rather than follow the work built on Lewin's theory

of AR, I explored the roots of participatory action research (PAR) and AR in education for my

methodological grounding, which was appropriate due to the focus on teaching and learning rather than organizational theory. My study included the work of educators as practitioner-researchers to improve their local-level practices. Though my methodology was AR, there was an influence from the PAR movement; as such, I included the history of PAR in the grounding.

Under Corey at the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, the 1950s Columbia Teachers College provided teachers the opportunity to engage in cooperative AR (Herr & Anderson, 2005; however, it was not a successful movement. According to Froshay (1993),

> The chief limitation of cooperative Action Research, from the point of view of the educational researchers of the time, was that it was not possible to generalize from the examined population to others. . . . In addition, since much of the research was designed and carried out by classroom teachers, who were not trained in research, the data was often flawed. (p. 3)

Given this setback, AR was not a heavily utilized method in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. Stenhouse from the Center for Applied Research in Education, and, later, Elliott at the Ford Teaching Project, renewed the interest in AR in teachers in Great Britain in the 1970s through collaboration to reform their curriculum (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Stenhouse (1975) wrote about the unique challenges of teaching, insisting it was "not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves" (p. 143).

Meanwhile, Miles Horton was exploring PAR at the Highlander Center in North America, but as Herr and Anderson (2005) noted, it was "Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in English in 1970 that galvanized critical researchers in the U.S." (p. 15). The idea

that research could be an act of liberation became popular. Unlike more traditional AR models, the Freirean PAR model, which had a political nature, was less specific to problem-solving for efficiency and more for an equity-minded focus. Freire critiqued the conservative, male-dominated AR field and produced an inductive research process for "generative themes, or issues of vital importance to community members" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 15). The revival of AR was a pushback against the quantitative dominance in the field at the time. Freire (1985) described conscientization as a process that occurs when individuals "achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (p. 93). I hope to achieve the conscientization level of transformation for the participants through this research to bring awareness of students' social-emotional needs to instructors for students' learning. Smith (1997) said, "As people reflect, engage in dialogue, critically question relationships and circumstances, and gain new perspectives, they expand (p. 195).

Both Horton and Freire were teachers and reflected on the impact of their work on their teaching. Freire said, "One of the most important tasks we should have as teachers should be not to have the experience on behalf of the students. We cannot do that. They have to have their experience" (Horton et al., 1990, pp. 36—37). Dewey would likely have agreed, stating, "Were all instructors to realize that the quality of mental process, not the production of correct answers, is the measure of educative growth something hardly less than a revolution in teaching would be worked" (Dewey, 1916, p. 207). hooks (1994) wrote along similar lines about education as liberation:

To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who also believe that our work is not merely to share information *but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students.* To teach in a manner that *respects* and *cares* for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (p. 13)

An important concept of AR from 1916 through 2020 and likely beyond is valuing the human experience through reflection, recognizing that generating knowledge cannot be a one-sided process. The participant and the researcher do not need to be separate entities. Practitioners of AR have the potential to either challenge or perpetuate norms As Habermas (1974) articulated, "In a process of enlightenment, there can be only participants" (p. 40). Herr and Anderson (2005) cautioned that practitioners must remember that "if action research is not done with a critical spirit, it runs the risk of simply legitimating what may be—from the perspective of equity considerations—unacceptable social arrangements" (p. 24). Given the vulnerability of many students at 2-year colleges, it was essential to keep the equity lens at the center of the research.

Though this study included a brief student survey, the use of the CAT provided only one perspective. By incorporating the inquiry group in the study, a more complex set of data was available, including the instructors' reactions to the data and the adjustments they would make to their course delivery. As Herr and Anderson (2005) noted, "Making qualitative forms of research legitimate helped open the door for practitioners to experiment with more systematic qualitative approaches in studying their practice" (p. 21). Additionally, AR allows practitioners to contribute

to their profession. With AR, instructors can reassert their knowledge and practice when many state and federal government leaders are trying to impact how and what instructors teach via policy or testing developed outside of the teaching and learning community.

Positionality

To clarify my positionality regarding the method, I am a graduate student and was previously a full-time academic administrator working in a public 2-year college. I care deeply about the college, our students, and my colleagues and hope that my research will be beneficial to the institution. As an employee of the college, I am an "insider in collaboration with other insiders" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 31) on the continuum and implications of positionality. Thus, I was not an unknown outside researcher contacting the college to conduct research. I was an employee—an insider—as were the faculty members who co-researched via AR in the inquiry group.

It is critical to emphasize the collaborative nature of AR. Though I identified a problem, read the research literature, and devised a plan to collect data, the review and revision occurred alongside the faculty. I did not supervise the faculty in my professional role so there was no power dynamic. This was an informal and autonomous inquiry group; we did not attempt to work in formal committee structures to embark on campus-wide change. Rather, instructors volunteered, as the "more autonomous groups provide more freedom and idiosyncrasy" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 36). My intent was to provide the instructors with clear roles and purpose to cultivate an intentional and democratic approach to knowledge creation.

Pilot Study: Development of the CAT

Before developing the CAT, I met with several faculty members at a rural Northeastern United States community college to learn about their experiences with student feedback—specifically, what was helpful feedback and what was not. As Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) noted, a pilot study "can give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols might not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated" (p. 33). Overall, faculty members read their evaluations but responded in different ways. Most were full-time instructors, but a few were part-time. The faculty members' experience varied widely, from fewer than 5 years to 40-plus years of community college teaching.

One full-time faculty member who had not yet achieved tenure shared that he looked closest at the negative feedback to determine its validity or if a student had used the feedback to retaliate for a poor grade. He sought to understand if the feedback had well-founded criticisms, and if so, what he could do to address the complaint and teach the course better in the future. In his final semester before retirement, another faculty member shared that, historically, he did not gain any useful information from the SETs regarding his teaching. Students often reported complaints based on experiences entirely outside of his ability to influence rather than his actual teaching. He related some outrageous, irrelevant experiences to illustrate his frustration. Several female instructors said the evaluations were so personal that they no longer read them, as the students tended to comment on physical characteristics rather than course content. National reports have shown that gender discrimination is a consistent problem in SETs (Boring et al.,

2016; Flaherty, 2016). Because the students evaluating the teachers could be biased against

female instructors, the data from the teaching evaluations should not dictate personnel decisions.

I developed a pilot questionnaire and loaded it into SurveyMonkey, as represented in

Table 3.1. I altered the questions slightly from the initial questions shown in Table 3.2.

Permissions to adapt and reprint questions were received from publishers and are included in

Appendix F. Five community college students in their final semester (some traditional-aged and

some adult learners) took the survey with me in the room. I asked the pilot participants to think

aloud so I could gather if they understood the survey questions. I then had six other final

semester students take the survey without interruption. I asked the pilot participants to consider

the last class they attended as the context for the CAT. I chose students in their final semester to

participate in the pilot study because they would likely not take the CAT in the semester when I

conducted the study.

Table 3.1

First Iteration of CAT Questions. *Permission to adapt and reprint on behalf of www.tandfonline.com

Scale question	Shorter question for instrument	Construct	Scale title	Reference	Notes
I feel like a real part of this class.	I feel like a real part of this class. (y/n)	Belongingness (1 = *not at all true* to 5 = *extremely true)*	The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)	Goodenow (1993)	Adapted language to be "class" as opposed to school, as it was developed for eighth graders.
I am treated with as much respect as other students.	I am treated with as much respect as other students. (y/n)	Belongingness			
	I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today. (y/n)	Belongingness		Zumbrunn et al. (2014)	
Instructor promotes a lot of interaction in his/ her class.	Our instructor frequently engages students in class discussions. (y/n)	Interpersonal competence	Personalized Education Scale (PES) (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very often)*	Waldeck (2007)	Prompt was "Think of one particular professor who has helped create a personalized educational experience for you" (p. 421).

Scale question	Shorter question for instrument	Construct	Scale title	Reference	Notes
Instructor is a competent communicator.	My instructor explains concepts in ways that I understand. (y/n)	Interpersonal competence	PES	*Waldeck (2007)	
Instructor is approachable.		Interpersonal competence	PES	*Waldeck (2007)	
Instructor is willing to offer extra help in his or her office, outside of class.	Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class? (y/n)	Instructor accessibility	PES	*Waldeck (2007)	
My instructor is willing to discuss my feelings and emotions about school	My instructor is willing to discuss my feelings and emotions about school. (y/n)	Student emotional experience	Classroom Emotional Scale (CES) - 5-point	*Titsworth et al. (2010)	
My instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues.	My instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues. (y/n)	Emotion support	CES	*Titsworth et al. (2010)	
When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal or fake my emotions.	When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal or fake my emotions. (y/n)	Emotion work	CES	*Titsworth et al. (2010)	

Scale question	Shorter question for instrument	Construct	Scale title	Reference	Notes
I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor.	I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor. (y/n)	Emotion work	CES	*Titsworth et al. (2010)	
	Students support each other in class. (y/n)	Student participation		Fassinger (1995)	
	How open was your instructor to questions about today's class topic? (1–4)	Student participation		Fassinger (1995)	
	How prepared were you for today's class? (1–4)	Student participation		Fassinger (1995)	
	Does your instructor answer questions in ways that make it easy for you to understand the material? (y/n)	Teacher credibility Instructor competence		Myers & Bryant (2004)	
	My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class. (y/n)	Instructor character (content expertise)		Myers & Bryant (2004)	
	How knowledgeable do you think your instructor was in today's class? (1–4)	Instructor character (promotion of understanding)		Myers & Bryant (2004)	
	Did the instructor respond to by name today? (y/n)	Instructor caring (responsiveness)		Myers & Bryant (2004)	

Table 3.2

Pilot Study Student Questionnaire

CAT question	CAT response options
How prepared were you for today's class?	Unprepared, prepared, well-prepared
My instructor was knowledgeable about the topic of today's class.	Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree
My instructor was open to questions about today's class.	Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree
Today did your instructor answer questions in ways that made it easy for you to understand the material?	Yes/no
My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class.	Yes/no
My instructor responded to me by name today.	Yes/no
I feel like a real part of this class.	Yes/no
I am treated with as much respect as other students.	Yes/no
I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today.	Yes/no
My instructor frequently engages students in class discussions.	Yes/no
Students support each other in class.	Yes/no
Today my instructor explained concepts in ways that I understood.	Yes/no
When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal or fake my feelings.	Yes/no
I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor.	Yes/no
If necessary, I could or have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor.	Yes/no
If necessary, my instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues.	Yes/no
Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class?	Yes/no

The students took and talked through the survey to share their interpretations of the questions. The students expressed concerns I had not anticipated. Consistently, students struggled with the second question: "My instructor was knowledgeable about the topic of today's class." Most of the students uttered the word, "Weird." One student specifically mentioned that it was too broad and open-ended, and that there was "too much to consider" to answer the question. Another student said, "Of course they know [what] they are talking about—they are the teacher. How would I know if it wasn't correct anyway?" As I had adapted these questions from the CES survey administered at four-year institutions, I wondered if the item was an appropriate question for students in certificate and associate degree programs. The students assumed their instructors had content-level expertise because of the nature of the job; thus, the students considered the question counterintuitive because they thought that unqualified instructors would not work at the college. Rather than rewording this question to clarify, I decided to delete it entirely.

Another surprise for me was regarding the question about emotion work, in which I asked the students if they faked their emotions in class. All the students wanted me to explain this question. They felt it was a weird question and asked why I wanted an answer. I think the literature about this question showed its importance. I proposed to my faculty mentor, Dr. Siler, that I reword the question for more clarity. The original wording was, "When talking to my instructor, I have to fake or conceal my emotions." I suggested changing it to, "When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger." I clarified the language according to the study by Mazer et al. (2014) on deactivating emotions. Three other questions, shown in Table 3.3, received a "not applicable" answer due to the student responses.

Table 3.3

Edits to CAT per Student Feedback

CAT question	CAT response options	Adjustments made to CAT
How prepared were you for today's class?	Unprepared, prepared, well-prepared	
My instructor was knowledgeable about the topic of today's class.	Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree	Deleted question due to student feedback
My instructor was open to questions about today's class.	Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree	
Today did your instructor answer questions in ways that made it easy for you to understand the material?	Yes/no	
My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class.	Yes/no	
My instructor responded to me by name today.	Yes/no/not applicable	Included "not applicable" per student feedback
I feel like a real part of this class.	Yes/no	
I am treated with as much respect as other students.	Yes/no	
I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today.	Yes/no/not applicable	Included "not applicable" per student feedback
My instructor frequently engages students in class discussions.	Yes/no	
Students support each other in class.	Yes/no	
Today my instructor explained concepts in ways that I understood.	Yes/no	

Table 3.3 Continued

CAT question	CAT response options	Adjustments made to CAT
When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal or fake my feelings.	Yes/no	Reworded question: "When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger."
I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor.	Yes/no	
If necessary, I could or have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor.	Yes/no	
If necessary, my instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues.	Yes/no	
Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class?	Yes/no	

The students noted that although the occurrence referenced in the question did not happen in that day's class, it could have occurred in some prior classes or might not have been possible. One student posited the scenario, "What if we had a test today and no one was called on by name, or we did not have a reason to ask questions of our instructor?" It was a perspective I had not considered. I had not initially included a "not applicable" option for fear of receiving neutral responses rather than indications of real-time classroom experiences. However, after taking into account the perspectives of these student volunteers, I decided to proceed in a new direction, and I am thankful for their responses.

After adjusting the online survey software on SurveyMonkey, I retested the survey with five students who had previously taken the CAT. I also created a shorter web link for the survey website through TinyURL so students could quickly type the address into their mobile devices.

The dissertation survey had a customized SurveyMonkey link for ease of student navigation to the link. Students in the pilot study took between 1:22 and 2 minutes to complete the revised survey (see Appendix A). The students who read the survey aloud took between 5 and 6 minutes to complete. The pilot participants who completed the revised survey did not have any questions and afterward reported that it was a straightforward and easy process. They also said that they could easily complete the survey on their mobile phones.

Method of the Study

This AR study had three phases. Phase 1 was to secure formal permission for the research. Next, I recruited the participants (instructors) to administer an anonymous classroom assessment to their students and meet to discuss the instrument, experience, and responses to the real-time data in an inquiry group with other participants. A feature of the SurveyMonkey software is the ability to keep answers anonymous. Phase 2 entailed two rounds of administering the assessment to students and discussing the results with the inquiry group. Phase 3 was an assessment of the participants and a review of the thematic analysis with the inquiry group.

After receiving Antioch University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I invited the participants (instructors) to the inquiry group and conducted an initial meeting to review the study purpose and process. The pilot participant feedback led to only minor revisions to the CAT (see Appendix A for final questions). The second phase was two rounds of an AR cycle that included the CAT administration to students. The instructors and I reviewed the course-level data and then met as an inquiry group to discuss the tool, process, and ways to act on the data. After recording and sharing the initial round of work with the team and making minor adjustments to the CAT, I repeated the research cycle. Phase 3 was a summative instructor evaluation. I then

reviewed and synthesized the data and presented the results to the inquiry group for a final

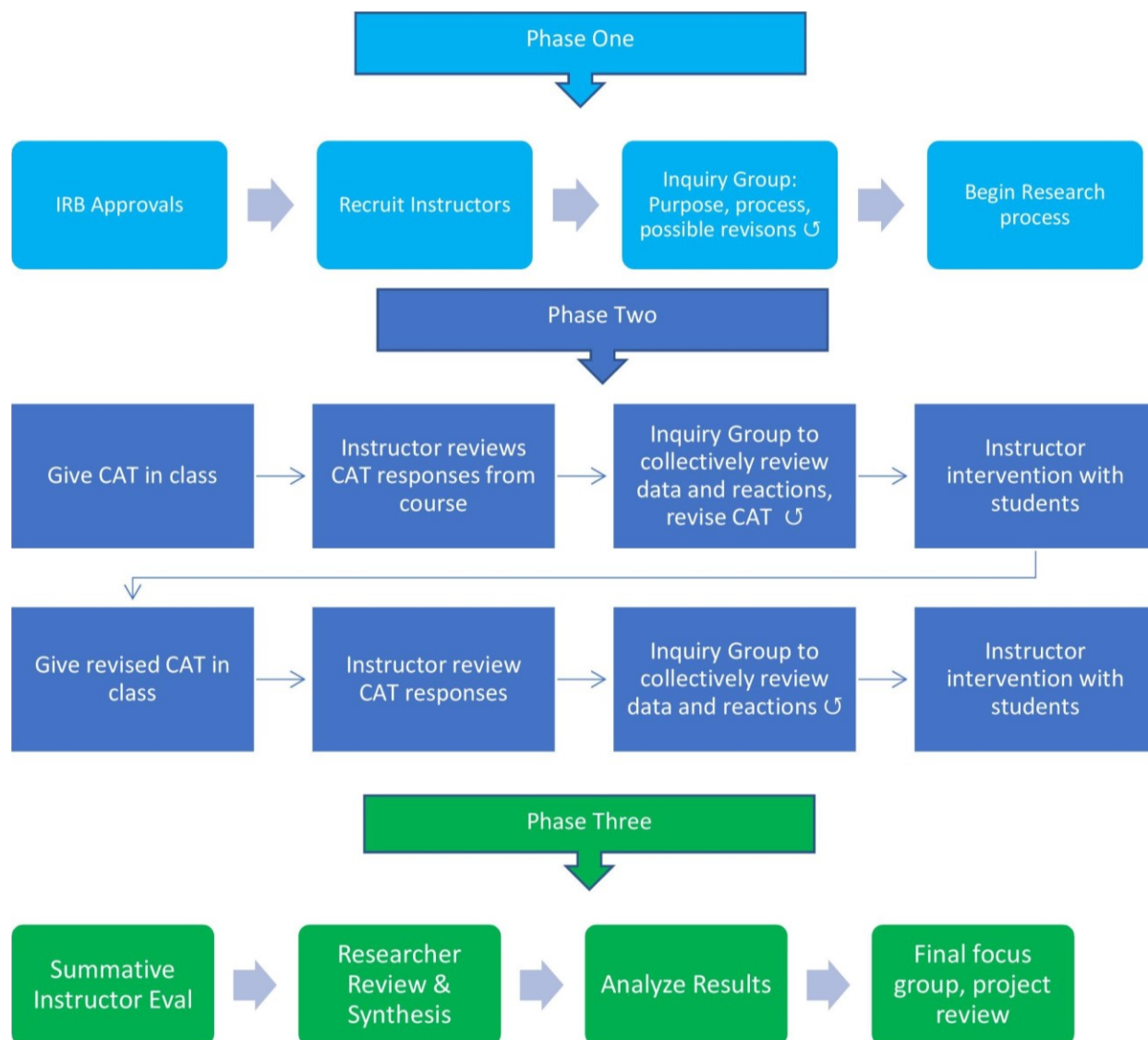reflection. Figure 3.2 shows this model.

Figure 3.2. Visual representation of study design.

Participants

I obtained IRB approval from both Antioch University and the 2-year college for the

research team and the students to take the anonymous assessment. Next, I recruited instructors

via the snowball sampling method. Jarvis (1999) found snowball sampling suitable for a researcher "seeking a small population for in-depth research" (p.123). I used this purposive sampling method because I needed "non-random ways of ensuring that particular categories of cases within a sampling universe are represented in the final sample of a project" (Robinson, 2014, p. 32). First, I contacted instructors who have presented on social-emotional learning and those who have participated in professional teaching and learning development at the college in the past year (see Appendix B for the invitation e-mail). Due to their prior voluntary participation in similar work, the chosen faculty were representative of the target population used to begin the referral chain. I asked participating instructors to suggest other qualified instructors until I had a sufficient pool to invite formally to participate. The snowball sample produced more qualified referrals than a general advertisement due to the highly charged emotions surrounding campus assessments. Instructors might have been more receptive to a personal invitation from their peers than they would have a general call from an administrator. Had there not been an identified target group of instructors to pull from, snowball sampling would have been a problematic approach. Another concern with this sampling approach was the dependence on social networks; in other words, instructors' knowledge and relationships with other instructors could result in a limited pool of respondents. Due to the small size of the inquiry group, however, I did not expect snowball sampling to be a concern, which it was not.

After e-mailing the invitations to instructors (see Appendix B), I convened the first inquiry group. Although the sample was technically a focus group, I renamed it to indicate a collaborative gathering. I aimed for a collection of voices when selecting interested instructors in "an attempt to ensure that the sample includes an array of respondents that, in qualitative terms,

if not rigorous statistical ones, reflect what are thought to be the general characteristics of the population in question" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 155). The ideal inquiry group would have participants of different gender identities, academic disciplines, and full- and part-time status to best show the overall teaching population at the college.

I decided to include part-time faculty because they comprised approximately 70% of the instructors employed at the college. The college has a higher number of part-time instructors than the national average reported in a 2008 JBL Associates paper on national trends, which shows that "contingent faculty members teach nearly 58% of courses offered by public community colleges" (p. 3). Though there is a high number of part-time faculty, many part-time instructors have been teaching at the college for decades.

The campus's rural location has drawn many instructors who live locally and teach on an ongoing basis. Full-time faculty members of the college or nearby high schools teach many of the evening courses. Though not tenured faculty, many part-time instructors have deep ties to the community and the college and deeply care about their students' success. Excluding part-time instructors from the studied population would have resulted in a severely limited participation pool and exclusion of most instructors on campus. I collected and coded the participants' demographics (see Appendix C) to protect their anonymity.

Due to the small number of instructors, I used pseudonyms in addition to participant numbers to ensure confidentiality and enable a more narrative approach to data reporting. I selected the pseudonyms using an online baby name index, Baby Name Voyager. The site Baby Name Voyager has filters for sorting the top baby names in the United States by year of birth and gender. Table 3.4 shows the participants' demographics.

Table 3.4

Overview of Inquiry Group Participants

Participant number	Pseudonym	Age	Hispanic or Latino descent	Ethnicity	Gender	Full or part-time instructor	Years of teaching experience
1	Sandy	35–44	No	Black or African American	Female	Part-time	8
2	Jack	55–64	No	White or Caucasian	Male	Full-time	7
3	Patrick	35–44	No	White or Caucasian	Male	Full-time	6
4	Earl	55–64	Yes	Multiracial	Male	Full-time	15

Overall, I sent invitations to 15 full and part-time instructors. Six instructors declined the invitation, citing a heavy teaching load; four instructors failed to respond. After 2 weeks, I had recruited five instructors; however, one withdrew before the first meeting without notice. The final inquiry group consisted of four instructors teaching a combined five courses at the community college. Courses included two business, one science, one criminal justice, and a career elective.

I set a small target size for the inquiry group (four to six instructors) to promote in-depth conversations. It would have been difficult to incorporate data from a larger group of participants (seven to 12 instructors) and to find a mutually convenient time to meet. A large group might have led to a limited amount of time for participants to speak in-depth about the study. Given the demanding schedules of instructors with a workload of four classes per semester, I found a smaller group of participants preferable. Krueger and Casey (2000) noted that "mini-focus groups with four to six participants are becoming increasingly popular because the smaller

groups are easier to recruit and host and are more comfortable for participants" (p. 67). It is also important to note that this study was an initial inquiry.

Procedures

Using the CAT

I provided each instructor with a unique link to share with students in each course section so each teacher could receive the aggregate data for their courses. Instructors asked their students (ages 18 years and older) to take the 1-minute to 2-minute survey on their cellphones, tablets, or laptops. The survey design did not allow for a paper option or for younger (dual-enrolled) students to participate. As my aim with this CAT was to assess the overall climate anonymously and quickly. Table 3.5 indicates the student demographics from the five courses.

Table 3.5

Overview of Student CAT Respondent Demographics

Baseline characteristic	Number of responses	Percentage of responses (%)
Age		
18–24 years	32	72.73
25–34 years	9	20.45
35–44 years	1	2.27
55–64 years	1	2.27
65+ years	1	2.27
Hispanic or Latino		
Yes	4	9.09
No	40	90.91
Ethnicity		
American Indian or Native Alaskan	1	2.27
Asian or Asian American	4	9.09
Black or African American	2	4.55
White or Caucasian	34	77.27
Another race	3	6.82
Gender		
Female	15	34.09
Male	28	63.64
Prefer not to answer	1	2.27

Use of CAT findings in Inquiry Group

After students completed the survey, I downloaded the results from SurveyMonkey into a spreadsheet and e-mailed the files to the instructors for review. The instructors shared their experiences within the inquiry group at the next meeting. I also compiled a full set of responses and shared the themes as we discussed the results. The inquiry group did not have a structured format but rather an organic approach to reviewing the results to see if the student responses fulfilled our inquiry, and if not, what we needed to change for the second round. We discussed the logistics, as well (e.g., Did the survey work for students? Were you able to read the results?).

Finally, the instructors shared how they intended to report back to the students (e.g., Did the information create a desire to change the course in any way at the next meeting? What was the impact of the real-time data on their teaching practices?). After the first inquiry group meeting, the instructors began a second cycle of administering the CAT.

I obtained permission from all members of the inquiry group to audio-record the meetings. I kept the recordings secure, transcribing them to accurately capture the instructors' words. Additionally, I assigned participant numbers and pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. I loaded all data (transcripts, CAT scale responses, and instructor evaluations; see Appendix D) into Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed-methods software program, for coding and analysis.

Summative Instructor Evaluation

Because an overarching goal of this study was to understand the impact of the CAT and inquiry group on the instructors, I adapted the Kirkpatrick (1996) model to assess the instructors' experiences and learning for the third phase of the study. I included and modified the questions from Jouzitis (2019) for the evaluation, as shown in Table 3.6. Appendix A presents the full survey.

Table 3.6

Summative Instructor Evaluation Items

Level	Participant evaluation question
Level 1: Reaction	How satisfied were you with the overall Inquiry Group (IG) experience? (*extremely, very, moderately, slightly, not at all*)
	The IG was an effective use of my time. (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)
	The IG motivated me to pursue more continuous learnings on topics discussed. (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)
	I would recommend other instructors to participate in a future IG. (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)
	Did the IG design work for you? Please consider pace, delivery, method, location. (*almost always, often, sometimes, seldom, never*)
	Would you recommend a future IG to another group of instructors?
Level 2: Learnings	Please rate your knowledge on the following concepts numerically, with 1 = *no knowledge* and 5 = *above-average knowledge*. • Social-emotional learning • Classroom climate • Student perception of teaching • Concept of belongingness • Antideficit models
	I am using what I've learned from the study in my courses currently. (*almost always, often, sometimes, seldom, never*)
	I will apply the knowledge gained from the IG to future sections of this course. (s*trongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)
Level 3: Behavior	Did anything noticeably hinder your ability to lean during the IG?
	What was the biggest challenge you noticed when applying knowledge from the Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) or IG to your teaching?
Level 4: Results	Being part of the IG positively impacted my teaching. (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)
	Students expressed positive feedback about the adjustments made due to the CAT responses. (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)
	If there are any other sentiments about the study, CAT, or IG you care to share with the researcher, please enter below. If not, thank you for completing this survey.

The Kirkpatrick (1996) model has four criteria for a comprehensive assessment: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. Praslova (2010) stated, "Reaction and learning are considered *internal,* because they focus on what occurs within the training program. Behavioral and results criteria focus on changes that occur outside (and typically after) the program, and are thus seen as *external* criteria" (p. 220). For the study, I used the internal criteria to review the instructors' experiences while engaging the external criteria to focus on the study's impact inside the classroom. Praslova discussed the soundness of this evaluation in the higher education setting:

> Application of the four level model also allows institutions to obtain feedback regarding the effectiveness of their educational efforts that is more specific and differentiated, and thus, from the point of view of systems theory, more useful for organizational change and adjustment. (p. 219)

The CAT model provides feedback to participants, a component often lost in traditional assessments or significantly delayed with the administration of summative SETs.

I conducted this three-phase study to pilot a CAT to capture real-time, student-level data of the social-emotional classroom climate and engage instructors with these data to make changes in subsequent class meetings. At the close of the study, after synthesizing the student and research data, I also administered an assessment to the instructors to understand their experiences.

Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) stated, "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (p. 79). The research was inclusive of the data collected through the

student surveys and transcriptions from the inquiry group, and the process was inductive. Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that inductive analysis is "a process of coding the data *without* trying to fit it into a preexisting coding from or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. In this sense, this form of thematic analysis is data-driven" (p. 83).

Braun and Clarke (2006) and Norwell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017) outlined six phases for researchers to follow to conduct a rigorous thematic analysis study, as shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Phases of Thematic Analysis. Permission to adapt and reprint on behalf of www.tandfonline.com

Phase	Process
1	Familiarizing yourself with your data
2	Generating initial codes
3	Searching for themes
4	Reviewing themes
5	Defining and naming themes
6	Producing the report

Note. Adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006).

Phase 1 was familiarization with the data collected and transcription, with Phase 2 the process of code production. Creswell (2003) described coding as "taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant (called an *in vivo* term)" (p. 192). Norwell et al. (2017) noted that a researcher completes this second phase of analysis when "all the data have been initially coded and collated, and a list of the different codes identified across the data set has been developed" (p. 8). Phase 3 of the analysis entailed the

identification of themes. DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) defined a theme as "an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole" (p. 362). In Phase 4, theme review, I determined the most prevalent themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that "the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures—but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (p. 82).

Coding is a nonlinear, iterative process that will often require revisions. If a theme is not robust enough to warrant a code, a researcher might merge it with other codes. A topic not inclusive of an existing code can point to the need to create a new code. Phase 5 was defining and naming themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase consists of "identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures" (p. 92). Phase 6, the final phase of the analysis was producing a report, which Braun and Clarke (2006) identified as a means to "provide a concise, coherent, logical, on-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell-within and across themes" (p. 93).

Ethical Considerations

For all employees of institutions of higher education, academic freedom is an overarching philosophy relevant to staff, students, and faculty. According to the Association of American Colleges & Universities (2006),

> Academic freedom implies not just *freedom from* constraint but also *freedom for* faculty
> and students to work within a scholarly community to develop the intellectual and

personal qualities required of citizens in a vibrant democracy and participants in a

vigorous economy. (para. 32)

Academic freedom is within the spirit of the collaborative, scholarly community where I

conducted my research and positioned myself. I respected the participants as well as the students

who took the assessments. I submitted two IRB applications to ensure the protection of the

faculty participants' and student respondents' rights and collect all associated consent forms

before research. Participation was voluntary, and any participants who wished to withdraw at any

time were able to do so. I kept the participants' identities confidential, as their work in the

classrooms is their livelihood. As outlined in the study design, I briefed the participants on the

procedures of the study in advance so they could provide informed consent (see Appendix E).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the AR study. The chapter included the results

of the pilot study and the creation of the CAT. I used the CAT to collect student feedback on the

social-emotional climate in the classroom and shared the results with the participants. The

inquiry group members responded to the CAT data, spoke in-depth about their reactions to the

data, offered feedback about the CAT, and discussed the changes they would make in response

to the real-time, course-level data. I conducted a thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data

from the inquiry group. Finally, the participants completed an assessment to gauge their learning

during their time in the inquiry group. Chapter IV presents the findings of this study.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study in three phases. Phase one is the administration of the Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT), initial Inquiry Group (IG) meeting, and a brief discussion of the semester interruption. Phase two was inclusive of the revised administration of student CAT and the second IG meeting. The phase three entailed a review of the overarching themes of the IG and the synthesis of data. The aim of this study was to understand if real-time feedback from students to their instructors could enhance the social-emotional climate in a community college course. The research questions were:

1. In what ways could a formative feedback tool informed by the field of practice and real-time student data enhance the social-emotional classroom environment in community college courses?

2. What parameters might affect the impact of such a formative feedback tool?

At the initial IG meeting, I shared the purpose of the proposed research, reviewed the CAT (see in Table 4.1), laid out the proposed timeline (specific dates and times) for the research, and solicited possible revisions to the CAT.

Table 4.1

First Student CAT Questions and Responses

CAT item	Response choices
7. How prepared were you for today's class?	Underprepared, prepared, well-prepared
8. My instructor was open to questions about today's class.	Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree
9. Today, did your instructor answer questions in ways that made it easy for you to understand the material?	Yes, no
10. My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class.	Yes, no
11. My instructor responded to me by name today.	Yes, no, not applicable
12. I feel like a real part of this class.	Yes, no
13. I am treated with as much respect as other students.	Yes, no
14. I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today.	Yes, no, not applicable
15. My instructor frequently engages students in class discussions.	Yes, no
16. Today my instructor explained concepts in ways that I understood.	Yes, no
17. When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger.	Yes, no
18. Students support each other in class.	Yes, no
19. If necessary, I could have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor.	Yes, no
20. If necessary, my instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues.	Yes, no
21. I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor.	Yes, no
22. Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class?	Yes, no

During the instructor orientation, participants completed a brief survey of instructor knowledge of key terms along with a demographic survey (see Appendix C: Instructor Demographics and Baseline Knowledge Survey). The timelines included the dates of CAT administration in class as well as follow-up IG meetings. There is a common hour at the college with no courses scheduled, which was the ideal time for the full IG to meet.

At the IG kickoff meeting, instructors received a folder that contained participant consent forms (see Appendix E: Instructor Consent Form), a demographic and baseline knowledge survey, a dissertation overview, a hard copy of the CAT, a hard copy personalized web link and QR code for the CAT, and a visual representation of the study design. The group reviewed the CAT and did not have any suggested alterations. I proposed they administer the CAT to their students once that week and that we meet again the following week. The IG agreed and made plans to re-administer the CAT the week after spring break (which was 2 weeks away) and meet again, scheduling a final meeting after data analysis was complete. The group reviewed study guidelines with a particular emphasis on the required student participant age of 18 years or more.

Week 1 Inquiry Group

Of the 47 students who received the first CAT, 45 completed the survey for a 96% completion rate at an average time of 2 minutes and 6 seconds. The instructors received their course-level CAT scores in an Excel spreadsheet sent to them via e-mail before the next meeting. At the start of the IG, at the request of the group from our orientation meeting, I reviewed the key components of the literature that went into the development of the CAT survey: real-time feedback from the human resource management field, instructional communication relating to how the perception of communication impacts the classroom environment, and past and present

work on student belongingness from the sociology literature. All members of the IG also

received definitions from this dissertation's glossary.

Next, I brought up the aggregate data from the first CAT. Table 4.2 presents the mean

scores and percentage distributions for all questions, excluding those related to demographic

data.

Table 4.2

Mean Scores and Percentage Distributions for Student CAT (N = 44)

CAT item	M	SD	Response
7. How prepared were you for today's class? *	2.30	0.59	Underprepared (6.82%) Prepared (56.82%) Well-prepared (36.36%)
8. My instructor was open to questions about today's class. **	3.7	0.46	Strongly disagree (0.00%) Disagree (0.00%) Agree (29.55%) Strongly agree (70.45%)
9. Today, did your instructor answer questions in ways that made it easy for you to understand the material?	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
10. My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
11. My instructor responded to me by name today.	1.45	0.78	Yes (72.73%) No (9.09%) Not applicable (18.18%)
12. I feel like a real part of this class.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
13. I am treated with as much respect as other students.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
14. I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today.	1.09	0.42	Yes (95.45%) No (0.00%) Not applicable (4.55%)
15. My instructor frequently engages students in class discussions.	1.02	0.15	Yes (97.73%) No (2.27%

Table 4.2 Continued

CAT item	M	SD	Response
16. Today my instructor explained concepts in ways that I understood.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
17. When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger.	1.84	0.37	Yes (15.91%) No (84.09%)
18. Students support each other in class.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
19. If necessary, I could have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor.	1.05	0.21	Yes (95.45%) No (4.55%)
20. If necessary, my instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
21. I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor.	1.86	0.34	Yes (13.64%) No (86.36%)
22. Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class?	1.09	0.29	Yes (90.91%) No (9.09%)

Note. *This item's responses are on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (unprepared) to 3 (well-prepared). **This item's responses are on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

The IG expressed interest that although the ages, content areas, and instructors varied, student responses were similar. Students across all five sections responded similarly to Questions 9 ,10, 12, 13, 16, and 20 of the CAT, with no deviation in student response (M = 1.00, SD = 1.00). The questions specific to emotion work (17 and 21), instructor accessibility (22), and student emotional experience (19) were of particular interest to all instructors and sparked in-depth conversation within the IG.

The group considered several ways to address student curiosity. Jack asked, "Should we say I conceal emotions based on personal, noncollege issues, or how much do outside influence affect my learning?" In the end, the group opted to revise Questions 17 and 22. As these items

drove the conversation of the IG, instructors wanted to better understand student experiences

contributing to emotion work in class. The revised response options to the questions appear in

Table 4.3. The IG agreed to administer the revised CAT after the upcoming spring break recess.

Table 4.38

Revised CAT Items

	CAT item	Response choices
Item 17	When talking to my instructor I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger (yes/no).	Added a text box with prompt: "If yes, please share an example of a teacher behavior that caused you to experience the feeling you felt you needed to hide."
Item 22	Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class (yes/no)?	Change answer choices to: • Yes • No, there is no one on campus I can ask. • No, but there is another college professional I can ask. • No but I feel comfortable asking a peer.

Week 1 Inquiry Group Reactions

Instructor 1

Sandy is a full-time employee of the college who has been teaching

part-time for 8 years. Her class, an elective for traditional-aged graduating seniors, was small

with just four students, two of whom volunteered to participate in the CAT. The results of the

first CAT were overwhelmingly positive (see Table 4.2). Sandy mentioned that Question 17

("When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or

anger") led her to reflect on the possible root of the issue for students:

Maybe you're talking about going over a lesson and my own shame or guilt is I didn't do

my homework. Now they're going over something where it's in the syllabi [*sic*], I should

have read the chapter, the lesson, and they're going over it and I have no clue.

This reaction provoked similar questions from the other instructors. There was

overarching desire on behalf of the instructors to understand why students were engaging in

emotion work. Instructors want to assist but also do not want to overstep if the root issue is

personal. Additionally, Sandy worried that if her dean were to view this topic through an

assessment lens, the dean might view students not engaging in emotion work as being the fault of

the instructor. She said, "It's so broad. They could put this blame on you, and it's like this has

nothing to do with me. This is the onus of the student." This entanglement of the personal and

professional was a topic to which the IG returned several times.

Instructor 2

Jack is a full-time criminal justice instructor with 7 years' experience at the college.

Jack's 15 students gave his class high scores on most of the CAT questions in terms of

satisfaction and belonging. One student indicated engagement in emotion work on Question 17.

Another student answered *yes* to Question 21 ("I wish I could better express my true feelings

with my instructor"), leading Jack to wonder why the student felt unable to do so. Jack said his

immediate reaction was, "Wait a minute!" Jack shared that this caught him off guard, as he

assumed he was approachable and other instructors nodded and shared that response to their

data. All but one of Jack's students felt as though they could express their feelings. Jack shared

that day in class, they had been discussing sexual assault, leading the IG to wonder whether the

student conducting emotion work did so because of gender. The IG also addressed whether the

gender makeup of the class (male-to-female ratios) could have impacted the students' need to conduct emotion work. Following a discussion, the group decided that both questions might require revision for the second phase of CAT administration.

Instructor 3

Patrick is a full-time instructor of math and science courses, having been at the college for the past 6 years. Twelve of his students volunteered to take part in the CAT Similar to Sandy and Jack's classes, Patrick's students agreed overall that their experiences were positive and they felt included. For Question 17, 25% of Patrick's students answered *yes* to engaging in emotion work. On Question 19 ("If necessary, I could have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor"), 8.33% of students answered *no*. Question 21 elicited responses from 16.67% of students that they wished they could express their true feelings with their instructor but could not. Similarly, 16.67% of students responded to Question 22 that they did not feel comfortable approaching their instructor outside of class.

Instructor 4

Earl is a full-time instructor in the business department who has been teaching at the college for 15 years. He administered the CAT to two of his marketing sections, and 16 students responded. As with the other instructors, Earl found near-unanimous responses to the first half of the survey, as students felt respected and involved and that their teacher explained content well. In response to Question 17, two students indicated that they were engaging in emotion work. One student answered *no* to Question 19 about instructor accessibility; two students indicated that they could not share their feelings (Question 21) and were not comfortable approaching their instructor (Question 22). Earl seemed to capture the mood of the IG to these series of questions

when he said, "I think a few [of the students] didn't feel comfortable talking about stuff. I feel like I thought I was approachable, but I guess that title of 'professor' sometimes touches people and they feel that you're more than." All instructors seemed to struggle with wanting every student to get the most out of their class, while allowing that might not be possible to get everyone to the same place, given how much individuals bring to the course.

Researcher Reflection

Members of the IG were pleased to see their students respond positively to many aspects of the classroom environment. I did not expect to see such high rates of reported belongingness, teacher communication, and efficacy across every section surveyed. The results were a pleasant surprise, a confirmation of the excellent teaching that occurs at the community colleges where instructors focus on teaching over research. The IG seemed to gravitate at once and in unison to the outlier responses that indicated students did not feel comfortable sharing or approaching their instructors. The IG expressed genuine surprise that some students did not feel they could approach their instructors, as all instructors had assumed their students would be comfortable approaching them outside of class. Upon review of student responses, one instructor admitted not knowing all of his students' names because he had 100 students that semester. He reflected on that after seeing his results and wondered if he could be more mindful to learn names.

Overall, IG members were both surprised and wanting to fix the experience while simultaneously acknowledging that the reasons for the responses could be deeply personal on the part of the student. IG members wondered if instructor gender, students' introversion, or external pressures had influenced the responses. Were students in the gender minority for that section engaging in more emotion work because they felt marginalized? If a student was introverted and

less likely to want to engage in individual, face-to-face interactions, was that an example of emotion work or could it just be personal learning preference? Could a student's external pressures (e.g., transportation, financial insecurity, self-esteem) be the reason for engaging in emotion work rather than something specifically to do with the in-class experience? I appreciated the conversation and honesty as the group worked through some of these topics. Several were surprised at how much they did not know and said the conversation was enlightening. I had felt the same way when I learned about emotion work and could immediately recall times I had concealed my emotion as a student in a class because I was anxious that my opinion was different than the vocal majority. I also remembered concealing my emotions as an instructor to avoid moving from an objective part of the course to a personal response that was not appropriate at the time. Finally, as with the IG members, I was surprised by the identification and study of emotion work in the instructional communication field.

Semester Interrupted

Three days after the initial IG meeting, the college closed temporarily after an employee reported coming into contact with someone infected with the COVID-19 virus. This closure lasted the previously scheduled spring break period and 1 week more, after which the college president announced a transition of all face-to-face classes to remote learning for the remainder of the semester. The additional week was necessary for faculty to reconfigure their in-person courses to a remote delivery format. Remote delivery differed from courses designed to be entirely online, with students and instructors potentially without experience, appropriate training, or technological knowledge for such a transition. The IG instructors noted that they were conscientious about maintaining as much of their course environment as possible while teaching

remotely. Instructors utilized live video conferences and met online during their regularly scheduled class time, something that would not have occurred in a traditional online course.

The external pressures on instructors and students were multifaceted. The state suspended all elementary and secondary schools and daycare centers initially through June and eventually for the remainder of the school year. Not only were students adjusting to new class formats, but they were also operating without child care; some lost their jobs and others still had to work, as they were deemed essential employees by the state. Some students shared devices with younger siblings doing their work online or with spouses or parents working remotely. As a result, the study was delayed to accommodate the new spring schedule and the IG was moved to a virtual setting, and all courses were migrated to remote delivery for the remainder of the semester.

Week 2 Inquiry Group Reflections

I postponed the second IG meeting for a week to align with the new academic calendar. I sought and received permission from the human subject review board to transition the face-to-face IG to a Zoom environment. Although not designed initially online, the courses meeting via Zoom were synchronous and preserved the face-to-face and social-emotional components of the class. These were not courses designed to be online; rather, instructors made efforts to connect with students with whom they had worked with for more than half the semester, cultivating belongingness and connections in a time of unprecedented upheaval. Two participants with prior online teaching experience indicated that this pivot to remote teaching was not at all similar to their traditional online courses. Students with no online course experience struggled with the transition. Instructors reported having students with no online access, limited or no computer access at home (many previously relied on the computer labs on

campus), and difficulty navigating online platforms. These barriers were especially problematic for students attempting to work remotely with their smartphones as their only internet-connected device. The lower student response rate to the second CAT iteration reflected that experience.

Half of the IG had a smoother transition to remote learning than their colleagues. The subject matter had a definite impact on the transition, as predominantly lecture-based classes were able to maintain that environment via video conferencing. The two instructors who taught courses with labs had a more difficult time with the transition, which presented technical hurdles and required more effort from the instructors and the students. The aggregate results from the 30 students who took the revised CAT appear in Table 4.4, although only 27 completed the full CAT and only three answered the demographic questions. The revised CAT had a 90% completion rate and took an average of 1 minute and 54 seconds for students to finish. As with the first CAT, many of the initial questions had similar responses to each other and to students' first round of CAT responses.

Table 4.4

Mean Scores and Percentage Distributions for Revised Student CAT (N = 27)

CAT item	M	SD	Response
7. How prepared were you for today's class?	2.22	0.68	Underprepared (14.81%) Prepared (48.15%) Well-prepared (37.04%)
8. My instructor was open to questions about today's class.	3.63	0.67	Strongly disagree (3.70%) Disagree (0.00%) Agree (25.93%) Strongly agree (70.37%)
9. Today, did your instructor answer questions in ways that made it easy for you to understand the material?	1.07	0.26	Yes (92.59%) No (7.41%)

Continued

Table 4.4 Continued

CAT item	*M*	*SD*	Response
10. My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class.	1.00	0.00	Yes (100.00%) No (0.00%)
11. My instructor responded to me by name today.	1.30	0.66	Yes (81.48%) No (7.41%) Not applicable (11.11%)
12. I feel like a real part of this class.	1.04	0.19	Yes (96.30%) No (3.70%)
13. I am treated with as much respect as other students.	1.04	0.19	Yes (96.30%) No (3.70%)
14. I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today.	1.41	0.78	Yes (77.78%) No (3.70%) Not applicable (18.52%)
15. My instructor frequently engages students in class discussions.	1.11	0.31	Yes (88.89%) No (11.11%)
16. Today my instructor explained concepts in ways that I understood.	1.08	0.27	Yes (92.31%) No (7.69%)
17. When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger.	2.00	0.00	Yes (0.00%) No (100.0%)
18. Students support each other in class.	1.07	0.26	Yes (92.59%) No (7.41%)
19. If necessary, I could have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor.	1.19	0.39	Yes (81.48%) No (18.52%)
20. If necessary, my instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues.	1.04	0.19	Yes (96.30%) No (3.70%)
21. I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor.	1.85	0.36	Yes (14.81%) No (85.19%)
22. Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class?	1.33	0.72	Yes (81.48%) No, there is no one on campus I can ask (3.70%) No, but there is another college professional I can ask (14.81) No, but I feel comfortable asking a peer (0.00%)

Several differences emerged in the responses from the first to the second CAT administration. The IG was especially interested in Question 17, which pertained to emotion work. In the first CAT iteration, at least one student in each course responded to participating in emotion work; no students indicated as such in the second CAT. Table 4.5 presents a comparison of the two aggregate student responses.

Table 4.5

Mean Scores and Percentage Distributions CAT Item 17
(N = 27)

CAT item	*M*	*SD*	Yes	No
When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger.				
Original CAT responses	1.84	0.37	15.91%	84.09%
Revised CAT responses	2.00	0.00	0.00%	100.00%

As no students indicated engagement in emotion work, no respondents shared examples of teachers' behavior that led them to hide the emotions they felt. As such, there was no additional insight into the IG's curiosity on this topic.

Question 19 also drew attention from the IG, as more students (although an overall minority of respondents) indicated an inability to express their feelings about school with their instructor. The comparison of the two aggregate CAT student responses is in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Mean Scores and Percentage Distributions CAT Item 19
(N = 27)

CAT item	*M*	*SD*	Yes	No
If necessary, I could have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor.				
Original CAT responses	1.05	0.21	95.45%	4.55%
Revised CAT responses	1.19	0.39	81.48%	18.52%

Without additional student follow-up, it is difficult to know why *no* responses were higher, but the IG assumed the transition to remote learning might have impacted this item. Several instructors mentioned that students had difficulty with the technological aspects of the course after the move to remote learning. The teaching delivery transition may have been the case with Question 22, as well, as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Mean Scores and Percentage Distributions CAT Item 22

(N = 27)

CAT item	*M*	*SD*	Yes	No	No one[1]	College[2]	Peer[3]
Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class?							
Original CAT responses	1.09	0.29	90.91%	9.09%			
Revised CAT responses	1.33	0.72	81.48%	**	3.70%	14.81%	0.00%

Note. No one[1] = No, there is no one on campus I can ask; College[2] = No, but there is another college professional I can ask; Peer[3] = No, but I feel comfortable asking a peer. *Answer options only available on the Revised CAT. **Answer only available on original CAT

As discussed in the individual instructor overviews, IG participants were relieved when students reported having other professionals on campus with whom to discuss their feelings and emotions about school. It made sense to the IG that some issues might be personal to the student in terms of how comfortable they felt with the instructor. Distressed that one student reported feeling isolated, the group suggested an intervention at the following class be to remind students of all the resources available on campus at no cost. Although the reminder would benefit all students, the IG hoped it would resonate with the one student who needed to hear it the most. Instructors did have questions about how often students received reminders about these sorts of services after orientation and in light of the remote learning shift. Of note is that communication

about such resources should not go to students alone, but to their instructors so they can reinforce the message in class.

Week 2 Student CAT

Instructor 1

Sandy's students responded at the same rate they had before the transition to remote learning. She had a very small class of final-semester students and worked extensively with them over the extended break to be sure they were ready to participate. Asked if the IG's focus on social-emotional learning had impacted her work, she affirmed, "I think 2 weeks before class started, I really wanted to make sure that I was reaching out to students. Because, you know our population; something small could go wrong and that could derail them." Sandy shared hosting a test run with her students over Zoom before their first remote class. She explained:

> I was just trying to warm them up. And also, just to make sure that there's still structure, like, you're still going to hear my voice, whether it's through an e-mail or online or what have you, but also just to keep that consistency and to keep the structure.

Considering whether the remote learning was different from previous online courses she had taught, Sandy stressed the importance of prior face-to-face relationships with students. She explained, "I think this [course is] different because we already have that established relationship. So, they're comfortable, they're familiar, they know my style, they know the personality." The student responses from the second iteration of the CAT reinforced her reflection.

As with the first iteration, the was near unanimity in student responses to the questions regarding belongingness, interpersonal competence, and emotional support. Question 17 was a

rewritten inquiry about emotion work, and this time, neither of Sandy's students reported engagement in emotion work. Question 22 remained the same with additional response options. One of Sandy's students again reported a lack of comfort in approaching her for help outside of class, but having another professional on campus to ask.

Instructor 2

All of Jack's 15 students took the revised CAT. Jack had never taught an online course; therefore, his transition to remote learning was as new for him as it was for his students. Jack used the video functionality provided in the student information system; although it is a synchronous class experience, only four students were visible to the class. When they participated fully, Jack reported, "They put their audio and video on, as I want to mimic the classroom as much as possible. They do like to see each other socially. I think they do like that interaction, particularly where they're kind of locked in" from the COVID-19 stay-at-home order. Student responses to the revised CAT were very similar to the first iteration. As in Sandy's class, none of Jack's students reported engaging in emotion work this time. On Question 22, only one student reported being uncomfortable approaching the instructor. The additional answer fields did yield more information, showing that the one student uncomfortable approaching Jack had another professional at the college to contact.

Instructor 3

Patrick seems to have had the most challenging transition to remote learning. He was teaching a computer program that required a license and a significant amount of computer memory to run, and most of his students utilized the lab at the college for the course. The response rate on the second CAT in his course was much lower, with just five of the original 15

volunteers starting the survey and only two completing it. In addition to hearing from students having difficulty with technology, Patrick noted that his teaching style had changed. He shared,

> It's just difficult for them. And also, it's hard to help them. When I'm helping them in the classroom, I've got myself and a student instructor. . .. We kind of wander around and students raise their hand and we help them as they need help. That kind of instant feedback is gone for them.

Patrick identified remote learning as different from the online-only courses he has taught because of the relationships he built face-to-face with his students, which carried into this new environment. He said,

> I've had a couple of students send me long e-mails, really long e-mails, but most of the students have just kind of—I think they're either introverts and they just keep to themselves about it, but it depends on the student, I guess. The students that came to my office frequently, most of those are the same students that are e-mailing me.

These patterns align with the students' CAT responses. The two respondents agreed that Patrick was not able to explain concepts (Question 16) or answer questions (Question 16). In addition, both said were unable to discuss their feelings (Question 19) or ask questions outside of class (Question 22). From both the instructors' and the students' perspectives, the semester has been challenging.

Instructor 4

Eight of Earl's original 16 students completed the revised CAT. Earl said that some of his students struggled with the transition to remote learning, saying,

My class that I'm doing with marketing, the students, mostly none of them have been online students before. And we're doing simulation work. So, we use a simulator to run cases and stuff. They're managing a company and doing marketing for it, so each week they have to do different things. So, it's been a little challenging for them.

Earl had taught online before, and when asked if this semester was similar or different, he responded,

Yeah, I think it is different. The dynamic is different, too. The students are—some of them are having a harder time logging in and doing the work, so I'm chasing after them to try to get it done. I did like Patrick did, extended the timeline so they didn't have to worry too much about huge deadlines. I still have them, but I'm not enforcing them strongly. But I'm still chasing after them to try to get the stuff done.

Earl has offered a weekly check-in session to help retain the face-to-face component of the course. He shared, "The couple check-ins that I've done, it hasn't been anything to do with the class. It's mostly about how they were doing and what they're doing now." The completed surveys reinforced his reflection.

The student responses remained positive in terms of belonging and learning. As with the other instructors during the second iteration, none of Earl's students reported engaging in emotion work. One student did state that although they were not comfortable approaching Earl about their emotions (Question 19), they had another professional they could speak to at the college (Question 22). Earl reflected on the feedback:

I like the feedback of knowing some of those questions, which we don't really get in the evaluation 'til after—weeks later after our class is over. So that that kind of instant

feedback of seeing how people are reacting, that I think was interesting, and maybe useful also.

Reflections From the Researcher

The second round of research was more difficult than the first due to the COVID-19 disruption. I expected the CAT response rate to be less than the first round, given instructor reports of students' difficulty transitioning to remote learning and withdrawing from courses. What I did not expect was the difficulty in convening the IG. It was difficult to reach the instructors and to find a time to meet virtually. The discussion was not as robust and the conversation kept returning to the remote learning situation. I believe the CAT responses were similarly impacted.

It was surprising to see that no students reported engaging in emotion work in the second iteration of the CAT, as each instructor initially had at least one student report engaging in emotion work on the first CAT. However, the wording of Question 17— "When talking to my instructor, I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger"—was perhaps less applicable, as very few students were able to speak with their instructors in class due to limitations of the virtual platform. The move from face-to-face in the same physical space to face-to-face in a virtual space may have changed the experience just enough to eliminate time for personal reflection in the class, given the challenge of adapting to the new format. I am disappointed the format change prevented the CAT from measuring this phenomenon in the physical space and from testing the additional responses that students could have selected.

Summative Evaluation, Inquiry Group

All members of the group received a baseline knowledge assessment at the IG

orientation, which they completed anonymously to encourage honest reflection. After the IG, an

adapted Kirkpatrick model summative assessment administered via Survey Monkey was a means

to assess instructor experience and learning. Table 4.8 presents a comparison of the baseline

knowledge answers from the orientation with the same question included in the summative

evaluation as Question 6. This table is reflective of Level 2 learning from the Kirkpatrick model.

The full list of survey items is available in Appendix D: Summative Instructor Evaluation.

Table 4.8

Instructor Topic Knowledge (N = 4)

	Baseline assessments				Final assessment			
	Sandy	Jack	Patrick	Earl	Sandy	Jack	Patrick	Earl
Social-emotional learning	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	4
Classroom climate	5	3	2	2	5	3	1	3
Student perception of teaching	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2
Concept of belongness	5	2	3	2	5	2	1	1
Anti-deficit models	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	5

Note. Responses ranked numerically on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing no knowledge and 5 representing above-average knowledge.

The findings in Chapter V include the presentation of these data to the instructors, along with

their responses and reflections. Similar to the students' responses, instructors reported varying

levels of learning resulting from their IG experience.

I adapted the full summative evaluation from the Kirkpatrick (1996) model. As discussed in Chapter III, the questions were a way to assess instructors' reacting, learning, behavior, and results of the IG experience. The aggregate responses to the assessment appear in Table 4.9, except for Question 6, which is in Table 4.8.

Table 4.9

Mean Scores and Percentage Distributions for Summative Instructor Evaluation (N = 4)

Level	Item	*M*	*SD*	Response
Level 1 reaction	How satisfied were you with the overall IG experience?	1.25	0.43	Extremely (75.00) Very (25.00) Moderately (0.00) Slightly (0.00) Not at all (0.00)
	The IG was an effective use of my time.	1.25	0.43	Extremely (75.00) Very (25.00) Moderately (0.00) Slightly (0.00) Not at all (0.00)
	The IG motivated me to pursue more continuous learning on topics discussed	1.75	0.43	Strongly agree (75.00) Agree (25.00) Undecided (0.00) Disagree (0.00) Strongly disagree (0.00)
	I would recommend other instructors to participate in a future IG.	1.50	0.50	Strongly agree (50.00) Agree (50.00) Undecided (0.00) Disagree (0.00) Strongly disagree (0.00)
	Did the IG design work for you? Please consider pace, delivery, method, location, or other factors that could be improved upon.	1.50	0.50	Almost always (50.00) Often (50.00) Sometimes (0.00) Seldom (0.00) Never (0.00)

Tab 4.9 Continued

Level	Item	*M*	*SD*	Response
Level 2: Learnings	I am using what I've learned from the study in my course.	2.00	0.71	Almost always (25.00) Often (50.00) Sometimes (25.00) Seldom (0.00) Never (0.00)
Level 4: Results	Being a part of the IG has positively impacted my teaching.	1.25	0.43	Strongly agree (75.00) Agree (25.00) Undecided (0.00) Disagree (0.00) Strongly disagree (0.00)
	Students expressed positive feedback about adjustments made due to the CAT responses.	2.50	0.50	Strongly agree (0.00) Agree (50.00) Undecided (50.00) Disagree (0.00) Strongly disagree (0.00)

Note. *This item's responses are on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (unprepared) to 3 (well-prepared). **This item's responses are on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*).

Level 3 behaviors were part of the open responses. When asked if anything noticeably promoted or hindered the ability to learn during the IG sessions, two instructors reported COVID-19, one responded *no*, and one wrote it was a "related atmosphere [that] led to easy and welcoming participation." Responses to the inquiry regarding the biggest challenge noticed when applying knowledge from the CAT or IG to teaching indicated "remote learning," no challenges, "looking to apply [knowledge]," and "diversity of student learning styles, emotions, backgrounds, etc." For the final question regarding whether instructors cared to share any other sentiments about the study, CAT, or IG, responses were, "thank you for your patience," "eye opening," "thank you for allowing me to participate," and "I learned to be more aware of student emotions and their impact on learning." The feedback from the group was overwhelmingly

positive, despite the midsemester interruption and the transition to a virtual IG follow-up meeting. This assessment indicated that the real-time feedback to instructors was helpful information to receive during the semester. I was also encouraged to see seasoned instructors considering new topics and becoming excited about learning and addressing the issues in their classrooms.

Overarching Themes Across Inquiry Groups

Thematic analysis was an inductive process that entailed reviewing all data collected as a part of the study to organize and make meaning of the findings. I recorded and then transcribed both IG sessions, subsequently reviewing the transcripts multiple times to familiarize myself with the data. This process was Phase one, as outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) for rigorous thematic analysis. I loaded the transcript into Dedoose for Phase two, which entailed the initial code generation, then grouped these codes into larger, related groups for Phase three. Upon completion of this step, I reviewed the groupings of codes to see which rose to prevalence for the Phase four. The Phase five involved defining and naming the groups as themes.

Initial Coding

The initial coding involved reviewing transcripts, highlighting data, and labeling categories with terms used by the participants whenever possible, as suggested by Creswell (2003). Table 4.10 shows the initial 16 codes along with a brief descriptor and the frequency.

Table 4.10

Initial Coding Scheme

Frequency	Code name	Description
1	Sharing feedback to all students	Share aggregate CAT result to entire class
1	Students feel part of class	Students reported feeling part of class
2	True feelings	Student emotions regarding class
3	Belonging	Students feel they belong in the class
3	Gender	Student gender
3	Student emotion	Students emotions dealing with external issues
3	Student feedback	Impact of CAT data on instructors
3	Student preparedness	Students reported level of class preparedness
3	Too personal	Some student emotional issues too personal to share with instructors
4	Engaging students	Connecting with students around course content
5	Comfort approaching instructor	Student comfort with approaching instructors outside of the classroom
5	Instructor shortcoming	Are CAT responses suggesting teaching improvement necessary?
5	Sparked emotions	Student emotions impacting learning experience
7	Emotion work	Students expending emotional energy to conceal some of their feelings
7	Technical remote learning	Technical issues related to remote learning
9	Transition to remote learning	Teaching and learning issues related to remote learning

After reviewing the excerpts from each code, I condensed several codes. I incorporated Sharing

Feedback With into the Student Feedback code, added Students Real Part of Class to the

Belonging code, and merged Student Emotion into the Sparked Emotions code. Finally, I added

Too Personal to the True Feelings code, as these were very similar. This reduced the code count

from 16 to 12.

Revised Coding

The revised codes appear in Table 4.11, followed by examples of each with excerpts from the transcripts.

Table 4.11

Revised Coding Scheme

Code name	Frequency
True feelings	5
Belonging	4
Emotion work	7
Sparked emotions	5
Student feedback	4
Student preparedness	3
Engaging students	4
Comfort approaching instructor	5
Gender	3
Instructor shortcoming	5
Technical remote learning	7
Transitional remote learning	9

The True Feelings code centered around instructor reaction to CAT Question 19, "If necessary, I could have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor."

Jack: Is that the place for it, our class, though? As we talked before, sometimes they

             share intimate things talking criminal law.

Angela: The way it was worded, it was really about school, my emotions about school.

Belonging coding captured the IG reactions to CAT Questions 12 and 13 having to do with students' sense of belonging and feeling a part of the class.

Angela: I don't think we really need to spend too much time on [it] because you guys

really knocked it out of the park. All of your students felt like they belong. I

think that's pretty intuitive when you teach a community college.

Jack: Do you think part of that is because it's a community college and most of these

kids either knew each other or they're from the next town over?

The gender code emerged from IG conversation as instructors attempted to determine

perspectives that have impacted the way students answered the CAT.

Angela: You can see we had more men than women take this, which I did not expect.

Earl: Yeah, I was thinking it was the opposite.

Responding to speculation about why students may not feel comfortable in class:

Earl: Because it could be, I'm a male instructor and the females don't feel like they

want to approach me, either.

Student feedback codes were related to the power or usefulness of student feedback.

Earl: I like the feedback of knowing some of those questions, which we don't really

get in the evaluation till after—weeks later after our class is over. So that that

kind of instant feedback of seeing how people are reacting, that I think was

interesting, and maybe useful, also.

Patrick: Absolutely. I like the concept of being able to get the feedback before it's too

late to change it for that group.

Regarding using the feedback in class:

Angela: Right. I like the idea of it sort of as an aggregate thing. I think would be great to

sort of share with the students the next day like, "Wow, 75% of you said you

were prepared for class. What's going on with the other 25%?" Like, "What else

is going on? What's in the way of you being prepared for my class? Did you not

expect it? Did you forget?" I think those kinds of pieces are helpful because it's

not—that's what I like about this. It's not just, what did my teacher do? It's

asking what did you do? What did your peers do?

Jack: Yeah.

Sandy: Yeah.

The Student Preparedness code came from conversation related to CAT Question 7 that
asked how prepared students were for the course that day. Regarding student CAT data reflecting
on their level of class preparedness:

Earl: Oh, yeah, I saw that. I would have said that they're not all prepared, but the

majority of them said they were prepared and [only] a few actually said they

weren't.

Angela: I think that's one of the benefits of this, too, is that you're asking your students

to reflect on their own [preparedness]. So just asking that question may spur

them to be more prepared next time.

Earl: Yeah, I think so.

Engaging Student coding stemmed from instructors responding to CAT Question 11 that
asked if instructors had called students by name that day in class:

Earl: I don't do that a lot because it's a lot of students; I still don't know them all. But

the ones that I've had in previous classes, I would remember their names, but

then half of them I don't remember all.

Responding to engaging students leading up to the remote learning transition:

Sandy: I think 2 weeks before class started, I really wanted to make sure that I was reaching out to students. Because you know our population, something small that could go wrong and that could derail them. So, I think 2 weeks before, I was trying to get them engaged with online stuff. I was sending out multiple e-mails, telling them make sure that you respond back within a certain timeline. So, I was already kind of preparing them for the online, the virtual world, like 100%.

The Comfort Approaching Instructors code was in response to instructors discussing Question 19. Several of Earl's students did not feel as though they could approach him:

Earl: I think that one question kind of threw me a little bit because I thought they would feel comfortable talking, but I guess not.

Regarding the revised question on the second CAT:

Angela: So, we added the extra piece here, "Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor," and we gave them some other options: "no," "there's no one," "not this teacher but there's somebody else." We had some folks, the only bucket they fell into beside "yes" was, "yeah, I don't feel comfortable, but there is somebody else that I feel comfortable talking to."

Angela: Only one or two of them said, "no, I don't feel comfortable and there's nobody else I can talk to." About 10% of the students have said "no, but there's somebody else on campus."

The Instructor Shortcoming code also came out of the discussion of instructor approachability. Instructors were surprised by the few students who indicated instructors were not responsible and were pondering the cause of student responses:

Jack: It could be my shortcomings

Jack: So, I'm thinking like, on the one hand, somebody put that as a shortcoming; on the other hand, the exact same class, at the end of the class, a student comes up to me.

Earl: Right. So that was interesting. Overall, they were fine. But I think a few, I guess, didn't feel comfortable talking about stuff. I feel like I thought I was approachable, but I guess that title of Professor sometimes touches people and they feel that you're more than

Sparked Emotions coding was in response to IG discussion of other factors impacting student CAT responses beyond course content:

Sandy: And that may not have anything to do with you, but the subject of material being introduced. So, I feel like that could be something, depending on certain disciplines, where if you do—perfect example, like in your class, depending on what the topic is, you might have sparked up different emotions.

The Emotion Work code was in response to the discussion resulting from CAT Question 17.

Angela: Fifteen percent of the students that took this said they were concealing some of their emotions.

Angela: I'm just wondering, how can we get that number lower? How can you get the

highest number of students feeling like they can be their true self in class?

The Technical Remote Learning code came from the IG conversation reflecting on students' technical difficulties with remote learning:

Patrick: The stuff that's already online is easy; the stuff that wasn't, it depends. For

example, I teach CAD, and if they don't have SolidWorks, they can get access

to it. But if they don't have a computer at home or if they don't have some way

to load SolidWorks on or use it, it makes it really challenging. A lot of the

students were relying on coming into the classroom and using those high-tech

computers because they're faster and they don't crash.

Earl: Yeah, that's a challenge, I think, with lab work. My class that I'm doing with

marketing, the students, mostly none of them have been online students before.

The Transitional Remote Learning code captured the student and instructor challenges associated with the full scope of issues relating to moving to remote teaching and learning midsemester.

Earl: Yeah, I think it is different. The dynamic is different, too. The students

are—some of them are having a harder time logging in and doing the work, so

I'm chasing after them to try to get it done. I did like Patrick did, extended the

timeline so they didn't have to worry too much about huge deadlines. I still have

them, but I'm not enforcing them strongly. But I'm still chasing after them to

try to get the stuff done. In Econ, it's mostly like math, so I'm using my Econ

lab to do that. So, they can go through and do the work and they can redo it several times. But the challenge is trying to get them to focus and do it.

Angela: Because you guys had an in-person relationship with them, are you getting more sort of conversations around what else is going on in their lives versus content?

Earl: Yeah. The couple check-ins that I've done, it hasn't been anything to do with the class. It's mostly about how they were doing and what they're doing now. More personal conversations than actual schoolwork, so it's interesting.

Patrick: Yeah, it might not work well, so it's just difficult for them. And also, it's hard to help them. When I'm helping them in the classroom, I've got myself and a student instructor. . .. We kind of wander around and students raise their hand, and we help them as they need help. That kind of instant feedback is gone for them.

Theme Development

DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) defined a theme as "an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience" (p. 362). I grouped like codes together to form the four themes, as shown in Table 4.12. The fifth phase of analysis involved defining these themes. Each of these four themes indicates the core conversations that took place in the IG.

Table 4.12

Themes and Associated Codes with Frequencies

Theme name	Code name	Code frequency
True feelings	True feelings	5
	Belonging	4
	Emotion work	7
	Sparked emotions	5
Engaging students	Student feedback	4
	Student preparedness	3
	Engaging students	4
Instructor approachability	Comfort approaching instructor	5
	Gender	3
	Instructor shortcoming	5
Remote learning	Technical remote learning	7
	Transition to remote learning	9

The True Feelings theme encompassed codes related to student feelings and their impact on the classroom experience. The codes in this theme are True Feelings, Belonging, Emotion Work, and Sparked Emotions. The four codes that make up this theme had a total frequency count of 21. The Engaging Students theme had three associated codes—Student Feedback, Student Preparedness, and Engaging Students—with a total frequency of 11. The Instructor Approachability theme combined the codes Comfort Approaching Instructor, Gender, and Instructor Shortcoming, with a frequency total of 13. The final theme, Remote Learning, combined Technical Remote Learning and Transitional Remote Learning codes. The True Feelings theme had 16 codes.

Synthesis of Data

Summary of Data Presented to IG

The IG came together to administer a classroom assessment to their community college students and to learn from the results and conversations with the group. The group discussions and summative evaluation indicated that the formative feedback tool provided useful information that enhanced their classroom climate. The main themes were the topics the group discussed the most and about which they had a great deal of curiosity.

Reflections From IG Transcript

Reading, rereading, coding, and exporting excerpts from the transcripts was incredibly helpful in experiencing this study from a more macro perspective. As a member of the IG, it was difficult for me to observe the trends of the conversations in real time. Revisiting the transcripts allowed me to view the full experience of the group rather than just my part. I noticed that the IG mirrored the students in an interesting way. As discussed, the students responded very similarly to many of the items early in their CAT, even though they were taking different courses. The IG did this, as well, as nearly all wanted to discuss the emotion work, student feelings, and instructor approachability responses as a group, which the themes appropriately reflect.

Something that was also surprising for me, in retrospect, was the instructors' desire to better understand why students indicated some hesitation in sharing emotions with them. Instructors were genuinely shocked to learn that some students were holding back in their classes. It was a powerful moment for me to see how invested each of these instructors were in their students beyond the delivery of course content. I think the IG's decision to add the additional question to learn if students had other professionals to turn to at the college gave

valuable feedback to the instructors. Having this knowledge eased a bit of the initial strain on the instructors, and they were able to quickly verbalize that the feedback target might be a student preference and not a negative on the part of the instructor.

Summary

Administering the CAT twice over the semester, in addition to the IG meetings and instructor assessment, provided real-time data that influenced how instructors viewed their roles in the classroom and how their students experienced the course. Across these data, four themes rose to prominence: True Feelings, Engaging Students, Instructor Approachability, and Remote Learning. The codes that make up each of these themes are the smaller units that comprised the study parameters of greatest interest to the IG. Chapter IV presented these data; a full discussion of the findings will be in Chapter V. In addition to aligning this study with previous research, reflections from the data synthesis presented to the IG will appear in the next chapter. There will be a discussion of study limitations and future research possibilities, as well.

Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this action research study was to learn if real-time, actionable feedback from a formative assessment could enhance the social-emotional climate in community college courses. This chapter includes a discussion of the findings from the literature related to student feedback to instructors, instructional communication, and sociology that affect student learning, real-time data collection methods from human resource management, and leadership theory. This chapter presents implications for practice, recommendations for action, and study limitations. A brief summary and reflection from the researcher and the IG conclude Chapter V.

Implications for Leadership and Change

As discussed in Chapter I, both transactional and transformational leadership lenses apply to teaching. Bass and Steidlmeir (1999) posited that the best leaders are both transformational and transactional. Transactional leaders honor contracts, loyalty, and justice, characteristics not incompatible with the same individuals desiring increased intrinsic rewards for a more transformative experience (Bass & Steidlmeir, 1999).

Transformative leaders encourage followers to shape change (Bass & Steidlmeir, 1999). They meet intrinsic needs by empowering and engaging through high-quality connections. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) identified authentic transformational leadership as having four components: "idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration" (p. 181). Transformational leaders engage in individualized consideration through thoughtful and supportive interactions with subordinates (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011). When faculty were engaged in individualized consideration by being

approachable, available, and promoting engagement, as the IG discussed, the instructors provided transformational leadership to their courses. In incorporating real-time classroom feedback, faculty promoted followership among their students.

Followers in a transformational experience are inclined to meet goals not merely for extrinsic rewards but because they share a goal with the leader. Followers and leaders find motivation to achieve their vision together (Northouse, 2013). Deichmann and Stam (2015) noted that when transformational leaders make space for change, they "promote follower confidence in the idea that they can successfully shape that change" (p. 206). When instructors took time to reflect on their profession and performance as teachers, as the IG did throughout the semester, the faculty modeled new ways to process and act on information from their students. By responding to issues raised by students, the teachers showed the learners that their input was valuable, thus encouraging future feedback.

Creating the IG outside of any formal review structures or existing hierarchies at the college also helped to put the instructors in a leadership role in the study. After collecting and analyzing data, the group concluded that the social-emotional components of the class on which they had not previously focused had impacted their students' experiences. Rather than centering entirely on content-area instruction, they took steps to transform their teaching and classrooms by bringing in new information. The results from the IG summative evaluation showed that 25% of group members always used what they learned from the study in their spring semester classes, 50% often did, and 25% sometimes did. Looking ahead to future courses, 50% of the IG strongly agreed and 50% agreed they would apply knowledge from the study. The IG will continue to use what they learned to achieve their long-term goals for their courses, students, and the college.

I observed relevant ties to relational leadership theory in considering the CAT responses, IG meetings, and the importance of the context and perspectives individuals bring together to create social context. Uhl-Bien (2006) defined relational leadership "as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e. evolving social order) and change (e.g. new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies) are constructed and produced" (p. 655). Given the co-authorship of the social processes within an organization, relational leadership theory is applicable on a system rather than an individual level, providing a new view of leadership in action.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) centers on positive attributes rather than student deficits (Cooperrider & Sekera, 2006), as do the members of the IG. Through appreciative inquiry, administrators and faculty can view an issue on a smaller scale where the solutions seem manageable. Basing organizational change on positive questions and the resultant narrative produces a vastly different tone than when focusing on the inadequacies. Austin and Bartunek (2006) noted three important assumptions on which to build appreciative inquiry. Organizations comprise people who interact and co-create their reality, which is a social construct. Every construct has positive components integral to guiding change. Finally, through a focus on the positive rather than the negative, change occurs to increase the favorable components.

This study provided an additional opportunity for students and instructors to acknowledge their views to each other. In the literature review, Warner and Simmons (2015) asserted that when students give feedback to instructors it provided the opportunity for procedural justice for students by including their voices in the learning process. The inclusion of

appreciative inquiry in the framing of this study provided the participants an opportunity to more fully value the perspectives of justice and inclusion in teaching and learning.

Cooperrider and Sekera (2006) shared that "appreciative inquiry practitioners now emphasize giving the process away" (p. 227). Appreciative inquiry is an intervention, similar to the research phase of this study, in which the process of asking the right question inspires the change. In the context of this study, the inquiry is specific to students' most recent classroom experiences rather than a summative look at the semester via a SET. As Quinn (2004) stated, asking the right question makes all the difference:

> Instead of dwelling on everything that was going wrong and asking how it could be fixed, [the right question] changed a problem into a quest. As others were attracted to the quest, a new vision emerged that called for the creativity needed to achieve it. (p. 125)

Efforts are necessary to move students, professors, and the institution away from what they have always done toward what they can become.

Interpretation of the Findings

The IG and the researcher collaborated to study, discuss, and integrate the CAT data to address the research questions:

RQ1: In what ways could a formative feedback tool, informed by the field of practice and real-time student data, enhance the social-emotional classroom environment in community college courses?

RQ2: What parameters might affect the impact of such a formative feedback tool?

This study was a means to engage a small group of instructors as practitioner-researchers to improve their understandings of the social-emotional climate in their classes. The four main

themes with the most prominence in the IG discussions of those data were engaging students, instructor approachability, remote learning, and true feelings (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Themes and Associated Codes

Theme name	Code name
True feelings	True feelings
	Belonging
	Emotion work
	Sparked emotions
Engaging students	Student feedback
	Student preparedness
	Engaging students
Instructor approachability	Comfort approaching instructor
	Gender
	Instructor shortcoming
Remote learning	Technical remote learning
	Transition to remote learning

Although worded in participants' language, a majority of the codes and themes also appear in the literature. Following are detailed descriptions of each theme.

Engaging Students

The engaging students theme is inclusive of three codes: student feedback, student preparedness, and engaging students. The instructors noted that the feedback received during the semester was more helpful than the traditional SETs they obtain after the course has concluded. This assertion supports Narasimhan's (2001) call for soliciting student feedback earlier in the semester. The IG's decision to update the CAT to include additional student-level responses also

supported Narasimhan's belief that students should assess their experiences in the class, such as their participation.

As the IG worked through the CAT responses, they reflected on their teaching as peers, devising scenarios to best understand students' CAT responses. Golding and Adam (2016) noted that instructors with a reflective approach were interested in engaging data to improve their teaching, something I observed at each IG meeting. The instructors focused on their skills as teachers rather than on the instrument or the impact of the results, as they had when discussing traditional SETs. Veeck et al. (2006) heralded the power of a midsemester assessment for soliciting real-time data, which produced developmental rather than critical information from students. Although the CAT was not a formal assessment, the IG appreciated the student feedback. On the summative evaluation, the instructors reported that the IG positively impacted their teaching, with 75% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing.

Beyond using the data to improve as instructors, the IG grappled with the social-emotional components uncovered by the CAT. Members of the IG viewed their work as instructors as primarily content-specific. This is not to say they were unconcerned with the social-emotional components in their class, but it was not something upon which most had reflected prior to the study. HRM researchers Ferris et al. (2008) argued that evaluations should capture the "complex social, emotional, cognitive, political, and relationship context" (p. 146) in organizations to increase awareness of how the individual impact expands to the overall experience. The CAT enables the collection of similar data that could affect the classroom environment.

Initially, several IG members felt as though student emotions were the sole concern of students. Working through the group experiences that occurred in class, the IG understood that I was not necessarily trying to uncover personal student emotions. Rather, I was attempting to understand how students' emotional states may have impacted how they participated, understood, or engaged in class on a given day. The IG began to approach their analysis more holistically. They were more open to putting themselves in the mindsets of their students, in relation to the content, to better engage learners in class. One example came from Jack, who said he would no longer write off the student who appeared to be daydreaming in class. Instead, he planned to initiate a casual conversation with the student to see if everything was all right. Jack wanted to be more open to the possibility that something outside of class was causing the student distress. In this case, Jack planned to speak privately with his students and provide a campus referral for assistance. Jack reflected that his approach would be less as a discipline situation and more of an opportunity to connect and engage with his students.

Instructor Approachability

This theme encompassed the following codes: comfort approaching instructor, gender, and instructor shortcoming. Instructor approachability was similar to the engaging student theme in that both pertain to student emotions related to the course. The theme's wording came from the initial CAT item specific to students' comfort level in approaching their instructor outside of class. In each section, at least one student reported not feeling comfortable contacting the instructor. Although 90% of the students taking the first CAT indicated they could approach their instructor, the IG was concerned with the other 10%. Waldeck (2007) identified instructor accessibility as a component of what students report as a high-quality interaction. The IG agreed

and sought to understand what they could do to be more approachable. Waldeck defined instructor interpersonal competence as "teacher efforts to communicate friendliness, warmth, approachability, and dynamism to students" (p. 423).

The instructors initially considered their shortcomings as teachers in determining how to better connect with their students in and out of class. However, as they continued to discuss the topic, they realized they needed more information. The informal nature of the CAT and the ability to alter it to fit their needs in real-time made it possible to gather the additional data. Wiliam and Leahy (2007) noted that feedback allowed teachers to have better control of their classrooms to best support learning. On the second CAT, fewer students reported being able to approach their instructor, dropping to 81.48% from 90%. This CAT administration occurred during the remote-learning portion of the semester, which could have impacted responses. On the second CAT, the instructor approachability question included additional response options. Of the students who reported being unable to approach their instructor, 14.8% indicated they had another professional at the college whom they could ask; only 3.7% said they had no one to ask on campus. Members of the IG were relieved by this finding; still, they wondered if they had failed this small group of students by not creating an environment inviting enough for students to reach out to them. The additional student responses showed the concern less about the instructors' abilities and more about students' personal preferences. During the final wrap-up meeting, Jack remarked that he still felt bad for the one student with no one to talk to, calling the situation "depressing" and saying, "Collectively, as a college, we are failing them." The IG stressed the need for more work across campus to connect students to the services they needed to be successful.

The IG was also an example of instructors engaging in prosocial motivation as "the desire to expend effort to benefit other people" (Grant, 2008, p. 48). The IG were motivated to get the maximum benefit for their students, and they willingly learned and adapted their teaching in response to new ideas. The IG discussions were voluntary meetings with no extrinsic rewards. They met on their lunch breaks yet were invested in experimenting to better their courses for the students. They continued meeting after the semester moved online due to COVID-19 because they found value in the work. When reviewing the IG experience after the study concluded, Earl shared, "It was kind of fun to actually reflect on everything and have the opportunity. I appreciate it. We were the guinea pigs, but having that sounding board was cool."

Remote Learning

The theme of remote learning emerged given the pandemic that was unforeseen when this study began. Although remote learning was not originally addressed in the literature review, information from HRM regarding technology and feedback became a factor. McBride (2010) discussed the fatigue faculty sometimes report with new initiatives along with a general dislike of disrupting their professional lives to adopt another new technology initiative. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a move to remote instruction due to outside public health mandates rather than college-wide initiatives. Although 75% of the IG had taught online courses before, none of the faculty or students had ever needed to change modalities midsemester. The limited time and resources available for the transition contributed to the IG's discussion. Despite fatigue and disruption, instructors completed the semester remotely, overcoming the challenges as best they could.

As outlined in Chapter IV, the transition was challenging. Seventeen fewer students took the revised CAT. Among those who did, their responses to several items indicated difficulties from the student perspective. For example, 14.81% of respondents reported being unprepared for class as opposed to 6.82% before remote learning. When asked if the instructor explained things in a way the student understood, 92.3% responded in the affirmative, down from 100% during in-person learning. When I asked the IG in our final session to reflect on the technical challenges, Sandy reported that accessing content on the online learning management system was difficult for her students without computers. As a result, the unavailability of a more mobile-friendly platform for synchronous classes presented a real challenge for some students without devices or Internet access.

An experienced teacher, Earl treated the switch to remote learning as if it were a traditional asynchronous online course. His students who had no experience with an online course design did not follow, instead expecting him to log in for lectures during their regularly scheduled course time. Earl shared, "The structure in person was synchronous, but the move to online was not; it was pretty confusing for students." Having no previous online experience much like Jack, Earl did hold lectures synchronously. Within the small IG group, each instructor reported handling the transition differently in each course. It is easy to understand how students enrolled in several classes with multiple teachers had very different experiences.

True Feelings

The true feelings theme encompassed codes related to students' feelings and their impact on their classroom experience; the codes were true feelings, belonging, emotion work, and sparked emotions. True feelings was a term the IG used when trying to put themselves in their

students' places, imagining how the students' emotions impacted their ability to learn in class.

Titsworth et al. (2010) defined emotional support as "the extent to which students perceive that

their instructor is available and able to provide emotional support about topics that are directly

and indirectly related to school" (p. 438). The lack of emotional support, as noted by Titsworth et

al., is not necessarily neutral, there is a negative implication as well; as such, students may

engage in emotion work.

Titsworth et al. (2010) defined emotion work as "the extent to which students must

expend emotional energy and perform emotional labor (i.e. faking or feigning emotions in the

classroom" (p. 138). This concept was a prominent topic in three of the four IG meetings, one

new to all the instructors. On the first CAT, 15.91% of students reported engaging in emotion

work. As the classes are small (from four to 20 students), the instructors were surprised to learn

their students were feigning emotions, and even more stunned to discover that emotion work

behaviors could take effort away from learning, as described in the instructional communication

literature. As Mazer et al. noted, "the presumed link between students' emotions and learning

outcomes has strong support in interdisciplinary literature. In addition to studies in

communication (e.g., Horan et al., 2012), biomedical research (e.g., Grossberg, 2009) has shown

that emotional triggers can influence the strength with which individuals learn information" (p.

164). On the second CAT, no students indicated engaging in emotion work. Given the remote

learning and combination of synchronous and asynchronous course delivery options, the IG

speculated that emotion work may not have been possible. There were few opportunities for

students to interact directly with their instructors.

At the final meeting, I asked the IG to reflect upon whether they had personally engaged in emotion work, either consciously or not, during the remote learning portion of the semester. There was a round of laughter, some quiet reflection, and Sandy's enthusiastic response:

Hell, yeah, I did! I needed to sound hopeful, especially during COVID. I had to put on that armor: Don't worry because the students were afraid. I had students crying on the Zoom calls because the end of the semester was overwhelming. I wanted to be done with this, but they needed to mourn and be emotional. It was a traumatic time for the students and me. I didn't have spring break; I had to flip things, cancel events and field trips. You had to forcefully hold it together for the students so they could believe it [that everything would be okay].

Earl did not realize he was doing emotion work while it was happening; however, upon reflection, he found that he had. He explained, "The Zoom meetings drain you; I just do a half-hour and I'm ready to crash. I'd rather be in the classroom or make it online; this in-between is exhausting." The IG left this exercise with a deeper understanding of emotion work and the toll it can take on students who experience it with frequency.

Sparked emotions had to do more with students responding to something in class based on their own experiences that may have been triggered by the content, conversation, or another occurrence. The IG felt the CAT gave them a way to respond to student feedback at the next class meeting. Richardson (2005) noted that instructors' responses to quick, qualitative assessments could help students see the impact of their feedback on teaching and learning in real-time and further engage them in the course.

In the early conversations, the IG did not address belongingness, as students reported such high rates. On the first CAT, 100% of students across all courses said they felt like a real part of the class and received as much respect as other students. Those numbers fell only slightly on the second CAT, to 96.30% on both items. However, as the IG began to review their course CAT data, the high rates of reported belonging meant the teachers were intuitively creating a positive environment for their students.

Recommendations for Action

This was an exploratory study undertaken to see if a quick check-in with students to collect real-time feedback and attending several meetings with colleagues could provide information that would be of use to busy faculty. The IG responses were positive, as shown in Table 4.9. The CAT provided immediate student feedback, giving instructors useful information to consider their students' experiences in new ways. This study showed how a more reflective and transformational view of classroom assessment with a focus on engagement benefited students and instructors. Table 5.2 presents a summary of the recommended action steps of the study.

Table 5.2

Recommended Action Steps

Proposed action	Purpose	Audience
Convene additional inquiry groups	Confirm results, raise awareness of social-emotional climate impact on learning	Instructors
Support ongoing professional development for instructors	Increase intrinsic and prosocial motivation	Administrators, instructors
Share finding with greater community college sector	Share zero-cost intervention to enhance social-emotional classroom climate	Chief academic officers, instructors
Consider including formative classroom assessments to complement SET data	Provide real-time student feedback to instructors during the semester	Instructors, administrators
Include impact on students' social-emotional health when considering appropriateness for online course delivery	Ensure students are supported academically and emotionally though potentially taxing content	Instructors, administrators

The second benefit was that the IG meetings gave teachers time to reflect on their collaboration with colleagues. They knew each other after working at the same institution for years; however, they served in different departments and divisions and saw each other only occasionally, in passing or on committees. The interconnected work of instructors across the college led to stronger collegial relationships, which is one key to genuinely changing society: The more individuals know one another, the more likely they are to consider the implications of their work on others. Building alliances allows individuals to engage in more dialectical work, as Burke (2011) recommended, because "the more units within the organization depend on one another for accomplishing the organization's mission and its goals, the more tightly coupled the system" (p. 148).

Although IG instructors taught different courses, they had the same students, which created common ground and a shared investment in learning to best support the students. With nearly nonstop daily schedules, all instructors identified, either in person or on the summative evaluation, the value of having time set aside to reflect for their own purposes and development, rather than for tenure and promotion. As Richardson (2005) proposed, when instructors could view student feedback as a more holistic process separate from formal summative feedback that could impact their employment, they were more open to learning how to improve their teaching.

An additional IG led by faculty and comprised of instructors from different disciplines could extend the benefits of this study. The new learning strengthened relationships between the IG members; having time to reflect on their work may energize a new set of instructors. If so, it could confirm the exploratory study, as well. Instructors could also discuss this work in annual evaluations with their deans to promote the benefits of this no-cost professional development opportunity. In addition to focusing on the importance of student engagement and instructor approachability and understanding how student emotions impact courses, the IG gathered positive data on their students' high rates of belongingness and confirmation of teacher efficacy. These are essential and positive accomplishments they may wish to highlight in their professional year-end reflections.

I would suggest that this study could be scaled up at the institution; I would encourage that work to be done slowly and be faculty led. The deep learning occurred through the CAT data during the conversations with the instructors in the IG. The casual moments leading up to and following our official IG sessions were essential in creating a relaxed, welcoming, and safe space for the conversations. I cannot imagine individuals expressing concerns about their teaching

effectiveness with others who were not fully engaging in the conversations. The small group and reflective process of the IG were essential to this study. Deploying the CAT without that support may not be as impactful for future studies.

This study may also be of interest to the academic affairs leadership team. A zero-cost professional development opportunity that requires a minimal investment of instructor time could be extremely effective and appropriate in the semesters immediately following an international pandemic. For the foreseeable future, schools will scrutinize budgets, discourage travel, and hold virtual conferences. However, professional development is still necessary and, as members of the IG group shared, perhaps more now than in prior years. Even if a second wave of COVID-19 occurs in the fall, this study showed that the IG can connect, learn, and thrive via Zoom. Instructors engaged in emotion work expressed exhaustion, but made connecting with the IG a priority, which they perceived as a respite and something they gladly anticipated.

Additionally, as instructors and administrators collaborate to determine which courses easily shift to online environments while waiting for a COVID-19 vaccine, Jack made a well-considered observation. He mentioned that criminal justice courses often involve challenging conversations that could trigger emotional responses from students, given their experiences with the subject matter. Jack worried that without the personal connections and relationships developed in class (student-student and student-instructor), students might not have a way to process the emotions if taking the course remotely. Distance learning could thus become an emotionally damaging situation for vulnerable students; as such, deciding on the appropriate course delivery modality should include consideration for the emotional toll of the curriculum as well as the pedagogy. As Bailey and Garner (2010) noted, instructors "are aware of a conflict

between their conceptions of the purpose of feedback, their pedagogical intentions and the requirements of the system" (p. 195). As may be the case, where there is tension, there is also opportunity.

Though COVID-19 was framed as a disruption in this study, it could also be viewed as an opportunity for strengthened connections and instructor support. Instructors recognized moments when they had engaged in emotion work and the physical and emotional drain that resulted. By increasing their awareness of emotion work the instructors found relief by coming together, reflecting, and working to reenergize as a small group via Zoom. Instructors and administrators could benefit from creating short, intentional opportunities for students and staff (separately or together according to course specific needs) to re-energize and decrease the need to engage in emotion work. The less time spent engaging in emotion work translates into more time focused on course content.

The findings of this study could benefit chief academic officers at other community colleges or schools without centers for teaching and learning. Specifically, faculty should know to provide frequent and clear feedback to students in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits to teaching and learning. As Fitzgerald et al. (2012) observed, "Engagement projects need to be viewed less as discrete, short-term efforts that function alongside the core work of the academy and more as mechanisms for making engagement an essential vehicle to accomplish higher education's most important goals" (p. 23). I could extend the reach of these findings by providing a brief article or workshop presentation to the community college community or discipline-specific associations.

Recommendations for Further Study

       The study was a means to measure the classroom social-emotional climate of face-to-face courses. The COVID-19 interruption and transition to concluding the semester remotely left the IG with more questions than anticipated. It was not known whether the revised CAT would have captured specific examples of what led students to engage in in-class emotion work had they met face to face. It would be interesting to see if replicating this study at the college with the return of on-campus courses would show continued high rates of student belongingness. If so, it might not be necessary to include those CAT items going forward. Perhaps another researcher could focus more on the CAT items of instructor approachability, student engagement, and student emotions. Additionally, replicating the study at the same college could show how focusing on and actively soliciting student feedback on social-emotional climate might impact instructors' work outside the classroom (e.g., curriculum committee, governance, program reviews, hiring committees) as well as student satisfaction. When a critical mass of people sees things in a new and positive light, others are willing to join and innovate, better facilitating change (Quinn, 2004). As resistance decreases, the opportunity for innovation increases, as does the likelihood that even those without the title of "leader" will support the shared vision.

       Finally, given how much time the IG spent speculating on why students answered as they had, it might be interesting to convene a focus group of student volunteers to answer some of the IG's questions. Even without the instructors in attendance, a focus group would allow a researcher to capture data and report findings in the aggregate to maintain student anonymity. Although faculty discussions did return to items of interest with their students, I was more

focused on instructor feedback and did not develop a formal feedback loop for the students. A student-teacher focus group could help to facilitate such a feedback loop.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study, many of them addressed in Chapter I. This qualitative study involved a small number of student CAT respondents and an intentionally small group of instructors. As such, the results are not generalizable, but they may be transferable. As also predicted, the CAT student responses left the IG feeling as though they had failed some of their students. One CAT respondent indicated being unable to approach the instructor and having no one else at the college to contact. Had this not been an anonymous CAT, the instructor would have been able to reach out directly to the student to offer assistance. The IG worked through this and suggested the instructor close the following class with a reminder of being available for all students, sharing information about counseling and advising contacts, as well.

The online-only CAT survey modality was a predicted limitation because students without smartphones or tablets would not be able to take the assessment. This form of delivery did not end up being an issue for any of the students in these courses, as they all had some sort of Internet device. There was, however, a bit of a learning curve for some who had not previously used a QR reader, as was necessary to access the online CAT. The teachers reported that the students helped each other and had enjoyed the process immensely.

The final limitation was specific to course modality. I designed this study for use in courses that met face to face to assess the social-emotional climate in the physical classroom, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed that entirely. The IG and I decided to proceed with the study even though the semester moved online because instructors had already developed relationships

with their students before the transition. As the instructors reported, the remote classes were not akin to any online course they had ever taught. My original exemption of online courses from this study and in potential future studies still applies, with a possible exception for online courses offered synchronously in which all students can interact in real-time with each other and the instructor. An asynchronous class would not have opportunities for the interactions assessed by the CAT.

Researcher Reflection

Participating in this action research study was a challenging and exciting experience. Initially, I was surprised at how difficult it was to recruit participants. As a former employee, I worked closely with many of the instructors who expressed interest in my research. However, once I was through that phase and reflected on the experience in light of my prior research, I should not have been surprised by the recruitment challenge. The community college sector, as documented, is resource-poor, and faculty responsibilities on top of their already-high teaching load are much greater than at research universities. These conditions were precisely why I wanted to conduct my study at a community college. According to the Community College Research Center at Columbia College (n.d.), "44% of [U.S.] undergraduates in the 2017–18 academic year were enrolled at community colleges" (p.1, para. 7). Community colleges serve a high number of students with a focus on teaching, having limited opportunities to participate in research or professional development. It was incredibly moving to read the summative IG evaluation in which the instructors indicated the IG was time well spent and that they would continue to make changes to better support the social-emotional climate in their classes. If I were

to repeat the study, I would certainly enlist the voices of prior participants to assist in instructor recruitment.

As I moved through the phases of the study, I was confident in the selection of action research for the methodology. I enjoyed being part of the conversations about student data while also serving individually as the researcher. If I had chosen another methodology that required me to remain objective or adhere to a prescribed script, the conversations would likely not have been as rich or rewarding for the IG. The casual moments leading up to and following our official IG sessions were essential in creating a relaxed, welcoming, and safe space for the conversations. I cannot imagine individuals expressing concerns about not being a good enough teacher (their primary way to earn a living) to someone who was not fully engaging in the conversation and extending herself in similar ways.

In Chapter IV, I briefly reflected on my surprise at how little time the IG instructors spent on the CAT items specific to belonging and interpersonal confidence. Again, in hindsight, I should have known better. As community college instructors primarily teach (as opposed to focusing on research) and are responsible for at least eight courses per academic year, they are very good at their jobs. They have small classes and teach students of all ages, from those still enrolled in high school through retired citizens. Community college instructors have developed skills to engage, communicate, and create community in their courses. If I can replicate this study in the future, I may remove several of those CAT items and include more that focus on the main themes of engaging students, instructor approachability, remote learning, and true feelings.

I had not anticipated being a former employee of the college when conducting this study. However, I think my not having an official capacity at the institution facilitated more open

conversations within the IG. Teachers being open enough to acknowledge that they did not know all their students' names or perhaps did not handle a situation as expertly as they would have liked took courage. My preparations for the meetings were borderline obsessive. I wanted to have every handout we might need as well as consistently create a safe and confidential space. Looking back, I see that effort was well-placed. I think we cocreated a space that allowed for learning to occur. I also worked hard to be sure the IG felt my appreciation for their participation and knew their insights had value, not only to their classes but to the college and potentially to other educators.

I undertook this study because my work as an administrator frequently put me in touch with students brought to my attention when they were experiencing some sort of difficulty. I found myself often reacting rather than being proactive with students before they required a formal intervention. But as I did not work directly with students, I was without an avenue to connect with them early in their academic journeys. Faculty do have that opportunity, as they see students two or three times per week. I have always considered faculty to be a college's number one retention tool, although not all instructors see themselves as part of the retention team. I thought that by centering on faculty in this study, I could create an opportunity for instructors to view themselves as more than content area experts. The summative evaluations of the IG showed that this perception did emerge. The teachers came to see their students more holistically, reminded that students' experiences in and out of class can and do impact perceptions of their instructors and their ability to master concepts in class.

This partnership centered around the student experience showed it is possible to alleviate the occasional tension between administrators and instructors. We were all excited to learn and

work together. We worked outside of the formal hierarchies of department chairs, deans, unions, or the provost's office. We came together to investigate, share, and improve for our students. CAT administration took under 4 minutes of class time. In one of the most stressful semesters any of the IG could recall in their careers as educators, we found time to engage, reflect, and energize as researcher-practitioners. We showed that a bit of attention, some new information, and a safe space to discuss with colleagues was time well spent for veteran instructors. Energizing and engaging established members of the campus community has the potential to support emergent leadership and change, something incredibly valuable at a time when there are so many unknowns and challenges facing higher education.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Initial CAT Survey

Dear Student,

This is a survey about to better understand if real-time feedback from students to instructors. This survey will give you an opportunity to increase self-awareness by reflecting on the course and sharing those reflections anonymously with your instructor.

Your responses will help the researchers to better understand the social and emotional components of a course that are created by students and their instructors. This study is intended to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the non-academic components of a class that could be adjusted if brought to the attention of the instructor during the course of a semester.

There are minimal, if any, risks from participating. Your identity will be anonymous. You will not be asked for your name and all demographic data being collected will be reported as aggregated information. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses to any reports of these data. The survey will take approximately two minutes to complete.

This survey is part of my dissertation research at Antioch University in the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program. The information may be used for future research without additional consent.

Your participation is voluntary and you may elect to discontinue your participation at any time. If you have any questions about the survey or the research study, please contact me at Angela Quitadamo, at aquitadamo@antioch.edu.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Antioch University and by the Mount Wachusett Community College IRB committee. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact If you have any ethical concerns about this study, please contact Lisa Kreeger, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Antioch University Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Email: lkreeger@antioch.edu.

I have read and understood the above information. After clicking yes below and then answering "Yes" continue to survey, I am indicating that I have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study.

Thank you for your participation!

1. Continue to survey

◯ Yes

◯ No

2. Are you age 18 or older?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Classroom Observations in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study Investigating the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback to Instructors

Dear Student,

This is a survey about to better understand if real-time feedback from students to instructors. This survey will give you an opportunity to increase self-awareness by reflecting on the course and sharing those reflections anonymously with your instructor.

Your responses will help the researchers to better understand the social and emotional components of a course that are created by students and their instructors. This study is intended to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the non-academic components of a class that could be adjusted if brought to the attention of the instructor during the course of a semester.

There are minimal, if any, risks from participating. Your identity will be anonymous. You will not be asked for your name and all demographic data being collected will be reported as aggregated information. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses to any reports of these data. The survey will take approximately two minutes to complete.

This survey is part of my dissertation research at Antioch University in the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program. The information may be used for future research without additional consent.

Your participation is voluntary and you may elect to discontinue your participation at any time. If you have any questions about the survey or the research study, please contact me at Angela Quitadamo, at aquitadamo@antioch.edu.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Antioch University and by the Mount Wachusett Community College IRB committee. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact If you have any ethical concerns about this study, please contact Lisa Kreeger, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Antioch University Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Email: lkreeger@antioch.edu.

I have read and understood the above information. After clicking yes below and then answering "Yes" continue to survey, I am indicating that I have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study.

Thank you for your participation!

1. Continue to survey

◯ Yes

◯ No

2. Are you age 18 or older?

◯ Yes

◯ No

1

3. What is your age?

◯ 18-24

◯ 35-44

◯ 55-64

◯ 65+

4. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?

◯ Yes, Hispanic or Latino

◯ No, not Hispanic or Latino

5. How would you describe yourself?

◯ American Indian or Alaska Native   ◯ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

◯ Asian or Asian American   ◯ White or Caucasian

◯ Black or African American   ◯ Another race

6. To which gender identity do you most identify?

◯ Woman   ◯ Non-binary/ non-conforming

◯ Man   ◯ Prefer not to respond

◯ Transgender

Classroom Observations in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study Investigating the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback to Instructors

Please select one answer for each question

7. How prepared were you for today's class?

Unprepared	Prepared	Well-prepared
◯	◯	◯

8. My instructor was open to questions about today's class.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
◯	◯	◯	◯

9. Today did your instructor answer questions in ways that made it easy for you to understand the material?

( ) Yes

( ) No

10. My instructor speaks with enthusiasm in class

( ) Yes

( ) No

11. My instructor responded to me by name today

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Not Applicable

12. I feel like a real part of this class

( ) Yes

( ) No

13. I am treated with as much respect as other students

( ) Yes

( ) No

14. I had the opportunity to interact with other students in class today

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Not Applicable

15. My instructor frequently engages students in class discussions

( ) Yes

( ) No

16. Today my instructor explained concepts in ways that I understood

( ) Yes

( ) No

17. When talking to my instructor I have to conceal emotions such as shame, boredom, anxiety, or anger

○ Yes

○ No

18. Students support each other in class

○ Yes

○ No

19. If necessary, I could or have discussed my feelings and emotions about school with my instructor

○ Yes

○ No

20. If necessary, my instructor is willing to help me make decisions about academic issues

○ Yes

○ No

21. I wish I could better express my true feelings with my instructor

○ Yes

○ No

22. Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor with questions outside of class

○ Yes

○ No

lassroom Observations in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study vestigating the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback to Instructors

Appendix B: Participant (Instructor) Study Invitation E-mail

Social-Emotional Climate in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study on
the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback on Instructors
by
Angela E. Quitadamo

E-mail Invitation to Participants

Dear [enter instructor name]

My name is Angela Quitadamo, and I am a doctoral candidate in Antioch University's
Leadership and Change program. I am about to conduct a study to explore if instructors can use
real-time feedback from students to enhance the social-emotional climate in the classroom. I am
requesting your participation in the doctoral research study that I am conducting. The purpose of
this study is to understand the social-emotional components of a course co-created by students
and their instructor and to relay that information directly to the instructor. This study will be a
means of generating a comprehensive understanding of the nonacademic components of a class
that instructors can adjust if brought to their attention during a semester instead of waiting for the
end-of-semester course evaluations.

To keep the researcher and instructors in a feedback loop, I have selected action research (AR) as
the methodology. AR provides the researcher and the participants the opportunity to engage the
research and adjust throughout the study. The local focus of the research requires the use of data
to inform the process in real-time. Reflection on behalf of the participants is also a key reason for
the selection of AR. By participating, you will help to inform and shape this study.

I will ask the instructor participants of this study to participate in the following process:

    a. Provide demographic data.

    b. Participate in four inquiry group sessions (a half-hour orientation to the study
       followed by three 1-hour sessions) with the PI and other participating instructors on
       the [college] campus during the common hour in the spring 2020 semester.

    c. Administer a 2- to 3-minute online (smartphone) survey to students in one of your
       classes at approximately Week 4 and 6.

    d. Consent to the recording of inquiry group sessions.

    e. Complete a brief summative evaluation at the close of the study.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study
is completely anonymous. I will deidentify all information so it cannot be connected back to you,
replacing your name with a pseudonym in the write-up of this study. Only I will have access to

the list that correlates your name to the pseudonym. If you would like to participate or learn more about the study, please respond to this e-mail and I will contact you to schedule our first meeting. Additionally, should you know of other instructors (full-time or part-time) who may be interested, please share this e-mail or send me their contact information at xxx.

Thank you and best regards,

Angela

Appendix C: Instructor Demographics and Baseline Knowledge Survey

Instructor demographics and baseline knowledge

1. What is your age?

○ 18-24

○ 35-44

○ 55-64

○ 65+

2. Are you of Hispanic or Latino descent?

○ Yes

○ No

3. How would you describe yourself? Choose all that apply.

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native   ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Asian or Asian American   ☐ White or Caucasian

☐ Black or African American   ☐ Another race

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

4. To which gender identity do you most identify?

○ Woman   ○ Non-binary/ non-conforming

○ Man   ○ Prefer not to respond

○ Transgender

5. Are you a full-time or part-time instructor at the college?

○ Full-time instructor

○ Part-time instructor

6. How many years have you been teaching community college students?

[   ]

7. Please rank your knowledge of the following concepts numerically, with 1 representing no knowledge and 5 representing above-average knowledge.

Social-emotional learning	
Classroom climate	
Student perception of teaching	
Concept of belongingness	
Anti-deficit models	

Appendix D: Summative Instructor Evaluation

Summative Instructor Evaluation

1. How satisfied were you with the overall Inquiry Group (IG) experience?

Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
○	○	○	○	○

2. The IG was an effective use of my time.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

3. The IG motivated me to pursue more continuous learning on topics discussed.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

4. I would recommend other instructors to participate in a future IG

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

5. Did the IG design work for you? Please consider pace, delivery, method, location or other factors that could be improved upon

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
○	○	○	○	○

Specific factors

[   ]

6. Please rank your knowledge of the following concepts numerically, with 1 representing no knowledge and 5 representing above-average knowledge.

Social-emotional learning	[ ]
Classroom Climate	[ ]
Student perception of teaching	[ ]
Concept of belongingness	[ ]
Anti-deficit models	[ ]

7. I am using what I've learned from the study in my courses currently.

Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
○	○	○	○	○

8. I will apply the knowledge gained from the IG to future sections of this course.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

9. Did anything noticeably promote or hinder your ability to learn during the IG sessions?

[   ]

10. What was the biggest challenge you noticed when applying knowledge from the Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) or IG to your teaching?

[   ]

11. Being a part of the IG has positively impacted my teaching.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

12. Students expressed positive feedback about adjustments made due to the CAT responses.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

13. If there are any other sentiments about the study, CAT, or IG you care to share with the researcher please enter below. If not, thank you for completing this survey.

[   ]

Appendix E: Instructor Consent Form

Social-Emotional Climate in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study on the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback on Instructors
by
Angela E. Quitadamo

Participant Consent Form

Antioch University

Leadership and Change PhD

Project Title: Classroom Climate in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study Investigating the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback to Instructors
Primary Investigator: Angela E. Quitadamo
Dissertation Chair: Mitchell Kusy, PhD

You will receive a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.

Introduction: My name is Angela Quitadamo, and I am a PhD candidate in the Graduate School of Leadership and Change at Antioch University. As part of this degree, I am conducting a study to understand the impact of students' real-time feedback on instructors and hope to partner with instructors at the college to conduct this study.

Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand the social-emotional components of a course co-created by students and their instructor and relay that information directly to the instructor. This study will be the means of generating a comprehensive understanding of the nonacademic components of a class that instructors could adjust if brought to their attention during the course of a semester instead of waiting for the end-of-semester course evaluation.

Informed Consent for Summative Instructor Evaluation

Thank you again for your interest and willingness to participate. I am inviting you to participate in this research because you are a community college instructor who has volunteered to administer this survey in class and discuss the results with me and other participating faculty at the college. This informed consent is for participants of the study *"Social-Emotional Climate in the Community College Classroom: An Action Research Study on the Impact of Real-Time Student Feedback on Instructors."*

Below, I have provided you with additional information about your participation, what to expect, and an opportunity to consent to participation in this study. You may speak with anyone about this research at any time. If you have questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to ask me to clarify.

1. **Voluntary Participation**: Participation in this study is 100% voluntary.
2. **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**: I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without being penalized. I also understand that the investigator may drop me from the study at any time.
3. **Recorded Interview**: As a participant of this study, I will participate in the following process:
   a. Participate in four inquiry group sessions (a half-hour orientation to the study and three 1-hour sessions) with the primary investigator and other participating instructors on the [community college] campus during the common hour in the Spring 2020 semester.
   b. Consent to the recording of the inquiry group sessions
   c. Complete a brief summative evaluation at the close of the study.
4. **Benefits/Reimbursement**: I understand that this project is of a research nature and that there will be no monetary incentive or other financial benefits for participating in this research. However, the potential benefits of participation could include:
   a. *Direct benefit to me*: Increased self-awareness and the opportunity to reflect on the course and share students' anonymous reflections.
   b. *Benefits to others*: The study may be the potential means of unlocking the complexity of the non-content related components with an impact on the social-emotional climate within your classroom.
5. **Risks**: No study is completely risk-free. However, the primary investigator, Angela Quitadamo, does not anticipate any harm or distress during or after the study.
6. **Confidentiality**: I will deidentify all information so that it cannot be connected back to you, and I will replace your name with pseudonyms in the write-up of this study. Only I will have access to the list that correlates your name to the pseudonym. I will keep this list and audio recordings (see 3. above) of the inquiry group sessions in a secure location. I will destroy all audio recordings no later than August 2020. I cannot promise confidentiality because of the group process. However, I will ask participants to keep the study conversations confidential.
7. **Limits of Privacy/Confidentiality**: I will keep private everything you share during the data collection process. However, there are times when cannot keep things private or confidential. I cannot keep things private or confidential if:
   a. A child or vulnerable adult has been abused.
   b. A person plans to hurt himself or herself, such as by committing suicide.
   c. A person plans to hurt someone else.
   There are laws that require professionals to act if they consider a person at risk for harm or who is self-harming or harming another, or if a child or adult is being abused. In addition, there are guidelines that researchers must follow to make sure all people are treated with respect and kept safe. In most states, there is a government agency that must be told if someone is being abused or plans to self-harm or harm another person. Please ask any questions about this item before agreeing to participate. It is important that you do not feel betrayed if the researcher cannot keep certain things private.

8. **Brief Demographic Survey**: Attached to the informed consent form is a brief demographic survey. I will use this information solely for the study to achieve an accurate representation of the participating instructors.
9. **Future Publication**: I reserve the right to include any results of this study in future scholarly presentations and/or publications. I will deidentify all information before publication.
10. **Whom to Contact**: Please do not hesitate to ask questions at any time during the course of our interaction. If you have questions later, you can contact me at xxx.
11. **Ethical Concerns**: If you have any ethical concerns about this study, please contact Lisa Kreeger, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Antioch University PhD in Leadership and Change, via e-mail at xxx.

The proposal for this study has undergone review. I have received approval to proceed by the Antioch University and the Community College International Review Boards. These committees provide guidance and oversight to ensure the protection of the research participants. If you wish to find out more about the International Review Boards, please contact Lisa Kreeger, PhD.

DO YOU WISH TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

I have read the information regarding this study. I received the opportunity to ask questions, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and to let the researcher audio-record me for the study.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date _____

      Day/month/year

DO YOU WISH TO BE AUDIOTAPED IN THIS STUDY?

I voluntarily agree to let the researcher audio-record me for this study. I agree to allow the use of my recordings as described in this form.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date _____

      Day/month/year

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RESEARCHER:

I confirm that the participant received the opportunity to ask questions about the study and that I have answered all the participants' questions correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that I have not coerced the individual into consenting and that the individual has freely and voluntarily given consent to participate.

The participant will receive a copy of this informed consent form.

Print Name of Researcher: **Angela E. Quitadamo**

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date _____

      Day/month/year

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Emotion in Teaching and Learning: Development and Validation of the Classroom Emotions Scale

Author: Scott Titsworth, , Margaret M. Quinlan, et al

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Date: Oct 1, 2010

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10:28 AM

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Scott Titsworth, Margaret M. Quinlan & Joseph P. Mazer (2010)

Emotion in Teaching and Learning: Development and Validation of the Classroom Emotions Scale,

Communication Education, 59:4, 431–452, DOI: 10.1080/03634521003746156

Material requested: Adaptation of Personalized Education Scale (PES) from

Jennifer H. Waldeck (2007)

Answering the Question: Student Perceptions of Personalized Education and the

Construct's Relationship to Learning Outcomes,

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https://doi.org/10.10.1002/1520–6807(199301)30:1<79::AID-PITS2310300113>3.0.CO;2-X
The excerpt to be reproduced in a student questionnaire from the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM):
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One question is adapted from the following:

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05 August 2020

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Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke (2006)
Using thematic analysis in psychology,
Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3:2, 77–101,
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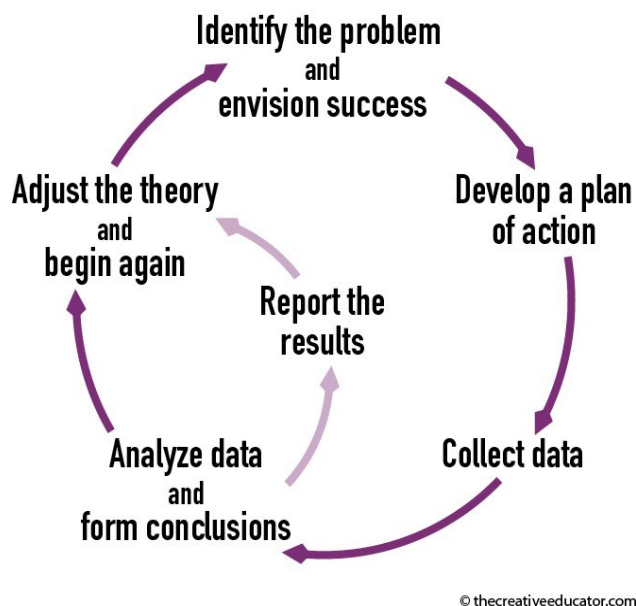
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If you have any questions or additional documentation requirements, I am happy to discuss it with you. Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Angela Quitadamo.