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## **Communication expectations for college instructors : do traditional and nontraditional students want the same things?**

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*University of Tennessee*

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Marian L. Houser entitled "Communication expectations for college instructors : do traditional and nontraditional students want the same things?." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communication.

Michelle T. Violanti, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Carolyn R. Hodges

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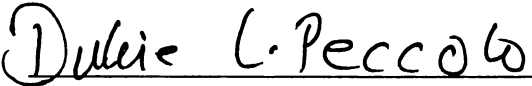
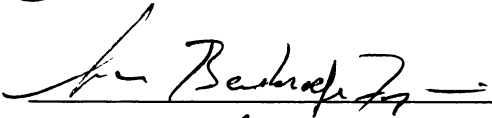
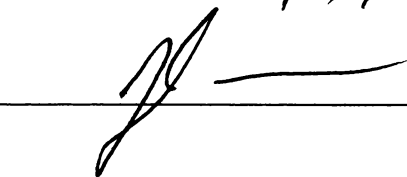
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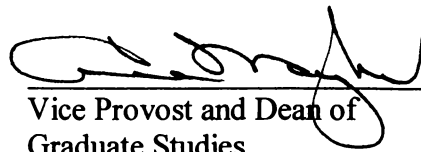
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and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

  
Vice Provost and Dean of  
Graduate Studies





COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS FOR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS:  
DO TRADITIONAL AND NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS WANT THE SAME  
THINGS?

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Marian L. Houser  
August, 2002

## DEDICATION

*Thesis  
20026  
H694*

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, Steve, Drew, and Staci Houser, whose constant love and encouragement guided me through this process. And to nontraditional students everywhere experiencing those great moments of doubt about returning to school...go for it...this is for you!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout my doctoral program, I'd heard many metaphors applied to the dissertation process. However, no description can quite do this process justice until you've actually experienced it. I've lived through it—survived it— but I haven't made it to this point on my own. There are so many individuals to thank for helping me through this process, but I know these mere words will never do them justice. Regardless, “Thank You! Thank You!” from the bottom of my heart—I MADE IT!

I probably should begin by thanking my chiropractor. The endless hours from early morning to late at night in front of the computer took its toll. Dr. Johns, you kept me in “the chair” until it was finished.

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topic. I came to know the field of adult education from one of its best and brightest representatives—you. Your teachings opened my eyes and were an inspiration that started and kept me focused down this path of research. Dulcie, I was so lucky to find you. Your enthusiasm for this research created such determination in me. Thank you for your interest and incredible Evening School support. The nontraditional students will never be forgotten; perhaps the findings in this dissertation will open a few eyes.

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support meant everything to me. The late afternoon “discussions” kept me sane. Dave, Thomasena, Astrid, Ron, Retha, and Tim, you were there when I needed you, and I thank you. We’ve been quite a strong force in the School of Communications.

## ABSTRACT

For over 20 years the instructional literature has suggested communication techniques and methods to instructors that enhance motivation and learning among traditional college students in their classrooms. However, the face of undergraduate students today is changing, and the nontraditional students entering colleges cannot be overlooked if instructors hope to serve every student. Thus, this study investigated the extent to which traditional and nontraditional students differ with respect to demographic characteristics and learning orientations and expectations of instructor communication behaviors as well as to see how those expectations affected their classroom motivation and learning.

The investigation utilized Expectancy Violations Theory (Burgoon, 1978) as a basis for understanding student responses to instructor communication in the classroom. To determine whether age and life experience impacts the expectations students have of their instructors' communication behaviors, 327 traditional and nontraditional undergraduate students from a four-year southeastern research university were surveyed. An instrument was developed to measure and compare expectations and experiences of the following instructor communication behaviors: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, student-centeredness, and instructor-centeredness.

Eleven research questions investigated the impact of the expectations and experiences between 169 traditional students and 158 nontraditional students. The results indicated these are two very distinct groups of students who have different expectations and perceived experiences of their instructors' communication behaviors. In addition to

differences in every demographic, nontraditional students experienced higher levels of trait motivation and learning orientation. Traditional students were less inherently motivated and were grade oriented. Perhaps due to these basic differences, levels and predictors of learning and state motivation were not the same for the two groups.

Nontraditional students experienced higher levels of learning indicators and state motivation. Differences in expectations and experiences for instructor clarity (negatively violated), affinity-seeking (positively violated) and student-centeredness behaviors (met expectation) predicted levels of learning and state motivation for nontraditional students. Differences in expectations and experiences for instructor clarity (negatively violated), instructor-centeredness (met expectation) and student-centeredness behaviors (negatively violated) predicted levels of learning and state motivation for traditional students.

Though nontraditional students' expectations support some of the communication behaviors the instructional literature has valued over the years, the findings of this study revealed significant differences that could alter the way instructors communicate in the undergraduate classroom. Conclusions, limitations, and future research completed the study.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

For over 20 years the instructional literature has been giving teachers a “laundry list” of recommended classroom behaviors to help them communicate with their students. Instructors are advised to be nonverbally immediate—“move around the class while teaching” (Andersen, 1979; Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987), be verbally immediate—“ask questions or encourage students to talk” (Gorham, 1988), “be clear when presenting content” (Rosenshine & Furst, 1971; Simonds, 1997), and “show care and concern for students” (McCroskey & Wheelless, 1976; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986). Instructors who are clear and organized, strive to create positive perceptions, and are highly immediate with their students can expect them to be more motivated and learn more in the class. With these outcomes, what teacher wouldn’t strive to engage in these recommended behaviors? Perhaps a more pertinent question in the new millennium though, would be, “With the changing face of today’s students, are these behaviors all they need, expect and appreciate?”

If student expectations are considered important, do all students have the same expectations of instructors’ communication in the classroom? Unfortunately, the primary source of recommended instructor communication behaviors such as clarity, affinity-seeking, and immediacy has been consistent: traditional undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 23 who pursued their college education immediately following high school. Most studies are conducted with undergraduate students during day classes at large four-year institutions. Although different cultures are often investigated (e.g., “A cross-cultural comparison of instructor communication in American and German

classrooms,” Roach & Byrne, 2001) in relation to these communication variables, few focus on the diversity of undergraduate students.

If colleges today hope to serve all their students, it is vital to recognize the great influx of nontraditional students. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (1998), over 45 percent of undergraduate students in 1995-96 were above the age of 24 and 12 percent of them were over the age of 40. Instructors may need to alter their classroom communication in order to meet all their students’ needs. It will be important, therefore, to discover if these nontraditional students have the same expectations of instructor communication behaviors as their traditional counterparts.

Thus, the problem is studies investigating student perceptions of instructor communication behavior fail to examine the broader population of students; more specifically the nontraditional student body is overlooked. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which traditional and nontraditional students are different with respect to learner orientations and expectations of instructor communication behaviors as well as to see how those expectations affect perceptions of student motivation and learning. The following model (Figure 1) and research questions depict the path this investigation will follow.

RQ1: To what extent are traditional and nontraditional students different with respect to demographic variables: sex, class rank, marital status, employment status, college finances, major, and trait motivation?



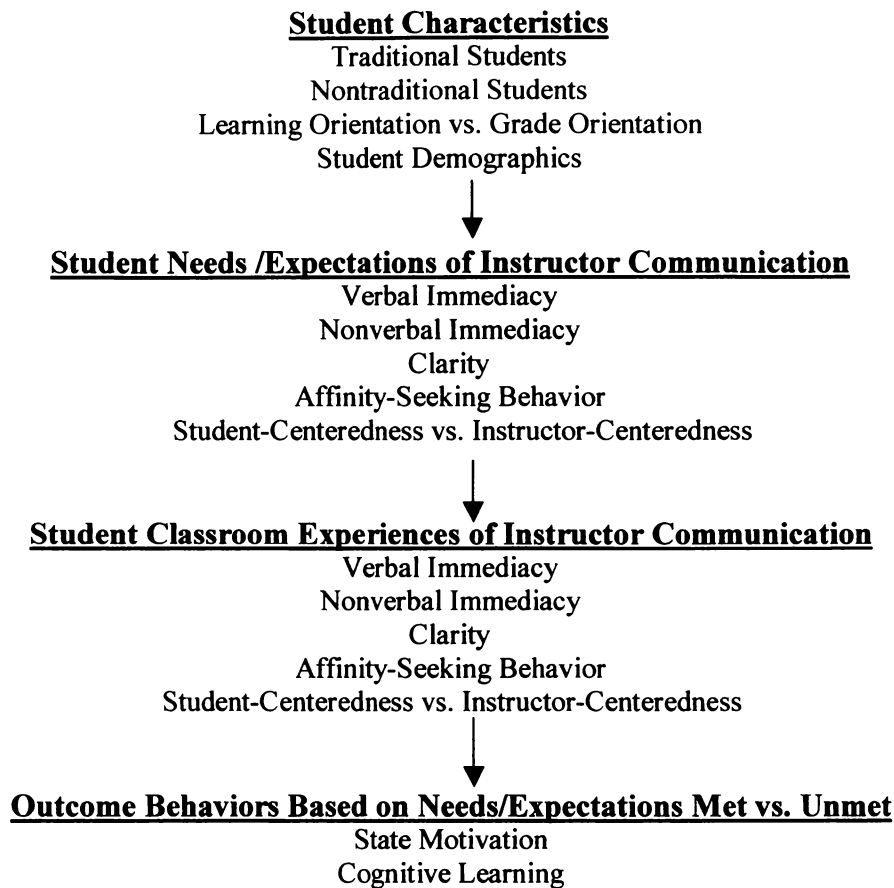


Figure 1: Research Design Model

RQ2: To what extent are traditional and nontraditional students different with respect to learning and grade orientation behaviors?

RQ3: To what extent are prescriptive expectations of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional and nontraditional students?

RQ4: To what extent are experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor

centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional and nontraditional students?

RQ5: To what extent are student prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different?

RQ5a: To what extent are prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional students?

RQ5b: To what extent are prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for nontraditional students?

RQ6: To what extent do traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of cognitive learning?

RQ7: To what extent do traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of state motivation?

RQ8: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict state motivation?

RQ8a: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict state motivation for traditional students?

RQ8b: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict state motivation for nontraditional students?

RQ9: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict cognitive learning?

RQ9a: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict cognitive learning for traditional students?

RQ9b: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict cognitive learning for nontraditional students?

RQ10: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation?

RQ10a: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation for traditional students?

RQ10b: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation for nontraditional students?

RQ11: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning?

RQ11a: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning for traditional students?

RQ11b: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning for nontraditional students?

### **Expectancy Violations Theory**

One way to understand the impact of traditional and nontraditional students' expectations of instructor communication behaviors is to be able to grasp what happens when those expectations are violated. Expectations are "a prediction about what will happen in some situation; it is a probability judgment based on previous learning" (Gigliotti, 1987, p. 365). If instructor communication behavior violates students' expectations, will learning and motivation be affected? Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) originally sought to understand nonverbal communication and its effects on conversational messages because people hold expectations about the nonverbal behavior of others (Burgoon, 1978).

According to Burgoon and Hale (1988), the communication expectations we have for a particular context influence message interpretation and subsequent receiver behavior. Thus, it makes sense that if instructors violate communication expectations students have of them, outcome behaviors such as learning and motivation may be affected. Expectancy Violations Theory is rooted in how messages are presented to others with three guiding theoretical assumptions: human interaction is driven by expectations; expectations for human behavior are learned; and evaluations of deviations are mediated by the reward value of the communicator (West & Turner, 2000). These assumptions support the premise that human interaction is expectancy driven. In other words, people have expectations of how others should interact with them and these expectations are based on their previous learned experiences.

Flannery reinforces the idea of learned experiences and describes “adult learners” instructor expectations as the result of “years of experience as learners,” which affect their “behavior in the classroom as well as their evaluations of instructors” (1991, p. 34). Thus, depending upon when a person chooses to attend college (immediately after high school vs. later in life) instructor communication expectations will vary.

Since its origination, however, Burgoon and a number of her associates have studied various responses to messages and their relationship with an individual’s expectations (Burgoon & LePoire, 1993; Frymier & Weser, 2001; Koerner & Petelle, 1991; Mongeau & Carey, 1996; Seiffert, 1991). For example, Frymier and Weser (2001) found student learning/grade orientation was positively related to instructor clarity in the classroom. Recent research has indicated that student learner orientations vary among traditional and nontraditional undergraduates, and if this is the case, instructor communication behaviors may need to be re-evaluated if they are to meet student needs. Some students, for example, focus on the process of learning for intrinsic reward (learning-oriented), while others are preoccupied with their grades (grade-oriented) when asked about their primary reason for attending college (Eison, Pollio, & Milton, 1986).

An initial pilot study (Pilot Study One) conducted to determine the basis for believing instructional communication expectations differ for nontraditional students, revealed consistent responses. The following statements received in multiple focus groups from nontraditional students are especially revealing:

- “I have experiences in the real world, and I can teach some of these teachers things. If they were open to learning from their students too, I think that would be really good. A good teacher does that.”

- “Teachers need to care that you are learning something. You need interactions. As an older student, you respond from interaction and a less dictatorial method.”
- “They need a personal approach in their teaching style, meaning they do not set themselves on a pedestal above their students but simply approach class as a person with knowledge they love to share.”
- “The instructor has to know who they’re dealing with. They must know that everyone is different and adapt to the student. It’s a learning process not just for us, but for them. You never stop learning. It’s a two-way street.

Traditional students, on the other hand, offered responses in their focus groups that were more reflective of the instructor communication behaviors validated in instructional communication research. Some of the more commonly heard quotes were:

- “They need to smile and add humor sometimes to make the lecture fun.”
- “They have to maintain good eye contact with their students and talk loud so we can hear them.”
- “I like a teacher that states your responsibilities clearly. They explain more of what they want out of the student as far as assignments, projects, etc.”
- “I would rather a teacher use overheads or power point for discussion instead of just talking—that makes me tired.”

These quotations offer brief insight into some of the differing expectations nontraditional and traditional students have of their instructors' communication behaviors in the undergraduate classroom. If it were possible to meet these communication expectations, motivation to learn may be enhanced.

Expectancy Violations Theory consists of two different senses of "expected." The first expectancy reflects what is most commonly accepted in a communicative act. This has been termed a "predictive" expectancy (Staines & Libby, 1986). They may be compared to cultural stereotypes as they are behaviors we expect to see because they are the most typical. Perhaps the more significant of the two, in terms of the present study's goals, are the "prescriptive" expectancies, or those verbal and nonverbal behaviors regarded as appropriate, desired, or preferred (Burgoon, 1995; Staines & Libby, 1986). Students may perceive these expectancies as *needed* behaviors, which would enhance their performance in the classroom. Thus, it makes sense that differing "prescriptive" student expectations for instructor communication behaviors might influence perceptions of classroom learning and motivation.

### **Student Characteristics**

If prescriptive expectations of traditional and nontraditional students are to be identified, it is essential to determine if the two groups are really different. Through a comparison of demographic characteristics, trait motivation levels, and learner orientations, possible differences in their expectations of instructor communication behaviors may be better understood.

### Nontraditional Students in the Classroom

Student age should be an important issue in instructional communication research today because nontraditional students, or those typically 25 years of age or older, constitute a large proportion of undergraduate students on college campuses. The title “nontraditional student” was selected for this study due to student responses during focus group discussions in Pilot Study One. While older students expressed no preference for any certain descriptive title, traditional students described the “adult learner” title as offensive. They related a strong desire also to be referred to as adults. Therefore the titles “traditional” and “nontraditional” were selected as the simplest distinguishing descriptors. In addition, although selecting age 25 as a “cut-off point” may exclude some nontraditional students (e.g., a 23 year old mother and wife), using this number to distinguish the two groups may ensure nontraditional students are those who have been raising families, working, or otherwise engaging in necessary life experiences besides college. Researchers in adult education have typically represented the nontraditional student as those above the age of 25 (Donaldson, 1989; Miglietti & Strange, 1998; Ross & Stokes, 1984; Polson, 1993). It has been reported that for instructors to be effective in educating nontraditional students, “all learning must be built on the learner’s experience because the adult is a total composite of their [sic] past experiences” (Richardson & Lane, 1993, p. 17). This message is based on the fact that nontraditional students have lived longer and therefore typically bring more life experiences to the classroom than their traditional counterparts, and these experiences impact both teaching and learning (Polson, 1993).



Perhaps a more comprehensive definition, and the one selected for the present study, would describe nontraditional students as those who did not choose to attend college immediately following high school. These students are entering the college classroom voluntarily to change their lives, locate new jobs, and acquire new skills and knowledge to enhance their earning potential. Instructors need to know what is attracting them and what they can do to facilitate a positive learning environment (Viechnicki, Bohlin, & Milheim, 1990).

#### Traditional Students in the Classroom

Research in instructional communication typically focuses on traditional undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24 who have entered college directly from high school. However, many researchers in the field of adult education have recognized that student age impacts judgments of certain teacher characteristics (Beer & Darkenwald, 1989; Scheckley, 1988; Tracy & Schuttenberg, 1986). They conclude educators need to know what specific attributes traditional and nontraditional students want from an effective instructor and how to reflect those needs through classroom communication. In fact adult (nontraditional) and traditional students have been described as “similar only in their identification of, and emphases on, teacher’s personal organization, availability and warmth” (Donaldson, Flannery, & Ross-Gordon, 1993, p. 162). If this is the case, is past instructional research complete if it fails to take student age or time span between high school and college into consideration?

A sampling of recent research in instructional immediacy, affinity-seeking and clarity reveals that often only mean age of students is reported or is not considered an influential factor in the investigation: “Participants for this study were 120 first year

undergraduate students enrolled in communication courses in a small, liberal arts university in the Midwest (traditional students, ages 18-19)” (Carrell & Menzel, 2001, p. 233); “A total of 223 students enrolled in the basic communication course at a large Midwestern university agreed to participate in the study . . . . The average age of participants was 19.5” (Titsworth, 2001, p. 287); “At two separate times, the affinity-seeking measure was administered within a survey packet containing other instruments to undergraduate students enrolled in basic communication courses at a large university” (Dolin, 1995, p. 222); and “Participants were 167 undergraduate students in a large, upper-division service course in Communication Studies at a large Middle-Atlantic university. . . . The mean age of the sample was 21.68 with a standard deviation of 2.85” (Rocca & McCroskey, 1999, p. 311). Is it acceptable to omit age considerations when the adult literature reports differing instructor expectations for adult learners? To delineate the expectations of traditional and nontraditional students, sex, marital and employment status, class level, college financial support, major, and level of trait motivation within the student participants were included as demographic variables. Research in the field of adult education has reported differences in basic demographic characteristics for traditional and nontraditional students. For example, Senter and Senter found traditional undergraduate students “tend to be employed for fewer hours per week than students in the nontraditional student group, are less likely to be married, and less likely to have children” (1998, p. 273). Polson (1993) reported adult learners were more likely to pay for their own education and have families who rely on them.

RQ1: To what extent are traditional and nontraditional students different with respect to demographic variables: sex, class rank, marital status, employment status, college finances, major and trait motivation?

### Learner Orientation

Another area that may help further define and delineate the traditional and nontraditional students is their learner orientations (Landrum, McAdams, & Hood, 2000). Eison, et al., (1986) described two contrasting student orientations toward higher education: learning orientation (LO) and grade orientation (GO). They developed the LOGO II scale to distinguish learners based on the premise that varying orientations affected the student-teacher relationship and evaluations of instructor effectiveness (Pollio & Beck, 2000). Students with predominantly high grade orientation typically value classroom communication that enables them to earn a good grade. Those favoring a high learning orientation feel greater intrinsic rewards from learning and hope to relate subject matter to their individual interests.

It is important to note that recent research has reported a difference in traditional and nontraditional students' learner orientations (Gorham, 1999; Landrum, et al., 2000). If this is the case, expectations of instructor communication behavior may also vary. Therefore, it will be helpful to determine just how different these students are.

RQ2: To what extent are traditional and nontraditional students different with respect to learning and grade orientation behaviors?

### **Instructor Communication Behaviors**

Research in instructional communication has identified many instructor communication behaviors associated with traditional student learning (Christophel, 1990;

Frymier, 1993b; Frymier, 1994; Richmond, 1990) and motivation (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Frymier, 1993a; Jaasma & Koper, 1999; Richmond, 1990). These positive outcome variables have been consistently linked to instructor use of nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, affinity-seeking, and clarity in the undergraduate classroom.

### Nonverbal Immediacy

Nonverbal immediacy was conceptualized by Mehrabian (1971) as communication behaviors such as smiling, touching, and eye contact that enhance closeness with others. In the classroom, these behaviors send messages that the instructor is interested in the student. Since its conception, hundreds of researchers have validated approximately nine nonverbal immediacy behaviors such as eye contact, smiling, moving close to students, using positive gestures, and using vocal variety that produce positive outcome behaviors such as student learning and motivation (Andersen & Andersen, 1982; Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Richmond, et al., 1987; Rodriguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996).

### Verbal Immediacy

Separate from nonverbal immediacy, Gorham (1988) operationalized verbal immediacy as teachers' verbal behaviors such as use of personal examples and the use of "we" and "our" that increase student perceptions of closeness in the classroom. She determined that both verbal and nonverbal immediacy were positively associated with student learning.

### Clarity

Research also indicates a positive relationship between learning and instructor clarity. Clarity was defined by Simonds (1997, p. 279) as “the teacher’s ability to present knowledge in a way that students understand.” In other words, a teacher’s ability to structure the material, comments, and questions to students in a way that motivates and enhances their learning is key to effective instruction (Rosenshine & Furst, 1971).

### Affinity-Seeking

Affinity-seeking has been defined as a “positive attitude toward another person” (McCroskey & Wheelless, 1976, p. 231), and early research has reported that teachers frequently employ affinity-seeking techniques in the classroom. These instructors are open, positive, and interested in student experiences and their behaviors have been linked to enhanced student motivation and learning (Frymier, 1994; Richmond, 1990; Roach, 1991).

### Instructor-Centered vs. Student-Centered

Many experts believe that an instructor’s approach to teaching influences student learning (Conti, 1989; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992). Instructor-centered and student-centered styles of instruction encompass teacher communication behaviors for presenting content and class information (Potter & Emanuel, 1990). Teachers subscribing to the student-centered style of communication in the classroom directly and actively involve students in the class by offering them encouragement and support (Conti, 1989). Instructor-centered classrooms, on the other hand, are more reflective of a traditional learning environment where the authority resides within a more dominant instructor who

is responsible for disseminating information, creating the greatest distance between the instructor and the student (Grasha, 1994; Reinsmith, 1994).

Previous research in instructional communication indicates students respond positively to an instructor's use of immediacy, clarity, and affinity-seeking behaviors in the classroom, but are these specific behaviors they prefer or expect? Students may not be thinking of these behaviors on their own. They may simply be responding positively because they are being asked if they appreciate them. Therefore, it will be important to understand if the instructor behaviors students expect are the same as those actually experienced.

RQ3: To what extent are prescriptive expectations of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional and nontraditional students?

RQ4: To what extent are experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional and nontraditional students?

RQ5: To what extent are student prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different?

RQ5a: To what extent are prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal

immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional students?

RQ5b: To what extent are prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for nontraditional students?

### **Outcome Variables**

While identifying differences in the prescriptive expectations of traditional and nontraditional students is valuable information, the resulting effects may prove even more informative. Without a doubt, being aware these two student groups are different is helpful, however, knowing the effect these differences have on their classroom performance is powerful information. This knowledge may help instructors motivate their students to learn more in class.

### **Learning**

One of the more critical outcome variables susceptible to effects of expectancy violations may be learning. Researchers in instructional communication have long struggled with developing methods to measure student learning. The most common method has consistently been to measure students' abilities to achieve mastery of the subject matter by performing positively on tests. Bloom (1956) defined learning as having three components: the psychomotor (or behavioral) domain, the affective domain, and the cognitive domain. While the psychomotor domain of learning has not held considerable interest in instructional communication research, both affective and cognitive learning have received great attention.

Understanding and meeting student expectations of instructor communication behavior may enhance both types of learning (Richmond, et al., 1987; Rodriguez, et al., 1996). This study focuses on the connection between the “prescriptive” expectations and the more commonly discussed form of learning: cognitive learning.

Cognitive learning was defined by Bloom (1956, p. 7) as dealing with “recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills.” Christophel (1990, p. 323) defined it as “comprehension and retention of knowledge.” This area is more typically the primary focus of instructors because cognitive learning is most often represented by student grades. For years, researchers in instructional communication have relied on student grades as evidence of a teaching-learning link. McCroskey, Sallinen, Fayer, Richmond, & Barraclough (1996) reported inadequacies with reports of learning relying on course grades and tests. Other cognitive learning indicators revealed items reflecting communication behaviors such as, “I actively participate in class discussion” (Frymier, Shulman, Houser, 1996). The Revised Learning Indicators Scale (Frymier & Houser, 1999) was developed to address problems with evaluating student learning by eliminating the communication variables confounding student reports of perceived learning. If traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of cognitive learning, an investigation into whether their instructor communication expectations are met by their classroom experiences may offer an explanation.

RQ6: To what extent do traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of cognitive learning?



### State Motivation

Research in instructional communication has also observed a link between learning and motivation (Hill, 1997). The primary focus in the instructional literature has been to present a broad-based view of motivation as a “motivation to study.” It has been described as consisting of two components: trait and state motivation (Brophy, 1987a). State motivation varies for students and is affected by external factors such as teacher communication behaviors and classroom tasks and assignments (Frymier, 1994). It has been positively associated with cognitive learning as an outcome variable (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994; Richmond, 1990). Trait motivation, on the other hand, is not susceptible to the external influences of state motivation. It consists of the more inherent motivation that exists naturally within the individual and, therefore, for the purposes of this study is considered a student demographic variable. If traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of state motivation to study and learn course material, an investigation into whether their instructor communication expectations are met by their actual classroom experiences may offer an explanation.

RQ7: To what extent do traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of state motivation?

RQ8: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict state motivation?

RQ8a: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict state motivation for traditional students?

RQ8b: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict state motivation for nontraditional students?

RQ9: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict cognitive learning?

RQ9a: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict cognitive learning for traditional students?

RQ9b: To what extent does age, learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations, and student experiences predict cognitive learning for nontraditional students?

RQ10: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation?

RQ10a: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation for traditional students?

RQ10b: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation for nontraditional students?

RQ11: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning?

RQ11a: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning for traditional students?

RQ11b: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning for nontraditional students?

### **Summary and Rationale**

Nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, affinity-seeking and clarity are all instructor communication behaviors research has shown are associated with student learning and motivation. However, the majority of these studies have been conducted with traditional college students between the ages of 18 and 24. With over 45 percent of undergraduates now over the age of 24, is it wise for instructors to assume these communication behaviors are effective in all age groups? Do nontraditional students, who have perhaps lived longer, encountered more and varied life experiences following high school, and are entering academia to change their lives, have the same expectations of their instructors' communication? According to Knowles (1978) and Loacker (1986), nontraditional students desire concrete, hands-on, practical information. Others argue that adult students learn best in a student-centered classroom where they are directly and actively engaged in the class, share experiences and apply classroom content to them, and receive instructor support and encouragement (Conti, 1989; Donaldson, et al., 1993; Grasha, 1994; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). In other words, "adult students' expectations of effective teaching are qualitatively different from those of traditional students" (Donaldson, et al., 1993, p. 162).

Nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, affinity-seeking, instructor clarity, and instructor-centeredness or student-centeredness may not meet their expectations or simply may not be important for nontraditional undergraduate students on the college campus today. When students enter a classroom at the beginning of the semester, they bring with them a certain level of intelligence, previous educational and life experience, a learning style, as well as other characteristics that can affect their expectations. Their

“prescriptive” expectations may influence their motivation and overall ability to succeed in a particular course.

Thus, the primary focus of this study is to discover the extent to which traditional and nontraditional students are similar with respect to their expectations of instructor communication behaviors and approach to teaching (student-centered vs. instructor-centered). It will be especially informative to understand if the expectations of the nontraditional students reflect what past research has deemed important for the traditional student in the instructional communication literature: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, affinity-seeking and clarity. With the growing number of adult learners in the college classrooms today, it is becoming increasingly important to understand how best to meet student needs. Instructors receive guidance when they encounter students with special needs or disabilities because these students learn differently. The adult learning literature shows adults learning differently from the traditional student, yet these differences are hardly acknowledged by the instructional communication literature. If colleges and universities expect to fulfill needs and have an impact on the majority of nontraditional students today, it is imperative they recognize what expectations these students hold of their instructors’ communication and how these needs can best be met so that motivation and learning are enhanced.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Related Literature**

Student expectations for instructor communication behavior can play a role in affecting how students perceive the actual instructor communication behaviors (Gigliotti, 1987). Research frequently focuses on the instructor's role in the classroom and how his or her behaviors affect student learning (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1993b; Richmond, 1990). However, what students bring to the classroom, in the way of expectations and experiences, also has a strong impact on classroom performance. Research in adult learning literature, for example has revealed that adults have unique expectations of their learning environment (Knowles, 1978; Polson, 1993; Richardson & Lane, 1993; Schmidt, 1983). If more traditional students do not share these same expectations, this would reveal differences college instructors should consider if they hope to reach all of their students.

This review of literature examines what has been written in the instructional communication and adult education literature about traditional and nontraditional students, their expectations of instructor communication behaviors, and the possible effects of met or unmet expectations. First, expectancy violations theory will be discussed as the framework for recognizing the value of understanding differences in student expectations of instructor communication behaviors. Following the theoretical significance will be a discussion of characteristics of the traditional and nontraditional undergraduate students and the influence of their learning and grade orientations. Nontraditional students are typically 25 years of age or older who did not choose to attend college directly after high school. College students between the ages of 18 and 24

are most often described as traditional because they meet the typical high school followed by college attendance pattern. The third area in this review covers communication behaviors the instructional literature has deemed valuable to student learning and motivation: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor vs. student centeredness in the classroom. Research linking these communication behaviors to two outcome variables, state motivation and learning and a demographic variable, trait motivation, will complete the review of literature.

### **Expectancy Violations Theory**

Any time individuals engage in a communication exchange they come with expectancies about the social behaviors of others. The communication literature, and more specifically, the instructional communication literature is replete with prescriptions or recommendations for how individuals are expected to communicate and how their behaviors are expected to be perceived. Expectancy violations theory (Burgoon, 1978) explains that people have expectations of others' nonverbal communication behaviors. Two strangers in an elevator, for example, have expectations for how the other person should behave. So, if one person stands too close or stares too intently at the other, they have most likely violated the other person's nonverbal expectations. Although the theory was originally developed to evaluate nonverbal expectancies, today it is applied to both verbal and nonverbal communication issues. Initial studies in expectancy violations theory focused on interpersonal relationships. Over the years, Burgoon and a number of her associates have studied various responses to messages and their relationship to an individual's expectations (Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Burgoon & LePoire, 1993; Burgoon, Newton, Walther, & Baesler, 1989; Hale & Burgoon, 1984). The primary components of

expectancy violations theory are arousal value, threat threshold, communicator reward valence, and violation valence (West & Turner, 2000).

Arousal value refers to the receiver's interest or attention that is peaked due to a behavioral deviation or violation. In other words, if a communicator behaves in a deviant manner, the receiver's attention is aroused (Burgoon, 1978). When this occurs, the receiver pays less attention to the communicator's message and more attention to the individual violating their expectation (LaPoire & Burgoon, 1996). If instructors violate students' classroom expectations (a threat is incurred) this could certainly have serious consequences on their learning, as students may tend to focus more on their instructors' behaviors. However, the receiver must first be aroused for a feeling of threat to occur. It is also important to note that threats are not always perceived negatively. It may depend on the communicator reward valence or the reward potential of the communicator. Some communicators are simply viewed differently and, therefore, have greater reward potential. We may, for example, tolerate direct eye gaze from an instructor we have had in previous classes rather than from one whose class we have recently joined. Thus, even though Burgoon (1978) describes the threat threshold as the "distance at which an interactant experiences physical and physiological discomfort by the presence of another" (p. 130), not all receivers view this perception of distance the same way. Some individuals may choose to reward the threat because they perceive a positive communicator reward, while others may punish it (react unfavorably) due to negative communicator reward valence. For example, if a classroom instructor walks over and touches a student on the shoulder to congratulate them on their success on a recent exam, some students may become uncomfortable while others may be pleased by the

instructor's attention. In other words, receivers may view a threat as positive or negative according to how the initiator is viewed (communicator reward) and the valence the violation is assigned.

An important component of communicator reward valence that must also be considered is the mediation of the reward valence of the violator. In other words, the positive or negative evaluations may be influenced by a number of reward valence factors such as status of the communicator and communication style (Burgoon, et al., 1989). Therefore, if the meaning behind a communicators' message becomes uncertain, receivers reference their communicator reward valence factors (e.g., status, communication style, etc.) to aid their interpretation. However, as Burgoon, Coker and Coker (1986) noted, some behaviors, such as averted eye gaze, carry consistent meaning for most communicators—in this case, negative meaning. Thus, there are instances when social understanding outweighs reward valence.

While communicator reward valence focuses on the communicator and their perceived value to the receiver, the primary focus of violation valence is the deviation itself. Violation valence is evaluated on a continuum from positive to negative. Thus, when individuals violate our behavioral expectations of them, we view their violation as either positive or negative depending on the social norms we have developed for the person or their role. Students' classroom experiences over the years, for example, guide their expectations for instructor behavior, and the students may develop either positive or negative perceptions of them based on their frame of reference. Positive violations occur when expectations one person has of another's behavior are confirmed, leading to positive evaluations of the individual and a favorable communication outcome (Burgoon,



et al., 1989). Negative violations, on the other hand, are caused when a communicator violates receiver perceptions of expected behavior.

Expectancy violations, therefore, occur when the behavior of others is not consistent with the expectations we initially possess for that behavior. The assumptions of the theory (expectations drive interactions which are learned and evaluated according to communicator rewards) support the premise that human interaction is expectancy driven (West & Turner, 2000). In other words, people have expectations of how others should interact with them and these expectations are based on their previous learned experiences. Thus, depending on a person's cultural background (e.g., age), expectations may vary. For example, in most college classrooms, students recognize that their instructors have greater status and this creates specific expectations for the student-teacher relationship. Students expect their teachers to be knowledgeable about the subject matter and in turn, present it in a clear fashion that will foster understanding and learning. The educational culture has enabled today's students to hold these expectations of their instructors. However, if cultural backgrounds differ, then perhaps these expectations differ as well.

While expectancy violations theory has primarily been applied in relational contexts, it is recently experiencing increased application in the instructional environment (Frymier & Weser, 2001; Gigliotti, 1987; Koerner & Petelle, 1991; O'Mara, Allen, Long, & Judd, 1996). The educational literature has historically promoted expectations instructors should develop of their students' classroom behavior (e.g., listening, staying on task, etc.), and students have obviously become familiar with what is expected of them. It would make sense, therefore, that after spending years in an education

environment, students would develop expectations for their instructors' classroom behaviors.

Instructional communication scholars have become interested in student expectations of instructor behaviors based on norms developed through their years of educational experience. More specifically, they have become concerned with the effects of positive and negative expectancy violations. Gigliotti (1987), for example, examined expectations sociology students had of their instructors and reported that when they were met, students experienced greater affective learning and were more satisfied with the course and sociology as a choice of major. Other more recent studies have extended this research and investigated the impact of student characteristics on classroom expectations (Frymier & Weser, 2001; O'Mara, et al., 1996). A predisposition reported to affect student expectations has been students' levels of communication apprehension. O'Mara, et al. (1996) reported high apprehensives expected lower grades while Frymier and Weser (2001) linked high apprehension to lower expectations of an instructor's use of immediacy behaviors. However, it is important to note that while highly apprehensive students may not expect immediate teachers, they still may respond positively to these behaviors (Frymier & Weser, 2001). Perhaps there are additional distinctions to be made between the characteristics of students that will distinguish their expectations of instructor communication behaviors and classroom experiences as well.

The communicator reward valence mentioned earlier is also a vital assumption in understanding expectancy violations in the instructional setting because the evaluation of the violation depends on the reward value assigned to the communicator—in this case, the instructor (Burgoon, et al., 1986). Thus, if a student holds an instructor in high

esteem, any violation or deviation from an expected behavioral norm may be seen less negatively and may perhaps even receive positive evaluations. Deviations from expectations have “arousal value” consequences, thus, when a student’s expectations are violated, their attention is aroused and they use a particular mechanism to cope with the violation (Burgoon, 1978). In the student-teacher relationship, this may mean the student will ask more questions, become more involved, or perhaps withdraw from participation or the class altogether. According to LaPoire and Burgoon (1996), arousal causes less attention to be paid to the message and more to the source of the arousal. This could have startling repercussions for student-teacher communication and relationships and classroom performance.

Koermer and Petelle (1991), for example, examined expectancy violations in the teacher-student relationship. They discovered that college students who have high expectations of their instructors, which are then met, rate their teachers more favorably than students who have low expectations that are also met. In other words, the higher the student expectations that, in turn, are met, the more positive the instructor evaluation. Seiffert (1991) reported similar findings in the teacher-student relationship, only finding enhanced student learning when expectations were positively violated. Witt and Wheelless (1999) explored the relationship between students’ expectations for teacher nonverbal immediacy and their enrollment in a distance-learning course. Their results revealed that distance students expected less nonverbal immediacy from their distance instructors than on-site students expected of their teachers. However, an additional interesting outcome in this study was that students who had experienced distance learning in the past had slightly higher expectations of their instructor’s nonverbal immediacy

behaviors than those who had no experience with distance education. Obviously previous experiences affected their instructor expectations.

As with the evaluation of instructors, Tinsley, Bowman, and Barich (1993) surveyed counseling psychologists about their perceptions of the occurrence and effects of their clients' unrealistic expectations about counseling. Their original perceptions were that many clients have unrealistically high expectations about the likelihood of counselor nurturance, directiveness and empathy, and the probability of a beneficial outcome. Their survey revealed that most unrealistic expectations have a detrimental effect on counseling. There could be a strong link between the patient-counselor link and the teacher-student relationship as students frequently view their instructors as rewarding individuals who are there to guide them (McCroskey & Richmond, 1992; Richmond, et al., 1987).

Though expectancy violations theory has been studied for over 20 years, and has received increased interest in the instructional communication literature, relatively little attention has been paid to the two different senses of "expected" (Burgoon, 1995). Originating from the concept of social roles, Staines and Libby (1986) report expectations differ greatly from behaviors, and thus deserve more comprehensive descriptions. They define the two expectations as "predictive" and "prescriptive." Predictive expectations fall in line with cultural stereotypes. They are the behaviors we expect to see because they are the most typical. In the classroom, for example, a student might predict that their instructor will take control of the classroom, call role, and generally follow an instructional lesson-plan. This is what they have most often observed instructors doing in educational settings. Prescriptive expectations, on the other hand, are

not as easily defined according to accepted norms of behavior. They refer more to “people’s beliefs about what behaviors should be performed” (Staines & Libby, 1986, p. 212). In fact, they are considered similar to what is more typically known as a social norm. So, for instance in the classroom prescriptive expectations are not what students typically see from instructor behaviors, but rather how they feel they “should” and desire them to behave. Recognizing Staines and Libby’s (1986) explication of the two expectancies, Burgoon (1995) later incorporated them in an intercultural application of expectancy violations theory. As prescriptive expectations are based more on what is needed and desired, she described them as “idealized standards of conduct” (Burgoon, 1995, p. 196). Burgoon stresses that expectancy violations theory encompasses both types of expectations, and notes “Predictive components of expectancies are arrayed on a frequency continuum; prescriptive components are arrayed on a valence continuum” (1995, p. 198). In other words, reflecting on our prescriptive expectations permits us to evaluate communicative acts as positive or negative, and these views vary from culture to culture. Thus, it may be of merit in instructional communication research to understand the valence certain groups or cultures (e.g., traditional vs. nontraditional students) assign to teacher communication behaviors.

Expectancy valence toward instructor communication behavior may vary according to age and experience (Manusov & Hegde, 1993). In fact, a key premise of expectancy violations theory is the valence attached to communicator characteristics (Burgoon, 1995). Although instructional research has historically identified positive and negative communicator characteristics, the greater difficulty has been in establishing the valence of these characteristics in terms of importance or impact. According to Burgoon,

it is important to consider the communicator, the relationship, the context, prior knowledge and observable communicator information as components of “the valence quotient” (1995, p. 201). Therefore it may be of value to determine whether age and experience impacts the positive needs or prescriptive expectations of instructors’ communication behavior.

### **Student Characteristics**

#### **Nontraditional Students**

If Burgoon (1995) is correct in stressing the value of understanding communicator characteristics in order to evaluate expectations and their repercussions, then evaluating the perspectives of nontraditional students may be especially beneficial. With over 45 percent of undergraduates today exceeding the more traditional student age of 18 to 24 (U.S. Department of Education, 1998), understanding their classroom expectations could broaden and more fully guide instructors’ communication. Thus, it is important to first develop a more complete picture of the nontraditional student in the undergraduate classroom.

It is not enough to describe nontraditional students as adult learners or as those over the age of 25 as this definition does not provide vital information to guide instructors in effective classroom practices such as clarifying material and creating a positive environment. Many scholars have sought to find a clear-cut definition of these students, but perhaps a combination of definitions and descriptions creates a clearer and more complete representation. Polson attempts to describe the adult learner in her statement, “We all know who adult learners are. They are the students who sit in the front row of class, the ones who remember when John F. Kennedy was President, the

ones who get mad when the instructor doesn't show up for class, and they are the ones whose favorite sweatshirt is older than some of their classmates" (1993, p. 1). However, this alone, still does not explain the behaviors and the expectations of the adult learner. Berryman-Fink (1982) adds much to Polson's description as she discusses nontraditional students as those typically lacking in self-confidence and basic study and communication skills. Ross and Stokes concur and suggest that the reason these adult students lack confidence is due to the fact that many carry with them, into the classroom, painful memories of high school or youthful college days, which makes them hesitant about the college classroom. "This often results in the nontraditional student assuming a low profile, reducing contact and visibility within the setting, at the same time becoming almost compulsive about trying to keep up, compete, with the younger student" (1994, p. 7). Also important to consider is Cross' description, which offers that "the great majority of degree-seeking adults come from working class backgrounds, most are first generation college students...upwardly mobile...and considerably more representative of the general population than are traditional college students" (1984, p. 67).

Combining these varied definitions and descriptions only reinforces the view that the adult learner is indeed nontraditional. More importantly, however, is that this knowledge suggests that individuals working in higher education should develop a better understanding of the unique learning needs of this group. In order to create the most effective instructional exchange, it is important to gain a more complete picture of the primary reasons adults return to college. Many qualitative and quantitative studies have recently been conducted in an attempt to get a clearer image. What is most consistent in all cases is that these adults are making a change in their lives – a change in either their

career, their personal life or both. West (1995) conducted a longitudinal study of 30 adult learners to discover their goals in entering college later in life. Through his interviews he discovered repeated explanations of adults entering college due to personal crises. The recurring metaphor for the adults he interviewed, was “fragmentation.” West explained this as “fragmentation: of lives torn or falling apart and of education as one potential means to reconstruct” (1995, p. 154). In other words, in his interviews adults reported feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy and lack of respect, which continued across time in their lives. In order to deal with these feelings they look to their instructors and the educational arena to help them in a struggle to rebuild and move beyond the fragments of their life. According to West, “A university may represent a space to understand self and others somewhat better and to revise a personal narrative as part of the process of rebuilding and constantly reshaping a life” (1995, p. 154).

Many other research investigations report similar feelings of needs and a desire to boost self-esteem. However, studies also report that adult learners relate these personally reflective needs to their employment status as well. In other words, they feel a college degree can help them move up the ladder or simply gain more respect in the workplace. Understanding the particular life experiences that lead to the development of these needs is valuable information for instructors in the classroom for this knowledge can serve as a sort of curriculum guide. Zemke and Zemke (1984), for example, describe the adult motivation to learn as being derived from the following: a) adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific life-change events such as marriage, divorce, job promotion, firing, moving, etc.; b) adults seek out learning experiences which are directly related – at least in their perception – to the life-change events that triggered the



seeking; c) adults also may have a use for the knowledge or skill being taught so learning is a means to an end, not an end in itself; and d) the learning helps increase or maintain their sense of self-esteem.

As the chair of the Education Department at the University of Redlands, Hensel (1991) describes the focus on understanding student enrollment goals, which she imparts to her faculty. She states that her staff began to realize that many adult students were enrolling because they were making career changes—even noting that some were leaving high paying positions, due to seeking more personal satisfaction from their work and better ways to combine their career and family interests. Miglietti and Strange (1998) best explain the value in obtaining this knowledge by reporting that learner-centered classes for adults were related to higher grades, a greater sense of accomplishment and greater overall satisfaction. Thus, as adult students enroll in college classes to better their personal and career experiences, instructors can enhance their goals, comprehensively, by focusing on their students' needs and expectations. This would be a win-win situation for both the instructor and the adult learner.

Scholars studying the expected goals of adult learners in the college classroom have no trouble reaching agreement in their understanding of what these goals are. In fact, most research studies concerning the nontraditional student's classroom expectations overlap in many areas. Lindeman, one of the original forces in the field of adult education, described the process of educating adults where learners become aware of significant experience and in which “authoritative teaching, rigid pedagogical formulae” have no place (1961, p. 7). They desire experiential learning opportunities, the chance to share past knowledge and experiences, and need a more self-directed learning

environment (Apps, 1988; Cross, 1982; Donaldson, et al., 1993; Knowles, 1978). For example, most researchers report that adults want to know how the course material will meet their needs. In other words, they have a strong desire to see how instructional information relates specifically to their personal lives (Donaldson, 1989; Knowles, 1978; Polson, 1993; Richardson & Lane, 1993; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Teachers must, however, also realize that adult students have developed some “truths” in their lives, which they may get defensive about if they feel they are being questioned. In other words, they may be offended if information disagrees or is thought to invalidate their current life experiences. Polson (1993) points out that this is a normal pattern of learning for adults and understanding this can help instructors cope with student anger or resistance to new learning.

Another common desire and expectation of adult learners is that instructors provide a variety of learning techniques. Richardson and Lane (1993) for example, reported that adult students desire learning activities, which are characterized by flexibility and creativity, not rote memory or stale repetition. Donaldson (1989) concurs that a variety of teaching techniques is imperative. After studying the responses of 176 adults regarding their perceptions of exemplary instructors, he discovered that teaching methods such as case studies, lectures, guest speakers, participant panels, films, work related projects and videotapes were considered important to each class meeting as well as to the class overall. This variety, according to Knowles (1978) helps reinforce the view, held by the adult learner, that every minute in class should be worthwhile and of practical use. It makes even more sense when compared to the fact that these students also expect to be able to relate the newly acquired information provided by the classroom

teacher directly to their own personal experiences. Polson (1993) agrees that adult students want their learning to be applicable to problems with which they are being confronted daily. She states that they are not satisfied with the comment that “someday this will be useful” and instead recommends that instructors develop real life case studies of problems students are being confronted with daily and on the job to aid in the application process.

Another common expectation of the adult learner is the preference for more self-directed learning. Schmidt (1983), for example, interviewed returning adult students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and reported their desire to set their own learning goals, independent of the instructor. However, as Zemke and Zemke (1984) point out, the need for self-direction does not necessarily mean isolation. Adult learners feel a sense of self-direction even during group work. The opportunity to work in small groups creates a “community of learners,” which according to Donaldson “apparently results from instructors using the group as a primary teaching/learning vehicle in which participants were responsible for each other’s learning” (1989, p. 8). However, simply knowing that adults prefer self-direction, does not signal their desire to learn without an instructor at all. Schmidt (1983) reports that they do indeed value the role of the teacher as content expert and climate setter. On the other hand, she states, “It would appear that students who prefer to set their own learning goals do not necessarily prefer classroom environments with teacher-authorized structures” (Schmidt, 1983, p. 2). Russell (1989) agrees with Schmidt and reports an inverse linear relationship between preference for educational structure in adults and self-directed learning. Instead, they prefer the role of teacher-as-facilitator, not simply as the dispenser of information (Richardson & Lane,

1993). Instructors who may have a difficult time accepting the needs of their adult students may find it helpful to understand the reasoning behind their expectations. Once again, this would lead to better student-instructor understanding and foster a positive classroom climate. According to Polson, “Instructors who are more interested in their subject matter than in helping students understand the subject will have a difficult time establishing a positive learning environment” (1993, p. 6).

What this review of literature in the field of the adult education appears to reveal is that instructor behaviors do matter. Nontraditional students do concern themselves with instructor communication behaviors and overall teacher style. They prefer a more student-centered or collaborative focus where instructors involve students in setting course objectives and evaluation of learning activities in an “atmosphere of mutual trust, warmth, respect, and collaborativeness” (McCollin, 2000, p. 8).

### Traditional Students

While there appears to be an abundance of information in the literature to describe the nontraditional student, concrete depictions of traditional students are not as easily located. Most studies comparing traditional and nontraditional students offer in-depth learner traits of the nontraditional or adult students and then leave the descriptions of traditional students, or the remaining population, up to the reader. Perhaps this is because students depicted as traditional, or those entering college directly from high school, are the norm in the United States. Students from 18 to 23 years of age are generally more common on college campuses. Over the years, leaving high school and going directly to college has become an accepted and almost expected practice in the U.S. Thus, while research studies in the instructional literature may certainly focus on traditional college

students, it is not their age that receives the attention. Other demographic variables such as cultural background, gender, and college major, for example, become the focal point. Therefore, locating specific descriptions of these more “normal” or “common” college students is difficult.

The traditional undergraduate students are typically described as entering college directly from high school (Donaldson et al., 1993). The U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1998) profiles them as students between the ages of 18 and 23. This agency also differentiates the traditional from the nontraditional student through their distribution levels in areas such as dependency status, number of dependents, marital and employment status. Approximately 99 percent of traditional students are dependents as opposed to 10 percent of the adult students. Sixty-eight percent of traditional students are both unmarried and without dependents, while 90 percent of nontraditional students are married and 87 percent have child-rearing responsibilities. Another interesting comparison reported in the NCES report (1998) is the fact that 31 percent of traditional undergraduates in 1995 worked 35 hours or more per week and nearly twice that or 68 percent of nontraditional students worked the same number of hours. When considering the combination of these statistics, it appears adult learners have additional family responsibilities when compared to their younger counterparts, serving as yet another distraction to their learning.

Some researchers have developed their own criteria for distinguishing the traditional from nontraditional student. For example, Kayla (1982) described traditional students as those attending college full-time, taking more recreational/leisure-type courses, and graduating within four years. Studies by Knowles (1978) and Comadena,

Semlak, and Escott (1992) described the traditional undergraduate student as those who preferred their instructors present a friendly, open, attentive and dramatic classroom style. However, Comadena et al. (1992) reported that while teacher communicator style accounted for 43 percent of the variation in teacher effectiveness ratings of traditional students, style was considered more important and accounted for 64 percent of the variation for adult learners.

There is evidence that age does make a difference in judgments of how important certain teacher characteristics are to undergraduate students (Beer & Darkenwald, 1989; Scheckley, 1988; Tracy & Schuttenberg, 1986). In fact, a meta-analysis of 31 studies of traditional undergraduates revealed that students rated instructor concern for student learning, organization, knowledge, and enthusiasm as the most important attributes of the teaching/learning situation (Feldman, 1988). This finding also corresponds with Comadena et al. (1992) who reported traditional students prefer friendly, confirming and attentive instructors.

Other studies offer more behavioral descriptions to differentiate between traditional and nontraditional students. Senter and Senter (1998) describe more startling differences between the social roles of the two groups. They suggest defining traditional students as having few social roles associated with adulthood. This study reported, for example, that 40 percent of traditional students are not employed, 94 percent have never been married, 97 percent have never been parents and had therefore not assumed the occupational and familial roles considered a component of adulthood and experienced by nontraditional students. In addition, this study reported traditional students more involved in campus life and less isolated than their nontraditional counterparts who

reported not only less interest but also less ability to be interested in extensive campus involvement. Traditional students reported feeling their involvement in activities on campus facilitated greater academic success (Senter & Senter, 1998). Fritschner (2000) compared classroom participation levels of traditional and nontraditional students and reported differences between the two groups. The greatest gaps in participation occurred in the upper-division classes where nontraditional students participated at a rate of 56 percent and traditional students at a 38 percent level. In summarizing her findings, Fritschner reported that “At all levels, the percentage of nontraditional students making two or more comments in class was two times higher than that of traditional-age students” (2000, p. 345). The basic assumption in this study was that traditional students talk less in class.

The research in the instructional literature has made little effort to distinguish traditional from nontraditional students. While mean age of participants was frequently mentioned, it was rarely a primary focus of the instructional communication studies. It will be interesting to discover if the findings of this study mirror those most often found in the adult education literature.

#### Learning and Grade Orientation

Another important and distinguishing characteristic of undergraduate students is their learner orientation. In fact, several researchers have concluded that high learning-oriented and high grade-oriented students are very different in the classroom and respond differently to teacher styles (Milton, Pollio, & Eison, 1986; Pollio & Beck, 2000; Richardson, Kring, & Davis, 1997). By differentiating between these students, it is

possible to determine the type of instruction that will lead to positive classroom outcomes such as motivation and learning.

According to Pollio and Beck, learning oriented students “regard college largely as an opportunity to acquire new information that is personally relevant and intrinsically rewarding” (2000, p. 84). They are interested in learning because they hope to acquire new knowledge for personal enlightenment to utilize in their own lives (Jacobs, 1992; Kauffmann, Chupp, Hershberger, Martin, & Eastman, 1987). The grade oriented students have an entirely different view of college. They see it as a hurdle they must overcome through incessant methods of evaluation. Their attitude is “that the attainment of a good course grade is a sufficient reason for being in college” (Jacobs, 1992, p. 367). Students with high grade orientations have been reported to have “poor study habits, high test anxiety, below average SAT scores, and low grade point averages” (Pollio & Beck, 2000, p. 85). Milton, et al., (1986) reported students high in learning orientation and low in grade orientation were better able to utilize abstract reasoning and maintained higher levels of self-motivation and sensitivity. Thus, it would seem that these students should not only appear different scholastically, but also personally.

Gorham (1999) presented a more detailed breakdown of the learner orientations for students. She described the nontraditional students as most often high in both learning and grade orientation. In other words, they have a goal and objectives in mind when entering the classroom, they expect to learn, they are constantly cognizant of the money they are paying to be instructed (wasting time, therefore, is abhorrent to them), and they prefer to apply what they learn to their own base of experiences. Students, on the other hand, who are low in both learning and grade orientation are typically young,



are attending school due to parental influence or to avoid working in the “real world,” and therefore, have frequent absences and trouble defining their priorities. Gorham stresses the difficulty in impressing the value of education to these low oriented students.

Eison (1981) developed the original LOGO scale to measure learning vs. grade orientations of students. Unfortunately, this scale was a single continuum developed to measure a unitary dimension. Later, Eison, Pollio, and Milton (1986) developed the LOGO II scale. This is a two-dimensional scale that produces scores for learning and grade orientations. With this 32-item instrument, students can be classified into one of four different orientation categories: high learning orientation with high grade orientation (High LO/High GO); high learning orientation with low grade orientation (High LO/Low GO); low learning orientation with high grade orientation (Low LO/High GO); and low learning orientation and low grade orientation (Low LO/Low GO) (Eison, et al., 1986). The four different orientations separate students according to their attitude and action toward learning in the classroom and are described by the scale’s creators.

Milton et al. (1986) described those students displaying both a high learning and grade orientation as taking a personal interest in motivating themselves to learn. They desire high grades of course, but for them, this falls under necessity rather than desire. They are also more likely to be the standard preprofessional students who are readying themselves for the job force. Unfortunately, these are also the students who experience the greatest stress levels in the classroom, due to their preoccupation with learning and earning high grades. Of considerable importance, also, is these students typically experience the greatest levels of test anxiety (Gorham, 1999).

A complete contradiction to the high learning and grade oriented students are those who are both low learning and grade oriented. They are most often described as maintaining other reasons for attending college besides earning an education. Perhaps someone with an extensive social life might fall into this category. Nontraditional students attending college to better their earning potential to take care of their family responsibilities would not be this type of learner.

Students who experience a high learning orientation but a low grade orientation “challenge us to look carefully at our instructional objectives and means of evaluation” (Gorham, 1999, p. 259). With these students it is important to convey the value of the course material. The grades are less important than the achievement of their goals (Milton et al., 1986).

Finally, the student who is low in learning orientation but high in grade orientation, focus on the grade. They may drop your course if they feel they may not succeed in earning the desired grade. These students may tolerate cheating and find it a necessity in a challenging class (Roig & Neaman, 1994). This student is a special challenge to instructors who are concerned with actual learning in their classes.

It is important to consider these learner orientations, as it is another means to distinguish our students and provide instructors with more detailed information to guide instruction. The student-teacher relationship has consistently been deemed important in the instructional literature, but this cannot develop if there is no awareness of students’ academic orientations. As there are reported differences in traditional and nontraditional students’ perceptions of teaching effectiveness in the education literature, understanding possible differences in their learning orientations and the relationship to teacher

communication behaviors may be equally relevant if most students needs are to be met. Landrum, et al., (2000), for example, reported that on a motivational scale traditional students scored higher on extrinsic motivation factors such as impressing friends and teachers and pleasing parents with good grades in class. This would appear to reflect a higher grade oriented focus. Nontraditional students, on the other hand, rated intrinsic items as higher motivators: “(a) to try my best even if I don’t get the best grade, (b) to receive a grade that represents my best effort, (c) to understand the subject matter better, (d) to learn something new which I was not familiar with before, (e) to understand myself better, (f) to understand other people better, and (g) to gain practical knowledge that I can apply in everyday life” (Landrum, et al., 2000, p. 90). These items certainly appear to correlate with what Milton et al. (1986) described as a high learning orientation and serve as another means by which instructors can understand students and select instructional methods to enhance motivation and learning.

### **Student Demographics**

#### **Trait Motivation**

While often considered with outcome variables such as state motivation, trait motivation, in the present research is considered a demographic variable. As opposed to state motivation, it has been easier to predict as it deals with a more general and enduring level of motivation students experience across encountered learning situations (Beatty, 1994; Brophy, 1983; Brophy, 1987a; Christophel, 1990). Based on this description, whether students perceive their teachers engaging in a student-centered vs. instructor-centered teaching style would not seem to matter. If students enter the classroom with inherent motivational traits, the behavior of the instructor should have little if any impact.

Christophel (1990) was interested in the impact an instructor has on student motivation in the classroom and originally distinguished trait from state motivation in the classroom. Also interested in creating this distinction, Richmond (1990) referred to trait motivation as classroom performance based on the students' own needs and desires. She conceptualized the corresponding motivator as compliant behavior that "will only occur in the presence (physical and/or psychological) of the compliance-seeking person" (Richmond, 1990, p. 183). So, in other words, student trait motivation occurs within the student and requires no outside influence. Reflecting this view, Frymier, Shulman, and Houser (1996) reported cognitive learning, based on their learning indicators scale, was not correlated with students' trait motivation to study. Therefore, they concluded students' inherent motivation, was not related to how much they learned in class.

Students' trait motivation has also been measured using Richmond's (1990) motivation scale, which consists of the same adjectives used to measure state motivation. The difference is students are asked how they "feel in general about taking classes at the University" (Christophel, 1990, p. 327). While the majority of instructional communication studies interested in student motivation have focused on the influence student levels of state motivation have on their classroom performance, generalized or trait motivation may differ for certain groups of students (e.g., traditional vs. nontraditional students). If this is the case, trait motivation may explain more of the variance in student learning.

### **Instructor Communication Behaviors**

Along with student behavioral and demographic characteristics, instructor behaviors also likely play an important role in determining student learning and

motivation in the classroom. Specific instructor communication practices that have consistently been researched in the instructional communication literature are nonverbal and verbal immediacy, clarity, and affinity-seeking behaviors. While these behaviors have predominantly been viewed from the traditional student perspective, they have also typically measured students' experiences rather than expectations of instructors using of them. Instructor communication behaviors that are more reflective of teaching styles have been more frequently investigated in the adult learning literature. Students have reported differing preferences for a teacher who is more instructor-centered or student-centered in the classroom. These instructor communication behaviors have been linked to student classroom performance, however, little is known regarding student expectations of them. Understanding whether students desire instructors who display immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking behaviors, and instructor-centeredness or student-centeredness could create a more complete picture of the student-teacher relationship and its effects on student learning and motivation.

### Nonverbal Immediacy

Mehrabian (1971) conceptualized immediacy as silent messages that are indicative of people's feelings and attitudes. They are behaviors that convey likes or dislikes between individuals as they represent "greater physical proximity and/or more perceptual stimulation of the two by one another" (Mehrabian, 1971, p. 114). Immediacy is defined by Richmond, Gorham, and McCroskey as, "a communication variable that impacts the perception of physical and psychological closeness" (1987, p. 574). Nonverbal immediacy behaviors include not only a closer position between one person

and another, but also behaviors such as touching, turning to face the other person and leaning in during conversation.

In the instructional setting, nonverbal immediacy is measured through student response to a variety of teacher behaviors such as “gesturing while talking to the class,” “moving around the room while teaching,” “smiling at individual students in class,” and “using a variety of vocal expressions while talking” (Richmond et al., 1987). Andersen (1979) first investigated teacher nonverbal immediacy in the classroom and found that teacher immediacy was positively related to students’ affective learning, but teacher immediacy was not associated with cognitive learning as measured by performance on a multiple choice test. Andersen also demonstrated that students were as accurate in assessing teachers’ immediacy behaviors as were trained observers. This finding has provided support for the use of student reports of teacher immediacy in research.

Although Andersen did not find a relationship between teacher immediacy and cognitive learning, Kelley and Gorham (1988) demonstrated such a relationship in a controlled setting where affect for the instructor was minimized. They determined that an immediate teacher increased arousal and attention, which in turn impacted recall of information presented. Kelley and Gorham found that participants had the highest recall when presented information by a high nonverbally immediate (high physical closeness with eye contact) instructor. The lowest level of recall occurred in the condition with low physical closeness and no eye contact. Kelley and Gorham’s study provided support for the hypothesis that immediacy has a positive impact on learning. Later echoing these findings, Comstock, Rowell, and Bowers (1995) reported that it was to a teacher’s

advantage to utilize immediacy behaviors to encourage student affect as well as stimulate their learning.

Messman and Jones-Corley (2001) explored the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and learning in different class formats. They studied students in large lectures and small discussion sections. Similar to Kelley and Gorham's (1988) findings, they reported students who perceived their instructors as highly immediate experienced increased levels of cognitive learning.

Using a self-report measure of cognitive learning as an alternative to grades, Richmond, et al.'s (1987) findings also conflicted with Andersen's (1979) earlier results and reported nonverbal immediacy to be positively associated with cognitive learning. An instructor's use of vocal expressiveness, smiling, and a relaxed body position were found to be most highly correlated with learning. In this study, students were asked to either report about the best teacher they had ever had or the worst. Richmond et al. (1987) were able to classify 95 percent of the sample correctly into best-teacher or worst-teacher categories with nonverbal immediacy. Although this study did not measure the aspects of cognitive learning that are traditionally measured (e.g., recall of information), it did provide further support for a positive relationship between teacher immediacy and cognitive learning.

Other researchers found connections between an instructor's use of nonverbal immediacy behaviors and affective learning, which Christophel (1990) defined as the attitude of the learner toward the instructor or course subject (Andersen, 1979; Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; & Richmond, et al., 1987). In fact, McCroskey and Richmond reported that the collective results of research

in instructor use of nonverbal immediacy have clearly established that students report “increased student affect for the teacher” and “increased student affect for the subject matter” (1992, p. 116). Current research conducted by Witt and Wheelless (2001) and Messman and Jones-Corley (2001) concurred, reporting strong associations between nonverbal immediacy and enhanced affective learning outcomes.

Although research on immediacy in the classroom has consistently displayed positive relationships between teacher immediacy and student affective and/or cognitive learning, teacher use of nonverbal immediacy is not equally beneficial to all students. Frymier (1993a) found that students beginning the semester with low or moderate motivation benefited the most from having an immediate teacher. Similarly, Frymier (1993b) found high and low communication apprehensive students to be differentially impacted by teacher immediacy. Students with low apprehension were motivated to study regardless of teacher use of immediacy, where highly apprehensive students were more motivated by immediate teachers.

Based on the results of this research, it is possible that other student characteristics (e.g., age) may also affect learner responsiveness to an instructor’s use of immediacy behaviors. Studies have revealed that traditional undergraduate students have historically responded positively to nonverbal immediacy behaviors. Most students have experienced enhanced levels of motivation and learning. However, whether all students expect and benefit from these behaviors is, perhaps, more uncertain.

### Verbal Immediacy

The construct of immediacy was expanded by Gorham (1988) to also include verbal behaviors. Verbal immediacy was operationalized as teacher verbal behaviors that



increased perceptions of closeness such as use of personal examples, using “we” and “our,” using students’ first names, and using humor in class. Many research studies have described verbally immediate behaviors utilized by instructors to reduce perceptual distance. Verbal behaviors such as humor, self-disclosure, and inclusive references have been reported to be perceived by students as exhibiting a desired closeness and therefore creating positive learning outcomes (Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Richmond, et al., 1987; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). In fact, Gorham (1988) determined that both verbal and nonverbal immediacy contributed to students’ perceptions of teacher immediacy and was associated with students’ affective and cognitive learning.

In this same study, Gorham (1988) investigated the differential impact of teacher immediacy behaviors in large and small classes, in terms of instructor sex, and the nature of the class (major/non-major). While no significant results were found for teacher sex and nature of class, some verbal immediacy behaviors were more strongly related to affective learning and perceived cognitive learning as class size increased. Teacher self-disclosure, question asking or encouraging students to talk, and referring to the class as “our” class and what “we” are doing were verbal immediacy behaviors that seemed to be of greater importance in larger classes than smaller classes.

To further understand the relationship between teacher immediacy and student learning, Christophel (1990) examined students’ levels of state and trait motivation to study. Christophel (1990) found that teacher immediacy (verbal and nonverbal) was positively associated with student motivation to study, with state motivation being more highly related to immediacy than trait motivation. Christophel (1990) concluded that immediacy had to first modify state motivation to study in order to impact learning. One

particularly surprising study found verbal immediacy to have a greater impact on learning than nonverbal immediacy (Rodriguez, et al., 1996). The possibilities of confounding variables however, have called this research into question (Witt & Wheelless, 2001).

Recently Robinson and Richmond (1995) have questioned the validity of Gorham's (1988) verbal immediacy scale. They suggest that instructor's use of verbally immediate behavior was examined by identifying effective teacher behaviors, which are not highly correlated with nonverbal immediacy, as it was originally conceptualized. "Only one item had correlations above .50" (Robinson & Richmond, 1995, p. 82). Though they cast skepticism upon the verbal immediacy scale, the 17-item measure has continued to be utilized and has been positively correlated with student learning and motivation (Frymier & Thompson, 1995) as well as perceptions of teacher clarity (Powell & Harville, 1990).

The verbal immediacy instrument has been utilized for over 10 years to measure specific verbal behaviors instructors use in the classroom. Though some researchers feel the scale may be measuring effective teaching behaviors rather than a verbal form of immediacy that was originally conceptualized by Mehrabian (1971), a relationship between positive instructor evaluations and learning outcomes has frequently been established.

### Clarity

In research conducted by Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey (1978), the authors state that the difference between knowing and teaching is communication. In other words, if a teacher does not present the course information in a way that the students may easily grasp, then learning cannot occur. "Clear teachers may facilitate student listening and

information processing by structuring content appropriately and speaking in a fluent manner that does not cause the listener to struggle to comprehend the lecture” (Chesbro & McCroskey, 1998, p. 446). Teacher clarity is defined by Simonds (1997) as “the teacher’s ability to present knowledge in a way that students understand” (p. 279). Though this is the more consistent view, many researchers have also viewed teacher clarity as having a relational component that has been overlooked by past studies (Civikly, 1992; Simonds, 1997). What this means is that increasing instructional clarity can positively affect the teacher-student relationship and overall classroom climate. In addition, past research has indicated positive correlations between teacher clarity and cognitive learning and student-perceived teacher effectiveness (Book, Duffy, Roehler, Meloth, & Vavrus, 1985; Civikly, 1992). Research has consistently revealed the benefits of instructor clarity.

After reviewing over 50 studies of instructor behaviors in the classroom, Rosenshine and Furst (1971) first identified nine variables that comprise teacher clarity: clarity, variability, enthusiasm, task orientation, criticism, teacher indirectness, criterion material, structuring comments, and levels of questions. In addition, they distinguished among various descriptions of clarity. However, arriving at a clear consensus for a definition of teacher clarity was tough, at best. Major complaints were that descriptions were too general or abstract (Civikly, 1992).

The challenge was to discover a way to operationalize the construct of teacher clarity so that behaviors could be easily observed and measured. Later research in teacher clarity attempted to do this, and two groups of instruments, in fact, were developed. The first group consisted of self-inventory instruments. Wlodkowski (1985)

produced one of the original scales in its final format. He identified four core characteristics of teacher presentation: expertise, empathy, enthusiasm, and clarity. His instructional clarity checklist was composed of 24 behaviors, which included items such as (a) explain things simply; (b) repeat things we don't understand; (c) describe the work to be done and how to do it; (d) prepare us for what we will be doing next; and (e) explain the assignment and the materials we need to do it. The second group of instruments consisted of observational measures asking students to rate an instructor's clarity. Murray's Teacher Rating Form (Murray & Lawrence, 1980) included 10 global items and 28 low-inference behaviors. Global items included "Clarity of explanation" and "Explicitness regarding course objectives." Observable behaviors include, but are not limited to, "Puts outline of lecture on board," "Provides sample exam questions," and "Explains how each topic fits in." Also in the second group were two separate measurement instruments developed by Cruikshank (1985). One presented four general factors as a more generalized measure, and the second offered a set of 12 behaviors about which students could evaluate their instructor's use of specific clarity behaviors.

Most of these measurement instruments have focused primarily on the clarity of the course subject matter or as one dimension. Hines, Cruickshank, and Kennedy (1985) for example, developed a clarity instrument that referred to items regarding how instructors explain, emphasize, and respond to content-based questions in their classes. Stemming from a similar evaluative viewpoint, Powell and Harville (1990) developed a 14-item instrument suggesting clarity as consisting of only a single factor.

However, teachers obviously do more than simply present content material to their students. At some point most instructors have to talk with them about class

processes and routines that also affect performance. Students, for example, almost always will have questions about class rules, absences, or even personal issues preventing them from succeeding in class. All issues of clarification obviously cannot solely revolve around content. Clarity surely must be viewed as more than one dimension. Arising from this view, Cruikshank (1985) described teacher clarity as a multidimensional phenomenon where instructors do a number of things for students to perceive them as clear. This makes sense when reviewing the many measurement items and different definitions for teacher clarity. Past research, for example has investigated teacher clarity according to the teachers' ability to create structure in their presentations. Concepts such as presenting skeletal outlines to students prior to lecturing, the effective use of transitions, using advance organizers, and note-taking facilitation are just a few examples of different ways instructor clarity has been evaluated in the classroom.

Sidelinger and McCroskey (1997) concurred with the multidimensional view of clarity and developed an expanded version of Powell and Harville's (1990) scale that originally focused only on the oral communication of the instructor. They added 12 items in order to include the written as well as the spoken clarity issues of instructors. Utilizing this scale in a recent study, Chesbro and McCroskey reported "Students of clear teachers are more likely to be motivated, have positive affect for their instructor and the course, and are likely to perceive that they have learned more cognitively" (2001, p. 65).

Similar to Chesbro and McCroskey (1998, 2001), Simonds (1997) created an instrument that incorporated two dimensions of clarity: content and process clarity. Her research proposed that clarity must be incorporated as a goal of general classroom understanding, which includes both content and process messages. She created the

Teacher Clarity Report (TCR) because, according to her research, past instruments have focused on items of content clarity to the extent that issues of student motivation, uncertainties about tasks, or expectations of the classroom have been neglected. Ten separate content items and 10 process items drawn from the work of Wlodkowski (1985), Murray (1995), and Cruickshank (1995) completed Simond's (1997) instrument. "The inclusion of process clarity items serves to increase the reliability of the overall TCR" (Simonds, 1997, p. 286). If these process items continued to be omitted in clarity measurements, a vital classroom communication component would be overlooked and continue to remain unevaluated—the student-teacher relationship (Simonds, 1997). Furthermore, the addition of these items enables instructors to have an opportunity to evaluate and enhance their personal clarity behaviors by establishing an understanding of how their behaviors are actually perceived by their students.

While disagreement may exist regarding the factors that comprise the clarity construct, what most researchers have seemed to agree on is the link between teacher clarity, student achievement, and satisfaction (Frey, Leonard, & Beatty, 1975; Hines, et al., 1985). An early study by French-Lazovik (1974) reported a link between clarity and students' evaluations of teacher effectiveness. Sidelinger and McCroskey (1997) surveyed undergraduates and found teacher clarity to be positively correlated with student perceptions of nonverbal immediacy and socio-communicative style (assertiveness and responsiveness) of the instructor. In other words, when students perceived their instructors to present course material in a clear manner, they also found them to be more highly immediate, assertive and responsive to them in the classroom. As a result of this finding, clarity was also found to be associated with enhanced student

affect toward the instructor and the course. They reacted more favorably and liked their instructors more. Titsworth (2001) reported teachers using organizational cues to prompt students during lectures (e.g., previews) positively affected their classroom learning. This finding supports Cruickshank's (1985) research suggesting a positive relationship between teacher clarity and student achievement. Teacher clarity along with the use of high instructor immediacy in the classroom has also been reported to reduce student levels of communication apprehension (Chesbro & McCroskey, 1998). In a later study, Chesbro and McCroskey extended their findings and reported an ultimate learning link stating, "... when teachers are clear and immediate, the negative role of state receiver apprehension in important instructional outcomes can be greatly diminished" (2001, p. 66).

Understanding the value of instructor clarity in the classroom has become in instructional communication research. It has been linked to positive teacher evaluation and student performance in the classroom. Though multiple instruments have been developed and utilized, the benefits of measuring teacher clarity cannot be denied.

### Affinity-Seeking

The principle of affinity is rather simple and stresses the perceptual process involved in communicating with others: The more people perceive we like them the more they will be inclined to return the feelings. Originally developed as an interpersonal construct, it was described as "a positive attitude toward another person" that would enhance perceptions of source credibility (McCroskey and Wheelless, 1976, p. 231). In other words, people use affinity-seeking to get others to like and develop positive attitudes toward them (Bell & Daly, 1984). It is possible in the classroom, therefore, that

if students believe their instructors like them, they will, in turn, like instructors as well. If teachers can either consciously or unconsciously manipulate their nonverbal and verbal communication messages to produce liking from students, the benefits can be great. Seeking affinity can create a positive learning atmosphere, afford the instructor higher teaching evaluations, and lead to better classroom performance for the students—a win-win situation for everyone. In fact, numerous research studies have provided evidence of the positive repercussions of instructor affinity-seeking behaviors (Frymier, 1994; Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Richmond, 1990; Roach, 1991).

McCroskey and Wheelless (1976) first introduced affinity as an interpersonal communication construct. This development led to the creation of Bell and Daly's (1984) typology of 25 strategies individuals may use to elicit positive feeling from another person. Because Bell and Daly's typology was generated from data drawn from classroom teachers and students, McCroskey and McCroskey (1986) sought to examine the affinity-seeking behaviors of instructors. They reported that 8 of the original 25 strategies were commonly utilized among teachers to increase student affinity. They also noted that when students have a positive regard for an instructor, they are more likely to increase the time they spend on tasks required to help them comprehend the subject matter. With this in mind, it is possible student motivation to study and learn could increase. According to Brophy (1987a), students are either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to learn, and those that are extrinsically motivated base their classroom performance on reward factors the instructor provides. McCroskey and McCroskey



(1986) suggest it is probable that affinity from an instructor may be perceived as a benefit or reward for students.

Building on McCroskey and McCroskey's (1986) research of the effects of affinity-seeking behaviors in the classroom, Gorham, Kelley, and McCroskey (1989) surveyed elementary and secondary teachers to discover strategies utilized to get students to like them and the subject matter. They were interested in differentiating between behaviors utilized to get students to like them as opposed to those utilized to enhance their liking of the subject matter. Two affinity-seeking strategies were predominant and accounted for 64 percent of all the behaviors listed by teachers as methods to get students to appreciate course material: facilitate enjoyment (e.g., talking about interesting topics, tries to make the classroom conducive to enjoyment) and concede control (e.g., allows students to take charge, provides an influential role in the classroom). "Scholars in the field of learning recognize affective learning (essentially what we are calling affinity for the subject matter) as one of the three primary types of learning" (Gorham, et al., 1989, p. 26). Echoing this view, Gorham and Burroughs (1989) emphasized the importance of affinity for course material. "Students who like the subject matter will look happy or excited in class (enthusiasm/attitude), try hard and do extra work (effort), tell the teacher they like it (explicit verbal feedback), and get good grades (performance/grades)" (Gorham & Burroughs, 1989, p. 5). It is likely then, that teachers who strive to achieve heightened levels of affective learning in their students, motivate them to learn and perform.

Richmond (1990) examined the use of affinity-seeking techniques on motivation and perceived cognitive and affective learning. She reported five strategies positively

correlated with motivation: facilitate enjoyment, assume equality, nonverbal immediacy, optimism, and self-concept confirmation. Based on her research findings, she suggested that the critical communication link between the affinity-seeking behaviors of the classroom teacher and student learning might be the important role these five strategies play in motivating students. Roach (1991) and Frymier and Thompson (1992) supported Richmond's (1990) observations that students' motivation to learn was strongly correlated with the teachers' use of affinity-seeking behaviors. Frymier and Thompson (1992) also confirmed a positive relationship between teachers' use of affinity-seeking strategies and student reports of affective and cognitive learning. More specifically, they reported that increasing the number of affinity strategies led to increased motivation.

While Beebe and Butland (1993) also reported an affinity-seeking-motivation link, they evaluated student motivation to learn from a different theoretical framework. They contended that the measurement of a student's emotional response to an instructor's specific affinity-seeking behaviors was more indicative of their motivation to learn in the classroom. They described these instructor behaviors as implicit messages that affected students' emotions by fostering positive feelings. Mehrabian (1971) suggested that all emotional states were defined within three dimensions: pleasure-displeasure, arousal-non-arousal, and dominance-submissiveness. Referencing these dimensions, Beebe and Butland (1993) reported that a teacher's use of affinity-seeking strategies correlated with two emotional states: increased feelings of pleasure and arousal. Thus, they suggested that teachers utilizing these behaviors implicitly communicate student liking, which in turn, creates heightened student emotion through reciprocal liking. This feeling of liking "manifests itself in approach behavior (e.g., learning and being motivated to learn) in the

classroom” (Beebe & Butland, 1993, p. 10). Richmond (1990) also suggested that this reciprocal emotional response may be an explanation for students reporting they were more motivated to learn when affinity-seeking behaviors were used by their instructors.

Tying together much of the previous research on affinity-seeking, motivation, and learning, Frymier (1994) proposed a motivation model of affinity-seeking. Her model tested whether a teacher’s use of these strategies increased student liking, leading to motivation and classroom learning. Frymier measured college students’ motivation at three points in the semester and perceived instructor use of affinity along with personal reports of student learning at two different points in the semester. Through path analysis, Frymier reported a teacher’s use of affinity-seeking behaviors produced student liking, which influenced their motivation to learn. Thirteen of the 25 strategies were found to be indicative of liking in the instructional setting. Based on this research, it would appear Frymier’s (1994) 13 strategies would be sufficient to produce an accurate measure of affinity-seeking and determine a positive association with motivation to study and learn. Suggesting instructors’ use of classroom affinity as more of an American education phenomenon, Roach and Byrne (2001) reported American instructors use these behaviors more frequently (than German instructors) and in turn influence increased student learning.

Research has also reported a link between an instructor’s use of affinity-seeking behaviors and student perceptions of their instructor and the classroom environment. For example, Frymier and Thompson (1992) found that a correlation exists between use of these strategies and perceived instructor credibility. Prisbell (1994) extended these findings and reported that if teachers specifically utilize the affinity-seeking behaviors,

trustworthiness, assume equality, altruism, listening, and personal autonomy, students perceive them as more competent. Perhaps equally important in understanding students' assessments of their instructors, is the finding that students simply like instructors who use affinity-seeking behaviors (Frymier, 1994; Roach, 1991). In addition to developing positive instructor perceptions, evaluations of the classroom climate may also be affected. Results of Myers (1995) study of instructor use of affinity-seeking revealed students develop a positive view of their classroom climate when teachers are supportive, encourage student interaction and confirm student views.

The aforementioned studies all utilized varying versions of Bell and Daly's (1984) original typology. These instruments feature small paragraphs that describe each affinity-seeking behavior and ask students to read each description and determine whether their teacher ever performs these behaviors (yes or no). If a student marks yes, he/she is then asked how frequently the teacher performs these behaviors. Studies have mentioned student fatigue, as well as interpretive concerns with the original measure (Dolan, 1995; Frymier, Houser, Shulman, 1995). Alternative instruments, highly reflective of the original have been developed. For example, Frymier et al., (1995) developed a more conventional survey format with 5 specific behavioral items representing each of the 13 affinity-seeking strategies originally reported by Frymier (1994) as positively correlated with instructor liking and reported most frequently by students. Their 65-item scale produced valid and reliable results and was positively correlated with motivation and learning (Frymier et al., 1995).

Affinity-seeking strategies have consistently produced a positive impact on the student-teacher relationship that leads to an overall increased motivation to learn. Over

two decades of research has provided important information of the value of seeking affinity in the classroom. Gaining a clearer understanding of varying student perceptions of the affinity construct can only enhance the student-teacher relationship in the future.

### Instructor-Centered vs. Student-Centered

While both the teacher and student play important roles in the teaching-learning transaction, the style an instructor uses to convey class information to students is a vital and dynamic process. Teachers create an environment that enhances student learning, so their teaching style should facilitate positive outcomes. A great deal has been written in the field of education regarding the value of focusing on teacher style. Teaching style consists of consistent traits and qualities a teacher displays in the classroom (Conti, 1989). Darkenwald (1989) described it as preferred instructor characteristics utilized to create student learning. While these may be fairly vague definitions, what they do emphasize is that variation exists between different instructors' teaching. In addition, it offers a presentation of teaching style as a characteristic external to the classroom instructor, although perhaps firmly entrenched in the instructor's teaching repertoire. In other words, this definition presents teacher style as something that may be altered, but often is repeated from classroom to classroom and student to student, regardless of preference or need. However, instructors who choose to alter their teaching styles based on student need, certainly reflect the value placed on the teacher-student relationship. McCollin stressed the need for instructors to step back and analyze their own teaching style to determine "what they are doing and why they are doing it. It can also help teachers to consider alternatives to what they do and give them a sense of empowerment"

(2000, p. 8). This way they can create a more effective learning environment for all students (Conti, 1989).

There are other scholars, however, who take an alternative view of teaching style and consider it to consist of the internal qualities a teacher maintains that affect students and their classroom behaviors. In other words, the instructor already maintains a set of values regarding teaching strategies and their implementation plans are set (Brookfield, 1986). What these values do are guide instructors in their classroom teaching and interactions as well as their overall views of the learner. This differs considerably from the view that teacher style can be described as external methods because in this more internal view it is the teaching values instructors maintain that direct their instruction. This view appears to present instructors who are entrenched in the values supporting their teaching styles and fail to consider student learning styles or instructional preferences.

Although there are different conceptualizations of teaching styles, for most educators, there are basically two fundamental styles: a student-centered style, which is more responsive and collaborative, and an instructor-centered style, which is more controlling and structured (Conti, 1989; Kidd, 1976; Nunan, 1995; Perin, 2001; Williams, 1996). While Reinsmith (1994) subscribes to the instructor- and student-centered styles, he presents them on a continuum. At the two extremes are teachers described as “disseminator/transmitter” and “facilitator/guide.” These would basically appear to reflect the dimensions of instructor-centered and student-centered styles. However, he incorporates four intermediate styles on his continuum: lecturer, inducer/persuader, inquirer/catalyst, and dialogist. Obviously, as instructors move from a disseminator of

information to a lecturer, persuader, and so forth, more student-teacher interaction occurs and greater reciprocity begins to take place (Reinsmith, 1994).

Similar to Reinsmith's six-stage continuum from instructor-centered to a student centered style, Grasha (1994) presented five teaching styles. These levels move from "expert," to "formal authority," to "personal model," to "facilitator," and finally to "delegator" at the student-centered end of the continuum. According to Grasha (1994), an "expert" instructor at the instructor-centered end emphasizes the role of feeding important information to students through overhead notes, lecture materials and any other means of an essentially straightforward transmission. In other words, the instructor is in complete control and has the final say in class. Reinsmith (1994) contends that while some students may flourish in this environment, for most of them, this form of teaching creates the greatest distance between the instructor and student. While Grasha (1994) places the "formal authority" style of instruction a step down in her continuum, it is still very focused on the instructor. Instead of more memorization and regurgitation as in the "expert" mode, this instructor style presents information in a more explanatory format while still expecting students to accomplish tasks the "right way."

The more "personal model" style Grasha (1994) discusses emphasizes the teacher as class role model. In other words, the instructor hopes to set examples for their students by offering examples, demonstrations, and directed discussions. In this style of instruction, teachers may be maintaining the classroom environment, but they are doing more to create and facilitate student participation and learning. Closer to the student-centered end of Grasha's continuum is the "facilitative" instructor who gets students directly involved by offering them more control over the learning in which they will

engage. Grasha (1994) emphasizes that students here will be provided support and encouragement to engage in more independent thinking. There is much more flexibility in how student learning will occur in the “facilitative” environment as it is more of a hands-on approach where the focus is on the learner instead of a controlling instructor. The final category is Grasha’s (1994) “delegator” style of instruction that falls at the student-centered end of the continuum. In this environment the instructor is primarily considered a resource, allowing students complete autonomy. This allows students almost complete independence in how their learning will transpire and, according to Grasha (1994), may increase anxiety for many students.

Nunan creates similar categorization of teacher-centeredness and student-centeredness. In fact, he stresses “learner-centeredness” (or student-centeredness) as a method in which “teachers and learners and teaching and learning can be brought closer together” (1995, p. 133). His view is that too many instructors refuse to entertain thoughts of creating a learner-centered teaching style due to contextual factors (e.g., large lecture classes, etc.). However, Nunan states this is simply “an excuse for inaction” (1995, p. 133). His view is this style of teaching leads to more successful learning because decisions on how content materials are taught are based on the learners. Once again, a consistent reference is made to the teacher-learner relationship. It is Nunan’s (1995) view that utilizing a learner-centered style by creating a more experiential learning environment would close the gap between teaching and learning. He creates a step-by-step process instructors can follow in order to create a more learner-centered teaching environment: a) first, create learner awareness of the instructor’s goals for the class; b) next, involve learners in selecting their own goals and objectives from a list of possible



alternatives; c) third, become involved in modifying and adapting their goals and course content; d) fourth, learners develop their own goals and course objectives; and e) finally, have learners make links between content and the “real” world beyond the classroom. As students move through this continuum, they are experiencing a stronger learner-centered environment where “teachers teach what learners learn” (Nunan, 1995, p. 155).

Understanding the varying instructional styles between student-centered and instructor-centered instruction helps us understand not only the role of communication in the classroom, but also the role of the teacher-student relationship. Obviously, in the more instructor-centered environment such as the “expert” and the “formal authority,” (Grasha, 1994) the teacher is very dominant and affords students no control over their learning. Certain types of students may or may not respond well to this sort of instruction and it is important for teachers to become familiar with students in their classes to create the most productive learning environment. Of course, this assumes awareness and flexibility on the part of the instructor.

According to scholars in the field of adult education, the facilitative or more collaborative environment described as student-centered, is where most non-traditional students prefer to learn (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1978; Lindeman, 1961). The “key word for working successfully with adults is *participation*” (Conti, 1989, p. 5). One of the strongest recommendations in the adult literature to get adults to participate in learning is to engage them in activities that make use of their own experiences (Conti, 1989). Nunn (1996) tells us, however, that levels of student involvement in the college classroom are typically low, and that greater student-centered instruction would be a boost to student learning and motivation. However, a student-centered style of

instruction simply may not be beneficial to all students. “Student-centered learning may be particularly appropriate for diverse student populations who have experienced little academic success” (Perin, 2001, p. 307). If this is the case, understanding who benefits most from either instructor-centered or student-centered styles of instruction would enhance teaching methods and overall learning in the classroom. “There is an interaction between a student’s achievement orientation and the teaching style he is exposed to, and that this interaction will differentially affect both the amount of learning that takes place and the student’s expressed satisfaction with his scholastic environment” (Domino, 1971, p. 427). While this statement reflects the need for understanding student responses to varying teaching styles, it also incorporates the student’s academic orientation: learning vs. grade orientation. Whether they place greater value in learning over grades earned in their classes should certainly reflect upon their appreciation of a more instructor-centered vs. student-centered teaching style.

Interested in understanding student teaching style preferences, Conti (1979) developed the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) to measure the degree instructors supported the collaborative or student-centered teaching style. He felt it was important for instructors to be able to evaluate their own teaching styles in order to be able to make decisions about their teaching and students’ learning. The Principles of Adult Learning Scale emphasizes the collaborative teaching mode supported in the adult education literature. A high score on this 44-item instrument reflects a greater learner-centered (student-centered) approach and a low score indicates a preference for the “teacher-centered approach in which authority resides with the instructor” (Conti, 1985, p. 8). Although Conti’s (1979) scale is made up of seven different factors (learner-

centered activities, personalizing instruction, relating to experience, assessing student needs, climate building, participation in the learning process, and inflexibility for personal development), the scale can also be divided into two main factors: items congruent with the collaborative (student-centered mode) style and items considered antithetical to being collaborative or akin to the instructor-centered mode. The Principles of Adult Learning Scale was initially altered to allow students to evaluate perceptions of instructor teaching style. Clow (1986) created The Adapted Principles of Adult Learning Scale (APALS) to reflect students' points of view. Thus, instead of items reading, "I allow my students . . ." the items read, "My instructor allows students . . ." (Clow, 1986). This new instrument was pilot tested and produced a reliability of .89. Similar to Clow, Lawrence (2001) further altered Conti's (1979) Principles of Adult Learning Scale to allow undergraduate students in her study an opportunity to report on whether their instructors were student-centered or instructor-centered. Items from the original scale were deleted that did not appear to fit either of the two styles, seven items were added based on literature describing both styles, and questions were rephrased to enable responses from student viewpoints. Lawrence submitted the revised scale to exploratory principal components factor analysis, and came up with 34 items representing the two teacher style factors and a reliability of .90 for the entire scale in the second part of her study. Two dimensions of student-centeredness emerged: student-focuses dimension reporting a reliability of .90 and student-interaction dimension reporting a reliability of .84 (Lawrence, 2001).

The Principles of Adult Learning Scale has been utilized in numerous areas of education and has received positive response. Teachers from various instructional

contexts have reported beneficial results through evaluating their teaching styles with the scale. Conti's study reported extensive and diverse use of his instrument: "In a staff development needs study, Dinges (1980) tested 265 adult basic education teachers throughout Illinois with the instrument. Investigating the relationship between managerial style and support of the principles in the adult education literature, Person (1980) administered PALS to 99 midwestern training directors. Douglass (1982) used PALS as the measurement device in a study examining the relationship of professional training in adult education to the degree of support of the collaborative mode by 204 hospital educators and cooperative extension educators in Washington" (1983, p. 5). This Principles of Adult Learning Scale has strong validity and reliability and has been used in numerous studies outside of the field of adult education. These studies reveal interest in understanding teaching style and its effects on student learning and performance in the classroom.

### **Outcome Variables**

#### **State Motivation**

The instructional communication literature has consistently separated motivation into two forms: state motivation and trait motivation. State motivation is situational (Beatty & Payne, 1985; Brophy, 1983; Christophel, 1990). It is not considered inherent motivation that someone constantly feels. It has been typically been defined as a "temporary condition in which individuals direct high levels of concentration and attention toward the competent completion of a task" (Beatty, 1994, p. 343). It is also often described as an attitude students develop toward a specific class (Brophy, 1987b). Educational psychologists have more thoroughly described this form of motivation as a

process where a student chooses (volition) to act (student energy) with an intended and continued (involvement) purpose (direction) (Wlodkowski, 1978). Though it has been described as situational, there appears to be a link between state motivation and instructional style where state motivation appears to rely on instructional factors that can be either student-centered or instructor-centered (Myers & Rocca, 2001). Based on this perspective, it makes sense that students frequently perceive their instructors as the primary motivating source in the classroom (Brophy, 1987b). If students desired a more student-centered approach and expected their instructors to encourage participation and to relate the subject matter to the students' personal experiences, then instructors who fail to do this (e.g., primarily lectures and disseminates information) demotivate their students. Therefore, it is possible that students may blame their instructors if they feel less than motivated toward their learning and classroom instruction (Christophel & Gorham, 1995).

Instructor teaching behaviors that have been shown to enhance students' levels of state motivation are verbal and nonverbal immediacy (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Frymier, 1993a, 1994; Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996), affinity-seeking (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Richmond, 1990), communication skills (Frymier & Houser, 2000), supportive student expectations (Brophy, 1987b), humor (Wanzer & Frymier, 1999), out of class communication (Jaasma & Koper, 1999), and instructor power (Richmond, 1990). Gorham and Christophel (1992) reported teacher behaviors accounted for 19 percent of student motivation and perhaps even more interesting, that teacher-related factors (behavioral and structural) accounted for 71 percent of the variation in student

levels of demotivation. Obviously, students are greatly affected by teacher behaviors they find missing or those they find discouraging to their classroom participation and overall performance (Gorham & Christophel, 1992).

To evaluate the effects of instructor behaviors on student levels of state motivation, Frymier (1994) surveyed students at three points during their semester in a specific course. Her results are especially significant to the value of determining student levels of trait motivation (a demographic variable in the present study), as she reported no significant difference in state motivation measures completed at the beginning, at midterm, and end-of-course intervals. She concluded that the initial motivation levels, prior to entering a class (or possible trait motivation), were the greatest predictors of students' overall motivation (Frymier, 1994). In an earlier study, Richmond, on the other hand, tested students at two points in the semester and reported "student motivation is highly susceptible to teacher intervention" (1990, p. 192). The conflicting reports for the possibility of teacher influence on student state motivation levels through instructional style led to Christophel and Gorham's (1995) study. They reported differences in their results and those of Frymier (1994) and concluded, as did Christophel (1990) and Richmond (1990) that "state motivation levels are modifiable by teacher behavior within the classroom environment" (Christophel and Gorham, 1995, p. 301). They explain that the variations in results were due to time of measurement factors (Frymier's midterm evaluation occurred at weeks seven and eight and Christophel and Gorham measured state motivation at weeks three and four). Their conclusion is that "student state motivation is influenced by teacher behavior in the first part of a semester and then remains fairly consistent from that point on" (Christophel & Gorham, 1995, p. 301).

Research outside the field of instructional communication has also placed great value in teaching style behaviors as precursors or strong influences of student levels of state motivation. Instructors who have created a more student-centered environment where students are exposed to variety in instructional methods, greater class involvement, and direct and positive feedback have reported increased levels of student motivation in class (Bandura, 1981; Brophy, 1983; Wlodkowski, 1978). Perhaps students who have teachers who meet their instructional communication expectations will also experience greater motivation, which will enhance overall learning.

### Cognitive Learning

The instructional communication research has rarely utilized consistent measurement instruments for student learning. While grades would appear to be the most straightforward indicator of this learning, this method has frequently come under attack, as it is often difficult to compare grades or assume grade equivalency from course to course (Gorham, 1988; Richmond, et al. 1987). Therefore, a more in-depth understanding of what learning actually means continues to be investigated.

Cognitive learning has been defined as dealing with “recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills” (Bloom, 1956, p. 7). To enhance understanding of cognitive learning and its processes, Bloom (1956) developed a six-level taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In efforts to develop a more concrete understanding of learning, instructional communication research has consistently examined the relationship between teacher communication and cognitive learning. A positive relationship between specific behaviors such as teachers’ use of immediacy (Frymier,

1994; Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Rodriguez, et al., 1996), clarity (Powell & Harville, 1990), teachers' use of humor behaviors (Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999), and teachers' use of organizational cues (Titsworth, 2001) have been reported.

Over the years, numerous instruments measuring cognitive learning have attempted to reflect Bloom's taxonomy (1956). A two-item cognitive learning scale that has frequently been utilized asked students, "How much did you learn in this class?" and "How much do you think you could have learned in the class had you had an ideal instructor?" (Richmond, et al., 1987; Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney, & Plax, 1987). To measure cognitive learning, a 0-9 scale was used and the score on the first item was subtracted from the score on the second item to produce a measure of "learning loss." However, only the responses to the first question were used to actually measure cognitive learning. This scale has been utilized in numerous studies over the years (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994; Richmond, 1990; Menzel & Carrell, 1999), but researchers utilizing the scale questioned the validity of the results.

Frymier, et al., (1996) initially created a measure of cognitive learning to confront the troubling issues surrounding previous measurement instruments. Based upon open-ended survey responses from university colleagues describing things students did that indicated they were learning, they developed a nine-item, Likert-type measure. This instrument was based primarily on the work of Carroll (1963) who explained learning as a function of time spent on-task divided by needed time. The original learning indicators scale (Frymier, et al., 1996) asked students to report how frequently they engaged in specific learning tasks, which reflected Carroll's (1963) conception of learning. Wanzer



and Frymier (1999) reported the learning indicators were positively correlated with instructor humor orientation and instructor responsiveness accounted for the most unique variance in learning. Once again, this study reveals the apparent benefits of teachers presenting a more student-centered style in the classroom.

The original learning indicators scale was revised when Frymier and Houser (1999) determined the measure was confounded by communication behaviors. In other words, the scale would inaccurately measure cognitive learning of students with high communication apprehension levels. Therefore, items such as “I actively participate in class discussion” were removed in the revised learning indicators scale. The seven-item revised learning indicators scale made up of two factors (learning activities involving thinking and learning activities involving talking) was positively correlated with nonverbal immediacy, student empowerment levels, state motivation to study, affective learning, and reported grades (Frymier & Houser, 1999). More recently, Ellis (2000) utilized the original 13-item learning indicators scale and reported a positive relationship between teacher confirmation behaviors such as responding to students’ questions and demonstrating interest in them and increased levels of students’ cognitive learning. Lawrence (2001) also found students reported greater cognitive learning in student-centered classrooms.

With this review of literature, the variables utilized to study the expectations traditional and nontraditional students have of their instructors’ communication in the classroom may be better understood. Characteristics of the adult and traditional students (age, demographics, and learning vs. grade orientation) may impact their expectations of instructor behaviors (immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and student-centeredness vs.

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instructor centeredness) and lead to differences in student outcome behaviors (state motivation and cognitive learning). The following methodology chapter will explain measures for these variables in order to discover the relationship between student expectations and motivation and learning.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **Method**

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which traditional and nontraditional students are different with respect to learner orientations and expectations of instructor communication behaviors as well as to see how those expectations affect perceptions of student motivation and learning. Therefore, the relationship between student age upon entering college (traditional vs. nontraditional student) and learner orientation (learning vs. grade orientation), and expectations for instructor communication behaviors: verbal immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, instructor clarity, affinity-seeking, and student-centeredness vs. instructor-centeredness are explored. In addition to gaining an understanding of differing expectations, it is also vital to learn if met or unmet expectations lead to student learning and motivation. If instructors can become aware of their students' communication needs, this could not only enhance their own teaching, but also increase students' performance. To select and develop survey items for instructor communication behaviors, two pilot studies were first conducted. A description of these studies and their findings is included. The pilot studies were not part of the current study and data were not included in this research. The benefit, however, of these two pilot studies was their contribution in the development and refinement of the four-part survey utilized in the present study. Following a description of the participants, a discussion of the instruments utilized to measure student characteristics (demographics and learner orientation), instructor communication behaviors, and learning and motivation as outcome variables are included. The procedures and data analyses used to address the research questions are also described.

## **Pilot Studies**

### **Pilot Study One**

The first pilot study utilized focus group discussions with traditional and nontraditional students. In eight separate groups (four traditional, four nontraditional), students were asked to describe expectations they have of their instructors' communication behaviors in the undergraduate classroom. The goal of this initial study was to determine traditional and nontraditional students' expectations of instructor communication behaviors. The results suggested several communication variables warranting further investigation to reveal differences in traditional and nontraditional expectations: nonverbal and verbal immediacy, affinity-seeking, clarity, and instructor-centeredness vs. student-centeredness. The following questions encompassing instructor communication behaviors reflected in the instructional and adult education literature guided the focus group discussions:

1. How do you expect instructors to communicate with you both in and out of the classroom?
2. What actions/behaviors do you expect of a good instructor both inside and outside of classroom (e.g., office hours, email, or phone conversations to discuss assignments)?
3. What are things you expect your instructor to say in a positive instructional setting?
4. Do you expect a good instructor to be clear? What do they say or do to enhance clarity in the classroom?

5. How much guidance do you expect on class projects or assignments? Do you expect opportunities to create your own assignments?
6. How do you learn best? Do you expect or prefer lectures to learn?
7. Do you expect to be able to share personal information or relate your own experiences to the subject matter being discussed in class?
8. Do you expect to meet with your instructor outside of class?

Twenty-one nontraditional (mean age, 35) and 31 traditional students (mean age, 20) participated in the focus group discussions. The nontraditional students were recruited through a request form sent to undergraduate faculty in the School of Communications. The completed forms with student names, email addresses, and phone numbers were returned and focus group meeting arrangements (time and date) were made. Each student was paid \$10 for his or her participation following completion of the meeting. The nontraditional students reflected a wide range of academic majors, with 10 different areas represented (e.g., accounting, child and family development, engineering, elementary education, history, information sciences, public relations, speech communication, theatre, and social work). The traditional students were contacted through instructors of the Speech Communication Department's basic public speaking course. Students in these classes are required to participate in one hour of research for class credit. Sign-up sheets for the four focus group sessions with the traditional students were posted in the central classroom for this course. These 31 traditional students represented nine different academic majors (e.g., business, engineering, exercise science, interior design, journalism, political science, sciences, speech communication, and sports

management). All eight sessions were audio taped and transcribed to determine instructor communication expectations.

Once all the tapes were transcribed, open coding procedures were utilized (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Two coders were trained to identify and categorize the instructor communication behaviors in the transcripts. A .90 inter-coder reliability was achieved. A thematic coding approach produced three major categories: positive communication behaviors previously experienced, negative instructor communication behaviors previously experienced, and prescriptive expectations of positive instructor communication behavior in the classroom. The overlap in expectations revealed through the focus group discussions aided in the selection and development of measurement instruments for further study. Nonverbal immediacy and clarity instruments for example, were selected as both traditional and nontraditional students prefer instructors who get to know them, display enthusiasm for their teaching and the subject matter, use real life examples to convey material, encourage participation and discussion, and stress organization and clarity in class presentation of material.

The consistent expectations between the traditional and nontraditional students aided in measurement selection to a point, however, the degree of importance placed on these behaviors and differences in many of the expectations created the need for further investigation (see Appendix A for complete focus group results). For example, traditional students focused a great deal on clarity of the instructor. They expected their instructors to be clear when presenting new and difficult material and most especially when discussing their assignment expectations. During the focus group discussions, however, the younger students expressed frustration with experiences of unclear

assignment explanations, leading to student frustration and eventual lack of student-teacher communication. The nontraditional students, on the other hand, focused more on expectations of student-centered behaviors such as instructors who are open to student opinions indicating a respect for diversity, flexibility in class rules, and using students' examples in class to link material to experiences. Unfortunately, they frequently experience instructors who are just the opposite. They described classes where instructors utilized "fill-in-the-blank" teaching and were demeaning and belittling to their students. This created extreme frustration and anger for the nontraditional students. Perhaps the most startling difference between the two groups was the nontraditional students' view that teachers should also be willing to learn from them. They wanted to be understood, recognized as individuals, and respected. This was never emphasized in the traditional students' focus groups.

Another interesting result of the focus group discussions was the differences between instructor communication expectations and those actually experienced in the classroom. Participants from both groups were quick to point out expectations of their instructors' communication, as well as the negative behaviors experienced, but were slower to relate positive experiences related to their expectations. In other words, it appeared simpler for them to think of behaviors they desired and those that turned them off rather than those eliciting positive responses. While it would be unfair to assume students simply aren't experiencing as many positive instructor communication behaviors, it does indicate they focus more on what they want, what they don't like, and what they aren't getting. Therefore, it was more difficult to locate consistent degrees of overlap in expectations and positive experiences with instructor communication behavior.

This finding could simply be that students enjoy complaining and commiserating with others who are like them during group discussions. It could also be, however, that students are too often given a list of behaviors to respond to in surveys and never asked what communication behaviors they actually expect to receive from their instructors.

The field of education has consistently studied differences in traditional and nontraditional student learning and their perceptions of effective teaching. Yet, while instructor communication behaviors are often embedded within the research, it has never been the primary focus. Based on pilot study one, both groups of students are experiencing negative expectancy violations of instructor communication behaviors that appear to exceed the positive ones. Thus, while both groups prefer immediate instructors who are clear and friendly toward them, their degree of preference for these behaviors varies and perceptions of their instructor communication experiences differ. With this in mind, it would be helpful to survey a larger student sample to validate pilot study one's findings and confirm our understanding of what traditional and nontraditional students expect. It will also enhance the instructional communication literature if it can be determined that both traditional and nontraditional students have positive expectations for communication behaviors the instructional research has been recommending for over 20 years.

### Pilot Study Two

Based on the results of pilot study one, there appears to be some degree of overlap in the expectations traditional and nontraditional students have of instructor communication behaviors. On the other hand, expectations exist that are startlingly different between the two groups. The most prominent instructor behaviors cited in the



literature that appear to best depict the expectations across both groups were nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, instructor clarity, instructor affinity-seeking behavior and instructor-centeredness and student-centeredness. To evaluate their understanding of these communication variables for future study, students were recruited from the basic public speaking course where one hour of research participation is required. Forty-two students completed an instrument (see Appendix B) intended to measure student expectations and perceptions of instructor communication behaviors.

More specifically, the main goal of the second pilot study was to confirm the conceptual definitions of specific teacher communication behaviors: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centered vs. student-centered instruction. Two other minor goals were to determine whether students perceived a difference in prescriptive and predictive expectations and to possibly eliminate items from the lengthy LOGO II scale (learning-orientation vs. grade orientation) and the PALS (student-centeredness vs. instructor centeredness) instrument.

Based on these three goals, the instrument for pilot study two was divided into two parts. Part one investigated degree of *need* or *expectation* of the behaviors embedded within the conceptual definitions of teacher communication variables. In other words, half of the sample (21) were given open-ended questions and asked to describe communication behaviors they “needed” instructors to perform in their classes, and the other half (21) were asked to describe behaviors they “expected.” The responses would present examples of behaviors to validate the conceptual definitions as well as investigate whether different students perceived differences in needs (or prescriptive expectations) and expectations (predictive expectations). The goal of part two was to validate and

possibly pare down the two scales to be used in a future study. This part was made up of survey questions asking students the extent to which they experience and respond positively to a learning orientation or grade orientation and instructor-centered or student-centered instruction. To compare student expectations (prescriptive or predictive) with their experiences in a future study, it was important to discover specific instructor behaviors that students perceived as reflective of the conceptual definitions.

The primary reason it was necessary to compare needs and expectations of the students in pilot study two was because Burgoon (1995; Staines & Libby, 1986) described two types of expectations: predictive and prescriptive. Predictive expectations are assumed behaviors and are different from prescriptive ones. Prescriptive expectancies are verbal and nonverbal behaviors regarded as appropriate, desired, preferred, or needed. These types of expectations are important because students may perceive them as behaviors *needed* to enhance their classroom performance. Because students might not view “needs” the same as “expectations,” two separate surveys (one using the word “needs” and the other, “expectations”) were developed.

The first component of pilot study two, therefore, consisted of the seven conceptual definitions reflecting the communication variables. Students were instructed to list any behaviors they “needed” *or* “expected” their instructors to do or say to indicate they were being verbally and nonverbally immediate, seeking affinity, striving for clarity, instructor-centered, student-centered, or a combination of the two (mixed). Forty-two students who were recruited from the basic public speaking course, where one hour of research participation is required, completed the surveys: 21 responding to “needs” and 21 responding to “expectations.” Only traditional students participated in pilot study two.

While this sampling parameter was completely unintentional, it did enable a more accurate comparison of their understanding of the scales as all participants were 21 years of age and younger.

The second portion of pilot study two consisted of survey items to test validity and reliability and to refine two of the scales to be used in the future. The LOGO II scale developed by Milton, et al. (1986) consists of 32 items and measures the degree of student learning or grade orientation (LO vs. GO). This survey was utilized as a possible secondary method (besides age) to differentiate the traditional and nontraditional students in the primary research study. Conti's (1979; 1989) Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS), measuring "instructor-centeredness" vs. "student-centeredness" was also included in the pilot study. Conti's scale is intended to measure whether an instructor engaged in a more collaborative or facilitative classroom environment, or one that is more controlling and traditional. Lawrence (2001) revised the scale, originally designed for instructors, to enable completion by students. To better meet the goals of her research, she reduced Conti's (1989) original 44-item questionnaire to 34 items by eliminating questions and replacing some more clearly related to student/instructor-centered instruction. Three additional items were added to the revised scale based on the results from the nontraditional student focus groups in pilot study one: "is flexible with rules in the class; develops rules and sticks to them; is open to learning things from their students." These three items were significantly different from those mentioned by the traditional students in their focus group discussions from pilot study one and appeared to more fully represent the student-centered focus preferred by the nontraditional students. The final LOGO II instrument used in this study consisted of 36 items. With both

surveys, students were asked the extent to which they agreed with the importance of their use of these behaviors (LOGO II) and the importance of an instructor's use of these behaviors (PALS).

The results of part one of pilot study two comparing student perceptions of needs vs. expectations of the seven instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, instructor-centeredness, student-centeredness, and mixed-centeredness) revealed similar descriptive responses. By simply comparing the written responses, students listed almost identical behaviors whether they were instructed to describe behaviors they *needed* or *expected* their instructors to utilize. Appendix C provides a comparative breakdown of the specific behaviors mentioned by the students in each category. Based on these results, asking students to respond to expectations of instructor communication behaviors should yield behaviors that reflect prescriptive behaviors. Therefore, survey questions utilizing the word "expectations" were followed by the phrase "desire, prefer, and need" in parentheses.

Perhaps due to the small sample size ( $N=42$ ) in pilot study two, the results of the second portion of the study intended to initially assess the PALS and LOGO II instruments yielded inconclusive results. With 36 items measured on a six-point Likert-style rating scale, scores on the PALS scale can range from 36 to 216. The instrument reported a reliability of .81, with a  $\bar{M} = 169.26$  and  $SD = 14.05$ . Although the alpha reliability was fairly high, when the 36-item scale was submitted to exploratory principal axis factor analysis no interpretable factor structure emerged. Eliminating specific items would neither significantly increase the alpha reliability nor make the factor structure more interpretable.

The 32-item LOGO II instrument intended to describe students as either learning oriented or grade oriented also utilized a six-point Likert style rating scale. The first 16 questions in Milton, et al.'s (1986) scale measured student attitudes toward learning or grade orientation with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The last 16 questions, measuring actions, involved the two extremes "never" to "always." The entire LOGO II scale allowed for scores ranging from 32 to 192 with the two subscales' scores ranging from 16 to 96. Results of pilot study two reported a low reliability of .47 for the entire scale, with a  $\bar{M}$  = 107.76 and  $\bar{SD}$  = 9.54. The learning orientation subscale reported a low reliability of .58, with a  $\bar{M}$  = 51.57 and  $\bar{SD}$  = 7.16 and the subscale for grade orientation reported a reliability of .72, with a  $\bar{M}$  = 56.19 and  $\bar{SD}$  = 8.97. A follow-up analysis split the entire scale into four subscales: grade orientation attitude ( $\alpha$  = .57), learning orientation attitude ( $\alpha$  = .42), grade orientation activity or behavior ( $\alpha$  = .68), and learning orientation activity ( $\alpha$  = .63). An exploratory principal axis factor analysis produced no interpretable factor structures. Eliminating specific items would neither significantly increase the alpha reliabilities nor make the factor structure more interpretable. Because the pilot study did not produce the intended results both scales were left intact for the final study.

## **Research Design**

### **Participants**

Subjects were 327 traditional and nontraditional undergraduate students from a four-year southeastern research university. Relatively equal numbers for both groups (169 traditional and 158 nontraditional) were attained. Most traditional participants were enrolled in one of two speech courses (Speech Communication 210: Public Speaking or

Speech Communication 240: Business and Professional Communication). Students in the basic public speaking course needed to fulfill a one-hour research requirement for the course. Their participation in the present study fulfilled one-half hour of their one-hour research requirement. Since public speaking courses are required in many other disciplines across the university, people who declared a wide variety of majors were included (e.g., agricultural sciences, business, communications, education, human ecology). Faculty permitted the author to conduct the survey in their various classes. Students were given an option of participating and each signed an informed consent form assuring complete anonymity prior to completion of the instrument.

The nontraditional students were contacted by mail through the Evening School Program (see Appendix D). Names and addresses were obtained through the campus student data resources office computer files. Parameters allowing the computer to search for nontraditional students were set as follows: birth date prior to 1976; major declared; full or part time; no more than 140 credit hours earned. The goal of these parameters was to retrieve names and addresses of undergraduate students over the age of 25 who were attending college to earn a degree (as opposed to those returning to earn certification hours or a second degree). The computer search yielded a population of 812 nontraditional students. Expecting a 25 to 30 percent mail return rate, a randomized sample of 500 names and addresses was requested and received. These students received the survey, an unattached informed consent form, and a cover letter explaining the research project participation request. All participants were informed their participation was completely voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed to everyone (see Appendix E). A follow-up reminder postcard was mailed to the same 500 nontraditional students two

weeks after the original survey (see Appendix F). The overall response rate of nontraditional students to the mailed survey was 33 percent with 158 completed surveys returned, 6 incomplete and unusable surveys returned, and 21 surveys returned as “undeliverable” by the postal service.

### Instruments

To discover whether traditional and nontraditional undergraduates are learning or grade oriented students with similar expectations and experiences for instructors’ communication behaviors, the survey was divided into four components: student demographics and characteristics, student prescriptive expectations of instructor communication behavior, student experiences with a specific instructor’s communication behaviors, and student learning and motivation scales (see Appendix G).

Demographics. The first section of the survey asked students to respond to seven demographic questions regarding age, sex, marital status, employment status, college class rank, and college financial responsibility. Table 3.1 presents the descriptive statistics for these demographic variables. In addition, the trait motivation scale (Richmond, 1990), referring to a general level of motivation across all learning situations was included in order to discover initial differences, if any, between the traditional and nontraditional students in the sample. The trait motivation scale consists of five, seven-step bipolar adjectives. The scale asks students how they “feel about studying in general” for their classes. Choices range from motivated and unmotivated to looking forward to it and dreading it, with possible scores ranging from 5 to 35. Trait motivation has reported high reliabilities ranging from .86 to .92 (Frymier, 1994; Frymier, Houser, & Shulman,

Table 3.1  
Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

	Age	N	Frequency Percent
sex	Traditional	169	(1) male-42.6 (2) female-57.4
	Nontraditional	158	(1) male-36.1 (2) female-63.9
class rank	Traditional	169	(1) fr-4.7 (2) soph-33.1 (3) jr-37.3 (4) sr-24.9
	Nontraditional	158	(1) fr-1.3 (2) soph-10.1 (3) jr-33.5 (4) sr-55.1
marital status	Traditional	169	(1) married-2.4 (2) single-97.6
	Nontraditional	158	(1) married-53.8 (2) single-28.5 (3) divorced-17.7
employment status	Traditional	169	(1) full-time-7.1 (2) part time-53.8 (3) not employed-39.1
	Nontraditional	158	(1) full-time-44.3 (2) part time-27.8 (3) not employed-27.8
college finances	Traditional	169	(1) self-7.7 (2) loan/scholarship-27.8 (3) parents-64.5
	Nontraditional	158	(1) self-41.8 (2) loan/scholarship-57 (3) parents-1.3

*Trait Motivation and College Major results reported in text.*



1996). The present study yielded a reliability of .87, with a  $\underline{M}$  = 22.08 and  $\underline{SD}$  = 6.05 for trait motivation.

Student Prescriptive Expectations. Following the demographic questions, student perceptions of preferred instructor communication behaviors were measured.

Prescriptive expectations are communication behaviors regarded as appropriate, desired, or preferred (Burgoon, 1995). To measure student expectations of instructors' communication behaviors and to avoid asking students to answer identical survey items in the third part of the study (investigating perceptions of communication behaviors *experienced* with a specific instructor), the conceptual definitions for each variable were utilized. A two to three sentence description of each of the six instructional behavior categories (verbal and nonverbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, instructor-centeredness and student-centeredness) was incorporated. Students were asked, on a 6-point Likert scale, to report the "extent to which you **expect** (desire, prefer, and need) a classroom instructor to perform these behaviors in your classes." The conceptual definitions, which included behavioral examples, for the six items were developed and validated through pilot study two. Possible scores for each conceptual definition ranged from 1, "never" **expect** (desire, prefer, and need) an instructor to perform these behaviors in class to 6, "always" **expect** (desire, prefer, and need) an instructor to perform these behaviors in class. The present study revealed the following mean and standard deviation scores for each conceptual definition: Nonverbal Immediacy Expectation:  $\underline{M}$  = 4.35,  $\underline{SD}$  = 1.02; Verbal Immediacy Expectation:  $\underline{M}$  = 4.41,  $\underline{SD}$  = 1.1; Instructional Clarity Expectation:  $\underline{M}$  = 5.59,  $\underline{SD}$  = .67; Instructor Centeredness Expectation:  $\underline{M}$  = 4.29,  $\underline{SD}$  =

1.09; Student Centeredness Expectation:  $\underline{M} = 4.11$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.17$ ; Affinity-Seeking Expectation:  $\underline{M} = 4.22$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.06$ .

Learning Orientation vs. Grade Orientation. Following the measures of the six conceptual definitions, learning orientation/grade orientation (LOGO II) was measured to possibly allow for a more complete differentiation of traditional and nontraditional students. This scale consists of 32 questions utilizing a 6-point Likert scale. The first half of the questions (16 items) measure attitude toward learning and grades within two extremes of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The second 16 questions measure action or behavior toward learning and grades with two extremes of “never” and “always.” Scores for the entire scale can range from 32 to 192 and from 16 to 96 for each of the subscales. Many research studies have reported successful results with the instrument. Two such studies reported a reliability of .76 for the LO scale and .73 for GO (Eison & Pollio, 1985; Frymier & Weser, 2001). The validity and reliability for the LOGO II scale were pre-tested in pilot study two. Based on the low reliability scores for learning orientation attitude ( $\alpha = .23$ ) and grade orientation attitude ( $\alpha = .47$ ) in the present study and pilot study two, the LO and GO based on attitudes were eliminated. Jacobs (1992) reported weak support for all items due to low reliability of the attitude subscales and suggested continued use of the 16-item LOGO behavioral subscales. Therefore, in the present study, all analyses were based on behavioral items represented by the two subscales. While other studies continue to utilize all four subscales, the goal of the present study was to categorize student-based orientations by measuring how students acted on them. What they think about their orientation toward grades and learning was not considered as important to this study as how students acted on their

orientations. The learning orientation behavior scale with possible scores ranging from 8 to 48, produced an alpha reliability of .82,  $\underline{M} = 21$  and  $\underline{SD} = 6.7$ . The grade orientation behavior scale scores also ranged from 8 to 48 and produced an alpha reliability of .77,  $\underline{M} = 19$  and  $\underline{SD} = 6.4$ .

Student Experiences. The third section of the survey consisted of scales measuring student experiences with instructor communication behaviors in a specific undergraduate class. To compare students' expectations, measured in the second portion of the survey, with their experiences, scales reflecting the six conceptual definitions of the two components of the PALS instrument: instructor-centeredness and student-centeredness, affinity-seeking, nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, and clarity, were utilized.

Student-Centered or Instructor-Centered. Students indicated their instructional preferences by completing the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS). Conti (1979) created this scale to evaluate whether instructors utilized a more collaborative or controlling education environment. This 44-item, self-report instrument asked teachers to indicate the degree to which they created one of these environments. Conti (1979) reported a scale reliability of .92.

Lawrence (2001) revised Conti's instrument to allow students to report their perceptions of and preferences for a student-centered or instructor-centered classroom. She created a 34 item instrument from Conti's (1979) original scale asking students to report the degree to which they agree with a their instructor's use of these behaviors. The scores ranged from 34 to 170 and a reliability of .90 for the entire scale was reported.

Pilot study two omitted one item considered somewhat confusing, “always gives all students the same assignment on a given topic” and added three items based on the results of the focus group discussions with nontraditional students in pilot study one: “is flexible with rules in the class; develops rules and sticks to them; and is open to learning things from his or her students.” The 36-item scale was submitted to exploratory principal axis factor analysis and two instructor-centeredness items did not appear to load on this factor and therefore were omitted from the instrument: “encourages competition among students” and “discourages student questions.”

A six-point Likert-type scale was utilized asking students to indicate whether they “strongly disagree” or “strongly agree” that a particular instructor engaged in each specific behavior. The two subscales, instructor-centeredness and student-centeredness were analyzed as separate components of the PALS instrument. Scores on the 7-item instructor-centeredness scale can range from 7 to 42. This study found a reliability of .60, with a  $M = 29$  and  $SD = 5.2$  for this instrument. Scores on the 27-item student-centeredness scale can range from 27 to 142. This study found a reliability of .95, with a  $M = 103.02$  and  $SD = 24.98$  for this instrument.

Affinity-Seeking. This construct has traditionally been measured using McCroskey and McCroskey’s (1986) adaptation of Bell and Daly’s (1984) 25 affinity-seeking strategies. With this original instrument, participants were asked to read descriptions of 25 strategies to determine if their teachers perform these behaviors and if so, how frequently. Reliability and validity were difficult to determine as a single item measured each strategy. To help address this problem, Frymier (1994) identified thirteen strategies that were most useful in the classroom and Frymier, Houser, and Shulman

(1995) developed a 65-item scale to reflect them. The summated affinity-seeking measure produced an alpha reliability of .97 (Frymier, et al., 1995). Construct and predictive validity for the instrument was demonstrated through the association of affinity-seeking with learning and motivation. Of the thirteen strategies, conversational rule-keeping and nonverbal immediacy had alpha reliabilities below .70. Since the elements of conversational rule-keeping were not mentioned by traditional or nontraditional students as expected, preferred, or needed instructor communication behaviors in pilot study one, and due to its low reliability, the five items representing it were eliminated from the instrument. Since nonverbal immediacy was an original component of the affinity-seeking instrument and reported to be positively related to student learning and motivation, one item was added to increase its reliability as a separate construct in the affinity-seeking scale. In addition, many items in Frymier et al.'s (1995) affinity-seeking instrument appear to overlap with verbal immediacy behaviors. Therefore, these items were adapted and labeled as such and two were added to enhance the reliability of verbal immediacy as a separate variable within the affinity-seeking scale. The primary reason the verbal and nonverbal immediacy measures were extracted from the affinity-seeking scale was to help shorten the overall instrument. The addition of nonverbal and verbal immediacy items is discussed in greater detail in their respective sections below. The final affinity-seeking instrument along with verbal and nonverbal immediacy contains 45 items. The summated affinity-seeking scale alone consists of 30 items. Utilizing a six point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," students were asked to report whether a specific instructor

performed each behavior. Scores on this scale can range from 30 to 180. This study found affinity-seeking had an alpha reliability of .96, with a  $\underline{M}$  = 133.78 and  $\underline{SD}$  = 27.62.

Nonverbal Immediacy. Nonverbal immediacy has been consistently measured with a 14-item Likert-type scale (Richmond, et al., 1987). This nonverbal immediacy instrument has an estimated reliability ranging from .73 to .89 (Christophel, 1990; Gorham, 1988; Richmond, et al., 1987) and numerous studies have supported its concurrent validity (Christophel, 1990; Gorham, 1988; Richmond, et al., 1987). For this study's purpose, student perceptions of nonverbal immediacy were measured with the five items already labeled "nonverbal immediacy" in the revised affinity-seeking measure (Frymier, et al., 1995). However, one item labeled as a "dynamism" item, clearly is a negative nonverbal immediacy behavior included in the original scale (Richmond, et al., 1987): "Speaks in a monotone voice." Therefore, this was adapted as a nonverbal immediacy behavior and one additional item from the original immediacy instrument was added to strengthen its reliability: "Gestures while talking to the class." In total, seven nonverbal immediacy behaviors were included in the survey and students were asked to report whether they agree or disagree that their instructor performs these behaviors. A six point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was utilized with possible scores ranging from 7 to 42. The revised nonverbal immediacy scale utilized in this study had an alpha reliability of .79 with a  $\underline{M}$  = 32 and  $\underline{SD}$  = 6.

Verbal Immediacy. Verbal immediacy has typically been measured by students' perceptions of their teacher's verbal behaviors or teachers' own self-reports. The original 17-item measure has consistently reported reliabilities ranging from .83 to .94 (Christophel, 1990; and Gorham, 1988), and exhibited strong validity, correlating with

student learning (Gorham, 1988) and motivation (Christophel, 1990). Eight verbal immediacy items were included as a scale within the affinity-seeking measure. As with nonverbal immediacy, six items representing verbal immediacy were already part of the affinity-seeking scale. To limit the length of the entire instrument, and since there was such overlap, these six were adapted and labeled “verbal immediacy” behaviors:

“discloses information about his/her interests and views; participates in lively discussion; tells interesting stories, and/or jokes; allows students to have an influence on class actions or topics; asks questions about our interests and opinions; and praises students in class.”

Two additional behaviors from the original verbal immediacy scale (Gorham, 1988) were added to strengthen the instrument’s reliability: “addresses students by name; invites students to telephone or meet with him/her outside of class if they have questions or want to discuss something.” As with the affinity-seeking and nonverbal immediacy scales, students were asked to indicate to what extent they agree or disagree that a specific instructor performs these behaviors in class. The eight verbal immediacy items were measured using a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” with possible scores ranging from 8 to 48. The revised scale in the present study had an alpha reliability of .87, with a  $M = 33$  and  $SD = 8$ .

Clarity. This behavior was measured using the 20-item teacher clarity report (TCR) originally developed by Simonds (1997) and revised by Frymier and Weser (2001). Frymier and Weser (2001) altered the scale to reflect expectations students have of their instructors. This instrument utilizes a seven-point, Likert-type scale and asks students to indicate how often their instructor performs certain behaviors. This revised instrument, which incorporates both content and process clarity of an instructor’s

communication behaviors, has produced strong content validity and consistently high reliability with Simonds (1997) reporting an overall reliability of .93 and Frymier and Weser (2001) reporting an alpha reliability of .94. The present study utilized 17 of Simond's original 20 items and replaced the following three items: "is clear when presenting content; defines major/new concepts; and points out practical applications for coursework." The three new items were negatively worded items to help ensure student consistency in answering the clarity measure: "does not offer me adequate and/or timely feedback on assignments or papers; doesn't adequately prepare us for his/her exams; and has trouble staying on the topic." Scores on the scale can range from 20 to 120. The present study reported an alpha reliability of .94 for the clarity instrument, with a  $\underline{M}$  = 91 and  $\underline{SD}$  = 17.

State Motivation. State motivation was utilized in the present study as an outcome variable intended to measure motivation levels of students whose expectations of instructor communication behaviors were either met or unmet. It was operationalized using Richmond's (1990) motivation scale, which consists of five, seven-step bipolar adjectives (e.g., motivated-unmotivated; interested-uninterested; involved-uninvolved; not stimulated-stimulated; and want to study-don't want to study). The directions for the state motivation scale ask students how they feel about studying for a particular class with a specific instructor. Reliabilities for the state motivation scale have consistently ranged from .91 to .96 (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Myers & Rocca, 2001). Scores on the state motivation scale can range from 5 to 35. The present study reported an alpha reliability of .90 for state motivation, with a  $\underline{M}$  = 23 and  $\underline{SD}$  = 7.



Learning. Cognitive learning was also included as an outcome variable in the present study to determine whether levels of met or unmet expectations led to perceptions of classroom learning. It was operationalized using Frymlier and Houser's (1999) Revised Learning Indicators Scale. This seven-item instrument uses a five-point, Likert-type scale with "never" and "very often" serving as the two endpoints. A seven-point scale was utilized in the present study. Reliabilities range from .85 to .87 (Frymlier & Houser, 1999; Lawrence, 2001). Validity of the instrument was established as the scale has been positively associated with affective learning and reported grades—two other measures of learning (Frymlier & Houser, 1999). Scores on the learning indicators scale can range from 7 to 42. The present study reported an alpha reliability of .89, with a  $\bar{M}$  = 25 and  $SD = 7$ .

### **Procedures**

Each participant was asked to complete the four sections of the survey: demographic and student characteristics information, prescriptive expectations, instructor communication experiences, and outcome variables. Following the seven demographic questions along with the trait motivation scale and the LOGO II items, they were asked to respond to their prescriptive expectations of instructor communication behaviors. In other words, they were to respond to the behaviors they **expect** (desire, prefer and need) from their instructors' communication. This section allowed students to describe what they felt they needed to receive from their instructors prior to reporting what they actually experienced with a specific instructor in the third section of the survey.

In the third and fourth sections (experiences, cognitive learning and state motivation) students were asked to think of the instructor they had in their last class each

week. Following these instructions, they were instructed to report the extent to which they experienced them as being nonverbally and verbally immediate, clear, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centered or student-centered. This allowed students to assess the communication experiences of a wide variety of instructors across the campus.

Surveys were administered primarily to traditional students in individual speech classes approximately 10 to 11 weeks into the semester. Nontraditional students received their mailed surveys at approximately the same time as the traditional students. This timing hoped to ensure students would have had ample time to develop their perceptions regarding a specific instructors' communication behavior. In addition, the learning instrument should be more indicative of student progress (state motivation and cognitive learning) at this latter point in the semester. The research purpose was explained to all students either verbally or through written communication (cover letter). Each also completed a consent form for guaranteed anonymity.

### **Data Analysis**

To determine if traditional and nontraditional students are different in aspects other than age, seven demographic variables along with trait motivation and learner orientation behaviors were measured. Research questions one and two inquired about the extent to which traditional and nontraditional students differed with respect to demographic variables, as well as their trait motivation, and learning and grade orientation behaviors. Responses to RQ 1 differentiated students according to their sex, class rank, marital status, employment status, college financial support, major, and trait motivation. Responses to RQ2 further delineated the traditional and nontraditional students. To answer these two research questions, Chi-Square tests were conducted to

determine if students differed demographically, and  $t$ -tests determined differences in their levels of trait motivation and levels of learner and grade orientation behaviors.

To answer RQ 3 and RQ4 and determine the extent to which traditional and nontraditional students differed in their prescriptive expectations and their experiences with instructor communication behaviors (verbal and nonverbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, student-centeredness and instructor-centeredness), two separate ANOVAs were conducted.

The results of RQ3 and RQ4 created a link to the three components of RQ5. To determine the extent students' expectations (those they desire, prefer, and need) differed from their actual classroom experiences, and to answer RQ5, RQ5a, and RQ5b, paired-samples  $t$ -tests were conducted. Average scores for prescriptive expectations and student experience scores were computed to determine levels of met or unmet expectations. Differential scores between student expectations and experiences were recorded. Higher score differentials indicated positively or negatively violated expectations. For example, students who experienced significantly higher expectation scores than experience scores for the instructor clarity instrument can be said to have unmet expectations or expectations that are negatively violated. Three separate paired-samples  $t$ -tests were run to determine whether there was a significant difference between student prescriptive expectations measured by the conceptual definitions of nonverbal and verbal immediacy, affinity-seeking behaviors, clarity, student-centeredness and instructor-centeredness and the instruments used to measure these students' experiences with a specific instructor's communication behaviors in the classroom.

The outcome variables, cognitive learning and state motivation, were included to determine if traditional and nontraditional students differed in their expectations, experiences, learning and grade orientation behaviors, and classroom performance. RQ6 and RQ7 were created to initially establish differences in levels of cognitive learning and state motivation between traditional and nontraditional students. Two *t*-tests were conducted to discover these initial differences.

RQ8 and RQ9 were created to further explain the results of RQ6 and RQ7. Two stepwise regressions were conducted to determine the extent to which the student characteristics, age, learning orientation behaviors, grade orientation behaviors, and trait motivation, and student prescriptive expectations and experiences predicted cognitive learning and state motivation. Follow-up stepwise regression analyses with RQ8a, RQ8b, RQ9a and RQ9b were conducted to determine the different effects for traditional and nontraditional students.

One of the more important questions this study hoped to answer was, "If student expectations are met or violated, does this predict learning and motivation?" RQ10, RQ10a, RQ10b, RQ11, RQ11a, and RQ11b were developed to address this. The difference in average scores for students' prescriptive expectations and experiences were computed and regressions were conducted to determine which differential scores predicted the variance in learning indicators and state motivation scores among all students as well as among the traditional and nontraditional student groups.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Results and Discussion**

This study was created to examine differences in the impact of student expectations for instructor communication behaviors for traditional and nontraditional students in the undergraduate classroom. For years the instructional literature has advised teachers how to best communicate with their students, but the nontraditional student has rarely been considered in this research. Basic differences in demographics such as age and marital status and student characteristics such as trait motivation and learner orientation are important to consider, but they certainly may not be the only differential factors impacting a student's classroom performance. Traditional and nontraditional students simply may not have the same expectations for the instructional setting and therefore perceive their learning experiences differently. If this is the case, they may vary in their classroom learning and motivation levels, which is certainly valuable information for any conscientious instructor. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between student age upon entering college (traditional vs. nontraditional) and student learner orientation behaviors (learning vs. grade orientation) and the relationship between expectations and experiences for instructor communication behaviors: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and student-centeredness vs. instructor-centeredness. Eleven research questions were put forth to discover the impact met or unmet expectations have on traditional and nontraditional students' classroom performance. Correlations between student characteristics, expectations and experiences were examined to enable a more in-depth investigation into the relationships between the variables and to discover possible

patterns. Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 present the results of the correlations for the entire sample, for the traditional students and for the nontraditional students. To answer the research questions, statistical analyses utilizing chi-squares, *t*-tests, paired-samples *t*-tests, ANOVAs and regressions were conducted.

### **Demographics**

RQ1: To what extent are traditional and nontraditional students different with respect to sex, class rank, marital status, employment status, college finances, major, and trait motivation?

Chi-Square tests and an Independent Samples *t*-test revealed significant differences in all the demographic variables except sex. Table 4.4 presents the results of the Chi-Square analysis. The fact that there was no statistically significant difference in sex is not surprising and indicates a relatively equal balance in the samples of male and female traditional and nontraditional students.

The differences in employment status, marital status, and college finances between these two groups of students make sense. Since the nontraditional students are above the age of 25, it is likely they have been working since they graduated from high school until the time they later decided to enter college. Significantly fewer younger students reported working ( $\chi^2 = 61.48, p < .001$ ) full time than their nontraditional counterparts, reflecting their decision not to work or to only seek part-time job opportunities. The difference in employment status is reinforced by research describing adult students enrolling to make career changes that are more satisfying (Hensel, 1991). While this finding was not unexpected, it is, however, important information to consider

Table 4.1  
Correlations Among Student Characteristics, Expectations, and Experiences

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	M	SD
1-NVI Expect	1.0																	4.35	1.02
2-VI Expect	.52**	1.0																4.41	1.10
3-Clarity Expect	.17**	.11*	1.0															5.59	.67
4-IC Expect	.14**	.04	.16**	1.0														4.29	1.09
5-AS Expect	.47**	.45**	.14**	.15**	1.0													4.22	1.06
6-SC Expect	.25**	.33**	.11*	.04	.36**	1.0												4.11	1.17
7-Trait Mot	.10	.10	.06	.05	.04	-.02	1.0											22.08	6.05
8-LO Beh	.17**	.13*	.02	.00	.02	.02	.56**	1.0										21.47	6.70
9-GO Beh	.01	.03	-.01	-.02	.09	.09	-.44**	-.40**	1.0									19.21	6.42
10-SC Exper	.18**	.09	.04	.01	.07	.04	.13*	.09	-.10	1.0								103.02	24.98
11-AS Exper	.20**	.09	.13*	.05	.06	-.04	.15**	.08	-.16**	.84**	1.0							133.78	27.62
12-VI Exper	.21**	.15**	.03	.00	.05	-.03	.15**	.12*	-.12*	.81**	.84**	1.0						33.09	8.42
13-NVI Exper	.19**	.07	.07	.00	.02	.00	.09	.06	-.11*	.62**	.72**	.70**	1.0					31.59	6.50
14-Clarity Exper	.15**	.05	.05	.04	.04	-.03	.20**	.14**	-.13*	.72**	.72**	.66**	.54**	1.0				90.55	17.30
15-IC Exper	.01	-.05	.03	.11*	.01	.02	-.01	-.03	.03	-.20*	-.15**	-.26**	-.20**	.09	1.0			29.00	4.20
16-State Mot	.10	.08	.00	.04	-.04	.00	.45**	.32**	-.29**	.53**	.52**	.51**	.43**	.56**	-.09	1.0		22.80	7.15
17-Learning	.13*	.13*	-.04	.03	-.01	.01	.36**	.43**	-.31**	.41**	.41**	.40**	.36**	.46**	-.11*	.73**	1.0	25.36	7.41

Note \* p<.05 \*\* p<.01

Table 4.2  
Correlations Among Traditional Student Characteristics, Expectations, and Experiences

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	M	SD
1-NVI Expect	1.0																	4.43	1.02
2-VI Expect	.45**	1.0																4.47	1.06
3-Clarity Expect	.23**	.11*	1.0															5.59	.68
4-IC Expect	.14*	.08	.15**	1.0														4.30	1.08
5-AS Expect	.51**	.47**	.22**	.14	1.0													4.40	1.09
6-SC Expect	.28**	.35**	.23**	.12	.37**	1.0												4.34	1.09
7-Trait Mot	.16*	.22**	-.01	.10	.18*	.09	1.0											19.63	5.41
8-LO Beh	.15*	.17*	-.01	.10	.13	.16*	.42**	1.0										19.07	5.46
9-GO Beh	-.03	-.00	-.01	-.03	-.02	-.09	-.28**	-.20**	1.0									22.82	5.66
10-SC Exper	.24**	.04	.06	.03	.18*	.04	.17*	.10	-.08	1.0								103.49	25.61
11-AS Exper	.31**	.13	.18*	.06	.17*	-.01	.13	.10	-.10	.84**	1.0							133.39	27.95
12-VI Exper	.26**	.11	.03	.02	.14	-.05	.14	.09	.00	.81**	.83**	1.0						32.43	8.77
13-NVI Exper	.23**	.04	.12	.02	.07	-.07	.10	.08	-.11	.63**	.73**	.70**	1.0					31.97	6.94
14-Clarity Exper	.20**	.03	.05	-.01	.14	.07	.20**	.18*	-.10	.77**	.73**	.65**	.51**	1.0				89.59	17.38
15-IC Exper	.04	-.04	.01	.08	-.01	.08	.12	.16*	-.06	-.14	-.13	-.24**	-.24**	.15*	1.0			29.13	5.14
16-State Mot	.18*	.15*	.02	.04	.05	.15*	.41**	.32**	-.18*	.52**	.47**	.47**	.42**	.57**	-.04	1.0		21.48	7.12
17-Learning	.12	.14	-.02	.06	.03	.23**	.25**	.38**	-.22**	.39**	.37**	.37**	.39**	.43**	-.11	.72**	1.0	23.95	7.74

Note \* p<.05 \*\* p<.01



Table 4.3  
Correlations Among Nontraditional Student Characteristics, Expectations, and Experiences

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	M	SD
1-NVI Expect	1.0																	4.25	1.02
2-VI Expect	.59**	1.0																4.34	1.14
3-Clarity Expect	.10	.12	1.0															5.58	.66
4-IC Expect	.14	-.00	.18*	1.0														4.28	1.10
5-AS Expect	.41**	.42**	.04	.16*	1.0													4.03	.99
6-SC Expect	.20**	.30**	.00	-.36	.30**	1.0												3.87	1.21
7-Trait Mot	.14	.05	.16*	.02	.07	.03	1.0											24.70	5.61
8-LO Beh	.29**	.17*	.06	-.06	.07	.07	.52**	1.0										24.03	6.96
9-GO Beh	-.05	.00	-.04	-.03	.00	.04	-.25**	-.31**	1.0									15.34	4.71
10-SC Exper	.11	.14	.01	-.00	-.06	.04	.13	.12	-.21**	1.0								102.51	24.35
11-AS Exper	.09	.06	.07	.03	-.06	-.06	.19*	.07	-.29**	.85**	1.0							134.20	27.36
12-VI Exper	.18*	.21**	.02	-.01	-.03	.02	.10	.11	-.23**	.82**	.84**	1.0						33.80	8.00
13-NVI Exper	.12	.09	.01	-.02	-.05	.04	.15*	.10	-.27**	.62**	.72**	.71**	1.0					31.18	6.00
14-Clarity Exper	.10	.08	.05	.11	-.04	-.11	.19*	.09	-.13	.68**	.72**	.66**	.60**	1.0				91.59	17.21
15-IC Exper	-.02	-.06	.06	.14	.03	-.05	-.12	-.19*	.13	-.26**	-.16*	-.27**	-.15*	.09	1.0			28.87	5.28
16-State Mot	.06	.04	-.01	.04	-.10	-.06	.42**	.25**	-.29**	.58**	.59**	.54**	.48**	.55**	-.14	1.0		24.20	6.93
17-Learning	.20*	.14*	-.06	.01	.00	-.13	.40**	.42**	-.29**	.46**	.47**	.43**	.38**	.49**	-.12*	.71**	1.0	26.86	6.76

Note \* p<.05 \*\* p<.01

Table 4.4  
Chi-Square test results

	Pearson Chi-Square	df	significance
sex	1.45	1	.227
class rank	42.06	3	.000
marital status	170.11	2	.000
employment status	61.48	2	.000
college finances	151.991	2	.000
college major	77.60	11	.000

when evaluating what these two groups expect and how they react to an instructor's communication. Being employed and trying to attend school simultaneously could have an effect on perceptions of what is important in the classroom and will be addressed in future research questions.

A statistically significant mean difference in marital status for traditional and nontraditional students was also reported ( $\chi^2 = 170.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It seems more likely that a newly enrolled college student over the age of 25 would more likely be married compared to an 18 to 24 year old who chose to enter college immediately after high school. Only two percent of traditional students were married, while 54 percent of nontraditional students were married and 18 percent were divorced. The value in these results is that they suggest nontraditional students have busy lives filled with additional priorities such as a job and family. With these extra responsibilities, older students expect instructors to make the time they spend in the class worthwhile (Knowles, 1978; Polson, 1993). This expectation could certainly affect their perceptions of classroom instructors and their communication.

An additional priority for nontraditional students could involve paying for their education. The results of RQ1 also revealed that the nontraditional students in this sample are more likely to pay their own way to attend college (41 percent), as opposed to 64 percent of younger students whose parents pay their way. The important link among this and previous demographic variables is that most nontraditional students have family responsibilities and are working to pay for their undergraduate education.

The chi-square test result for mean differences in class rank was also significant ( $\chi^2 = 42.06, p < .001$ ). It is especially interesting considering the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (1998) reported that over 45 percent of undergraduate students in 1995-96 were above the age of 24, with no indication of a decline in the near future. According to the results in the present study, 55 percent of the nontraditional students in the sample were seniors, 33 percent were juniors and only 11 percent were freshmen and sophomores. The pattern for this group appears to reveal a lower level of nontraditional students beginning their undergraduate education. There is greater balance, however, among the traditional students except in the freshmen class where there were only approximately 5 percent. This, however, was most likely due to the fact that the public speaking courses are rather difficult to get into and incoming freshmen would have fewer opportunities to enroll in them.

A somewhat surprising finding in RQ1 was the significant mean difference ( $\chi^2 = 77.60, p < .001$ ) in the college majors for traditional and nontraditional students. The majority (82 percent) of traditional students were in the colleges of arts and sciences, business, or communications. The majority of nontraditional students (70 percent) were in arts and sciences, business, or human ecology with a fairly even spread among other

areas such as education, engineering, and nursing. The results of this component of RQ1 suggest additional differences between these two groups of students. Again, this could magnify variations in traditional and nontraditional students' expectations and perceptions of instructor communication behaviors.

The final demographic variable investigating a further delineation between the traditional and nontraditional students was trait motivation. It has been described as a more enduring level of motivation students experience across encountered learning situations (Beatty, 1994; Brophy, 1983, Christophel, 1990) and based on the students' own needs and desires (Richmond, 1990). The *t*-test results examining mean differences in the trait motivation of traditional ( $M = 19.6$ ,  $SD = 5.4$ ) and nontraditional students ( $M = 24.7$ ,  $SD = 5.6$ ) was significant ( $t = 8.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This makes sense when reflecting on the definition of trait motivation. Nontraditional students who work, have family responsibilities, pay for their own education, or garner loans and grants to supplement their costs could be expected to have different educational needs and expectations compared to their younger counterparts who are not working and whose parents are funding their education. Adults approach the classroom with a motivation to learn "primarily because they have a use for the knowledge or skill being sought" (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). In addition, Landrum, et al., (2000) reported nontraditional students scored higher than traditional students on Rea's Motivation Outcomes Assessment Instrument, indicating a significantly higher level of intrinsic motivation. It will be important to determine if this distinction between traditional and nontraditional students carries over into their learner orientation behaviors.

### Learner Orientation

Another possible distinguishing characteristic between traditional and nontraditional students is their learner orientation. Though not necessarily an inherent trait-like quality, many researchers have reported differences in the learning and grade orientations between adult and traditional students (Gorham, 1999; Landrum, et al., 2000). In addition, the previous correlation table (Table 4.1) reveals a significant negative correlation between trait motivation and grade orientation behaviors ( $r = -.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a significant positive correlation between trait motivation and learning orientation behaviors ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Behavioral orientations toward learning could impact expectations and perceptions students have of their instructors' communication behaviors and understanding the differences that exist between these two groups of students could provide valuable information to undergraduate classroom instructors.

RQ2: To what extent are traditional and nontraditional students different with respect to learning and grade orientation behaviors?

Significant mean differences were found between traditional and nontraditional students' learning orientation behavior ( $t = 7.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and grade orientation behavior ( $t = 13.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The traditional students ( $M = 22.82$ ,  $SD = 5.66$ ) in the sample reported a higher behavioral grade orientation mean than nontraditional students ( $M = 15.34$ ,  $SD = 4.71$ ), while the nontraditional students ( $M = 24.03$ ,  $SD = 6.96$ ) reported a higher behavioral learning orientation mean than their traditional counterparts ( $M = 19.07$ ,  $SD = 5.46$ ).

The results of this research question provide valuable information for college instructors. Students who are more learning oriented engage in activities such as

discussing course material with instructors, family and friends, and reading material that extends beyond the scope of the course (Eison, et al., 1986). The student who is more grade oriented exhibits behaviors such as borrowing term papers and exams from previous classes and cutting class when they will not be tested over the material to be discussed. In other words, they view their classes as primarily created to present a series of hurdles to jump through to attain a high course grade (Jacobs, 1992). Thus, the reasoning behind their enrollment in college (to earn high grades and/or to learn) may be the most basic difference behind their behavioral learner orientations.

Gorham (1999) describes the nontraditional student as high in both learning and grade orientation. However, the results of the present study reveal them as more focused on learning behaviors. What this does appear to support is Gorham's description of the student with a high learning orientation and low grade orientation (the nontraditional student in the present study) as they "challenge us to look carefully at our instructional objectives and means of evaluation" (1999, p. 259). Milton et al. (1986) appear to concur with this description and state the high learning oriented student views grades as less important than the achievement of goals. But, what does this tell us regarding the teaching of the traditional student who exhibits significantly higher grade oriented behaviors? Roig and Neaman (1994) describe this student as one who may tolerate cheating and find it to be a necessity in a particularly challenging class. This view is certainly reflected in one of the specific questions from the grade oriented behavior scale: "I'm tempted to cheat on exams when I'm confident I won't get caught." Though, this behavior certainly does not describe every grade oriented student, the focus on grades does present a special challenge to instructors who value classroom learning.

If Landrum, et al, (2000) were correct in describing traditional students as scoring higher on extrinsic motivation factors such as impressing friends, teachers, and parents with their good grades, reflecting a focus on grade orientation, this could provide valuable information for their instructors concerned with motivating them to learn in class. If grades hold such value for them, then instructors must attempt to understand and pay attention to this focus. Gorham (1999) suggests that perhaps the best way to deal with the grade oriented student is to make certain “instructional objectives and evaluative measures are solid” and they “will learn in spite of themselves” (p. 260). The findings in RQ2 may provide additional information to assist teachers in choosing appropriate instructional methods in their undergraduate classes.

### **Instructor Communication Expectations and Experiences**

Though the instructional literature tells us students respond positively to specific instructor communication behaviors, the perspectives of nontraditional students has rarely been considered. Different perceptions of these behaviors may exist between traditional and nontraditional students. In addition, though research has reported favorable responses from undergraduate students, this is not the same as expecting or preferring an instructor to perform these same behaviors.

RQ3: To what extent are prescriptive expectations of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional and nontraditional students?

Results of an ANOVA, conducted to compare the six dependent variables against one independent variable (age), revealed traditional and nontraditional students differ in

their expectations of an instructor's use of affinity-seeking ( $F = 10.46, p < .001$ ) and student-centeredness behaviors ( $F = 13.17, p < .001$ ). With both of these expected instructor communication variables, traditional student means (affinity-seeking:  $M = 4.4$  and  $SD = 1.09$ ; student-centeredness:  $M = 4.34$  and  $SD = 1.09$ ) were significantly higher than those reported by nontraditional students (affinity-seeking:  $M = 4.0$  and  $SD = .99$ ; student-centeredness:  $M = 3.8$  and  $SD = 1.2$ ). Traditional and nontraditional students in this sample did not differ significantly in their expectations or preferences of instructors' use of nonverbal ( $F = 2.46, p = .11$ ) and verbal immediacy behaviors ( $F = 1.14, p = .28$ ), clarity ( $F = .01, p = .90$ ) and instructor-centeredness ( $F = .03, p = .85$ ). The survey scale for these expected (desire, prefer, and need) instructor communication variables ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (always). The mean scores for traditional and nontraditional students for all instructor communication behaviors were consistently above 4 (often) for both groups, with instructor clarity resulting in the highest mean score of 5.5 (almost always) for both groups.

To understand why traditional students in this sample reported a significantly higher need for affinity-seeking behaviors from their instructors in the undergraduate classroom, it is important to first re-examine the definition of affinity. It is defined as a perception of liking. This includes positive perceptions we have of someone else's credibility, attraction, and their similarity to us. In this research, students were asked to describe the extent to which they need their teachers to display behaviors that encourage students to like them, view them as credible, and similar to them. Examples of specific behaviors provided in the survey were teachers praising students, showing concern for them, being dynamic, and considering their opinions. Results from Pilot Study One,



presented earlier in this study, may provide the best explanation for why traditional students might need instructors to exhibit more affinity-seeking behaviors toward them in the classroom. Some of the instructor communication expectations they mentioned in their discussion groups most frequently could be classified as affinity-seeking behaviors: “care if students learn and understand,” “encourage students and call on them in class,” and “make time for them outside of class.” In addition, they reported experiencing these behaviors more frequently than nontraditional students, who had greater difficulty even coming up with positive experiences with instructor communication behaviors. Perhaps if students experience positive behaviors, such as affinity-seeking more often, they come to expect it.

Previous research also lends support to this possibility as traditional students have typically been described as preferring instructors who are friendly and attentive to their needs (Comadena et al., 1992). Nontraditional students, on the other hand, have been consistently described as preferring their teachers to fulfill the role of teacher-as-facilitator (Richardson & Lane, 1993) in a more self-directed learning environment (Apps, 1988; Donaldson, et al., 1993). Their focus, as Pilot Study One also reveals, is more on the learning, rather than hoping the instructor likes or feels close to them. One of their major goals is to be able to relate and utilize the classroom information in their personal lives (Donaldson, 1989, Polson, 1993). Nontraditional students realize they are different from their traditional counterparts in the classroom and because of this it seems more important that instructors “view them as individuals,” “adapt to their uniqueness,” and “respect their diversity” (see Appendix A).

While the higher mean student-centeredness score for traditional students expectations compared to that of nontraditional students was not altogether surprising when considering previous research reporting younger students prefer instructors who present a friendly, open, attentive and dramatic classroom style (Comadena, et al., 1992), the significance of this difference was somewhat perplexing. Student-centeredness is described as teaching made up of behaviors where the students and teacher share responsibility for what is taught and how students will learn it (Conti, 1989). Specific behaviors listed in the survey were items such as, encouraging student interaction, adapting objectives to student abilities, using a variety of learning methods, understanding that mistakes are part of learning, and allowing students to develop evaluation criteria. Nontraditional students reported a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 1.2, suggesting their scores ranged between “sometimes” and “often” prefer their teachers exhibit student-centeredness behaviors. This finding would not necessarily contradict what past researchers in the field of adult education have reported about adult learning preferences. Studies have frequently described the adult learner as preferring a student-centered classroom where they create their own goals and personalize the learning so it is relevant to their own lives (Knowles, 1984; Apps, 1988), but they are also reported to value some instructor-centered behaviors such as knowledge of material and clarity of presentation (Donaldson, et al., 1993; Ross-Gordon, 1993). Comadena, et al. (1992) reflected this view as they reported the best predictors of teacher effectiveness for adult learners were the following behaviors: impression leaving, friendly, relaxed, attentive, dominant, and precise.

So, while nontraditional students prefer friendly teachers who appear to enjoy what they do, they also expect them to be in control and specific (clear) in their instruction. Due to findings such as this, Donaldson, et al., (1993) called for an end to the dichotomy that exists between the views of adults preferring either instructor-centered or student-centered instruction. They suggest instructors instead “need to know what specific attributes adults want of an effective instructor and how to attend to these needs in instruction” (Donaldson, et al., 1993, p. 161). The results of RQ3 appear to support the view that while adults expect instructors who are both student-centered and instructor-centered, they place a bit more emphasis on instructor-centered behaviors. Perhaps the specific instructor-centeredness behaviors listed in the survey such as “closely following the syllabus,” and “having a classroom routine” are perceived as similar to the clarity items and simply more important to the student who has been out of the learning environment for an extended period of time. Since adult learners are often described as lacking confidence, basic study and communication skills and displaying hesitancy in the classroom (Berryman-Fink, 1982; Ross & Stokes, 1984), perhaps the returning adult student feels the need for greater or more consistent structure.

While understanding the differences in expectations between traditional and nontraditional students is helpful information for teachers in planning instructional methods, it is equally important to understand the instructor communication variables that overlap for traditional and nontraditional students. The ANOVA results for RQ3 also revealed no significant differences in the two groups’ mean expectation levels for teacher nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, and instructor-centeredness behaviors. In other words, both groups of students in this sample value instructors who smile and

appear relaxed in class (nonverbal immediacy), who know students' names and use personal examples (verbal immediacy), who stay on the topic and prepare students for exams (clarity), and who have a classroom routine and determine learning objectives for students (instructor-centeredness). Pilot Study One offers strong support for the balance in traditional and nontraditional students' expectations of these instructor communication behaviors.

In Pilot Study One, both groups reported strong expectations for an instructor's use of nonverbal immediacy behaviors. Traditional students ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) expected them to engage in eye contact, use vocal variety, and display enthusiasm for the subject matter. Nontraditional students ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) reported a desire for instructors to exhibit passion and enthusiasm for teaching. The views of these two groups obviously overlap enough in the present study to render similar mean scores for expectations of instructors' use of nonverbal immediacy in the classroom.

The difference in mean scores of traditional ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) and nontraditional students ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) for verbal immediacy was also not significant. As with nonverbal immediacy, the reported means for this sample were very close. In Pilot Study One traditional students reported a desire for instructors to encourage student discussion and share personal examples and experiences in class. This makes sense as the instructional literature, which typically has not delineated student samples according to age, has consistently reported positive student responses to verbal immediacy (Gorham, 1988; Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). Since components of verbal immediacy are teacher self-disclosure, asking questions, and encouraging students to talk, it also makes sense that nontraditional students would desire

these communication behaviors from their instructors. If teachers are telling stories about themselves or getting students to do so, this would support one of the primary findings in the adult literature and that is the need for adults to relate learning to real life (Donaldson, 1989; Polson, 1993; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). One of their greatest expectations in Pilot Study One was “use personal examples/relate real-life student examples to lecture” (see Appendix A). Exhibiting verbal immediacy in the classroom would be a primary means of meeting this expectation for the nontraditional student.

Instructor-centeredness expectations, as previously discussed in this section, were similar for traditional ( $\underline{M} = 4.3$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.08$ ) and nontraditional students ( $\underline{M} = 4.28$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.10$ ). Having an instructor who keeps students on task, closely follows the syllabus, and has a classroom routine are behaviors both groups prefer. This makes sense for traditional students, as it would seem to parallel a typical high school learning environment with which they have recent experience. Nontraditional students, on the other hand, who have been absent from the more structured learning environment for a period of time, also appreciate an instructor-centered learning environment. As previously stated, they may prefer more structure due to their unfamiliarity with the undergraduate classroom. Or, the instructor-centeredness items may overlap with instructional clarity. Teachers who “have a routine” and “follow a syllabus” (instructor-centeredness) probably also “stay on the topic” in class. Perhaps these two variables have enough similarities that nontraditional students failed to clearly discriminate between them.

While both groups of students may have felt a degree of overlap between expectations of instructor-centeredness and clarity, they still reported the highest mean

scores, of all the variables, for instructional clarity ( $\underline{M} = 5.59$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .68$  for traditional students and  $\underline{M} = 5.58$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .66$  for nontraditional students). Thus, an instructor's ability to "present knowledge in a way that students understand" was extremely important for all students in the sample regardless of age. Once again, Pilot Study One (see Appendix A) reinforces the value of clarity. In fact, it was the top or most mentioned expectation for traditional students in the focus group discussions. Nontraditional students in Pilot Study One described the importance of instructional clarity through their expectations that teachers are "organized," have "structure in the syllabus and a class routine," and "stay on task with class material." This appears to reinforce the notion that adult learners prefer every moment of class time to be worthwhile and of practical use (Knowles, 1978).

In comparison to expectations traditional and nontraditional students have of their instructors' communication behaviors, this research also sought to discover what they were experiencing in the actual classroom setting. Therefore, the following research question was put forth:

RQ4: To what extent are experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different?

As expected, there were no significant differences between traditional and nontraditional students' experiences of the six instructor communication behaviors. Both groups of students were asked to think of the instructor they have in their last class each week and then complete the instruments intended to measure each variable based on that specific instructor. Since a random sample of nontraditional students was obtained, no pattern was expected to emerge in their classroom experiences. This finding is supported

by the breakdown in college majors reported by the students. Table 4.5 presents the majors for both traditional and nontraditional participants. While the sample of traditional students was a convenience sample, there were 9 different majors represented. Since both groups of students came from a variety of university programs, many different instructors could be examined in the study. Because of this diversity, and perhaps more simply because they take classes together at the same university, it makes sense that there would be no clear pattern to their experiences with instructor communication behaviors. Only reporting on the same instructor or group of similar instructors (e.g., all speech communication faculty) might have created significant differences in their experiences. Since this was not the case, comparing differential scores for students' expectations and experiences to assess learning and state motivation may prove more telling.

To discover whether traditional or nontraditional students' learning and state motivation are affected by their instructor's communication behaviors, it was first necessary to discover levels of met and unmet expectations for the entire sample and then compare those of traditional and nontraditional students.

RQ5: To what extent are student prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different?

RQ5a: To what extent are prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for traditional students?

Table 4.5  
Descriptives for Traditional and Nontraditional Student Major

Age	Major	Frequency	Percent
1. Traditional	undecided	1	.6
2. Nontraditional	undecided	0	0
1. Traditional	agricultural sciences	4	2.4
2. Nontraditional	agricultural sciences	4	2.5
1. Traditional	architecture	2	1.2
2. Nontraditional	architecture	0	0
1. Traditional	arts and sciences	30	17.8
2. Nontraditional	arts and sciences	46	29.1
1. Traditional	business	43	25.4
2. Nontraditional	business	40	25.3
1. Traditional	communications	66	39.1
2. Nontraditional	communications	9	5.7
1. Traditional	education	11	6.5
2. Nontraditional	education	7	4.4
1. Traditional	engineering	4	2.4
2. Nontraditional	engineering	10	6.3
1. Traditional	human ecology	7	4.1
2. Nontraditional	human ecology	24	15.2
1. Traditional	nursing	1	.6
2. Nontraditional	nursing	12	7.6
1. Traditional	social work	0	0
2. Nontraditional	social work	5	3.2
1. Traditional	veterinary medicine	0	0
2. Nontraditional	veterinary medicine	1	.6

*Traditional: N=169    Nontraditional: N=158*



RQ5b: To what extent are prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor communication behaviors (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, and instructor-centeredness/student-centeredness) different for nontraditional students?

Paired-samples  $t$ -tests were conducted to compare the mean differences between student prescriptive expectations and experiences and determine met or unmet expectations for the six instructor communication variables. Significant differences in student expectation and experience scores would determine unmet expectations. A positive violation is described as an expectation that was exceeded by student experiences and a negative violation is an expectation exceeding the experiences. For clarification and comparison purposes, the results for RQ5, RQ5a, and RQ5b will be reported together as each variable is discussed.

As a group, this sample reported significant mean differences in prescriptive expectations and experiences of instructor-centeredness behaviors ( $t = 2.21, p < .05$ ). They experienced ( $M = 4.14, SD = .74$ ) less instructor-centeredness in the classroom than they expected or preferred ( $M = 4.29, SD = 1.09$ ). However, neither traditional students ( $t = 1.51, p = .13$ ) nor nontraditional students reported significant differences between experiences and expectations ( $t = 1.62, p = .10$ ) for instructor-centeredness behaviors.

Since the expectations for instructor-centeredness were negatively violated, they received less than they indicated needing. In other words, they expressed a preference for instructors who primarily lecture, determine learning objectives for students, and keep students on tasks. However, as a group, the instructors they reported having in their last

class each week did not meet their expectations, due to the lower mean and significant difference in the two scores.

This result was most likely due to the large sample size because when the sample was split, instructor-centeredness expectations were met for both traditional and nontraditional students. What this means is that the students who reported not receiving enough instructor-centeredness, were split relatively evenly between the two groups, and therefore the significance of the score was diminished. Therefore, traditional and nontraditional students express satisfaction with the level of instructor-centered behaviors they receive. Since this instructor communication variable involves behaviors such as controlling the instructional environment and keeping students on task, their needs are being met and the behaviors are not overdone.

Similar to the paired-samples  $t$ -test results for the entire sample with instructor-centeredness, was the significant difference between expectations ( $\underline{M} = 4.10$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.10$ ) and experiences ( $\underline{M} = 3.81$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .92$ ) for student-centeredness behaviors ( $t = 3.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When the sample was divided, traditional students reported a significant difference ( $t = 4.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ) between their expectations ( $\underline{M} = 4.34$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.09$ ) and perceived experiences ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .94$ ) of their instructors' use of student-centeredness behaviors. This was not the case for nontraditional students who reported as much student-centeredness from their instructor as expected ( $t = .703$ ,  $p = .483$ ).

Based on these results, the reason for the unmet expectations for the entire sample was due to the traditional students. The younger students in the sample perceived their expectations were negatively violated. In other words, they were not getting enough of these behaviors. These students reported a preference for instructors who would adapt to

their ability levels, display variety in teaching techniques, and hold individual conferences with them to understand their educational needs. Past research reporting traditional students rating “concern for student learning” as one of the most important attributes of the teaching/learning situation (Feldman, 1988) lends support to this expectation. When looking at Pilot Study One (see Appendix A) and the negative instructor communication behaviors traditional students stated they’d experienced, behaviors such as “don’t care if students are learning,” and “always lecturing, reading notes or book so students are uninvolved,” appear to pointedly oppose traditional students’ expectations for instructor use of student-centeredness behaviors.

Nontraditional students, on the other hand reported lower student-centeredness expectations than traditional students. So, perhaps less need for behaviors such as encouraging student interaction, adapting objectives to student abilities, and understanding mistakes are a part of learning aided instructors’ abilities to meet their expectations.

Instructional clarity maintained the highest mean expectation score for the entire sample and for both groups of students. Therefore, it was not surprising that students did not encounter actual teachers who met their clarity needs. The group’s high expectations ( $\underline{M} = 5.59$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .67$ ) were negatively violated ( $t = 18.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ) by their experiences ( $\underline{M} = 4.52$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .86$ ) in class. Within the larger sample, traditional students also reported a significant difference ( $t = 13.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ) between clarity expectation ( $\underline{M} = 5.59$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .68$ ) and experience ( $\underline{M} = 4.47$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .86$ ). In other words, scores for these students ranged between “almost always” and “always” prefer instructors to speak clearly, stay on the topic, and present information in a way they can understand. Nontraditional students

also reported a high mean score for instructor clarity expectation ( $M = 5.58$ ,  $SD = .66$ ) and a significantly lower ( $t = 11.98$ ,  $p < .001$ ) mean score for clarity experience ( $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). These findings suggest all students in the sample expect instructor clarity at such high frequency rates that perceived experiences cannot measure up.

For traditional students, a mean expectation score for clarity of 5.59 is a difficult level for any instructor to attain. Results for RQ5a for this variable are supported by the traditional focus group results in Pilot Study One (see Appendix A) where “Clarity in: presentation, difficult material, expectations for assignments” was the highest ranked response for expected instructor communication behaviors. It will be interesting to discover the impact this negatively violated expectation has on their classroom performance.

Pilot Study One (see Appendix A) may also offer an explanation for the significant difference in clarity expectations and experiences for nontraditional students who were investigated in RQ5b. Although they did not report the need for instructor clarity as often as the traditional students in their focus group discussions, the desire for teachers to be “Organized/Structure in syllabus/class routine/on task material” ranked in the top 10. In addition, this group also mentioned numerous related negative behaviors. They stated they frequently experience “Unclear class goals & learning expectations” with their classroom instructors. Since the nontraditional students mentioned both the need for and negative experience with instructor clarity, this lends support to the results of RQ5b. In addition, since the adult learners in this sample only reported instructor clarity as a negatively violated expectation, strong consideration of its value is warranted. Perhaps it is the driving force for the student-teacher relationship between college

instructors and nontraditional students in the undergraduate classroom. It will be interesting to discover if the level of this unmet expectation affects nontraditional students' learning and motivation in their classes.

One variable where instructors in the classroom exceeded students' mean expectations was nonverbal immediacy. In other words, the paired-samples  $t$ -test revealed a significantly higher ( $t = -2.35$ ,  $p < .05$ ) mean experience score ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = .92$ ) than student expectation ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ). This was most likely due to the large sample size because when the expectation and experience scores were divided between traditional and nontraditional students, the difference scores for nonverbal immediacy were no longer statistically significant. Although traditional student experiences ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) with their instructor's use of nonverbal immediacy slightly exceeded their expectations ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) the difference was not enough to be significant ( $t = -1.36$ ,  $p = .17$ ). Nontraditional students also experienced similar levels ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = .85$ ) of nonverbal immediacy than they perceived needing ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ), revealing no significant difference ( $t = -1.96$ ,  $p = .051$ ) and therefore, met expectations.

For both groups of students, the instructor in the last class they had each week engaged in just enough eye contact, smiled and moved around the room frequently, and appeared as relaxed as they expected. Though the difference scores for the separate groups were not statistically significant, the fact that their expectations were generally exceeded and were statistically significantly different from their expectations within the entire group is important. They are receiving more nonverbal immediacy than they believe they need. Will the instructor who expresses too much nonverbal immediacy

(positive expectancy violation) create positive outcomes? Research has reported that when teachers utilize nonverbal immediacy behaviors, it encourages student liking and learning (Comstock, et al., 1995). But, can there ever be too much of a good thing? Based on the results of RQ5, RQ5a, and RQ5b, it will be interesting to see if this difference for the entire group impacts their learning and motivation.

Compared to nonverbal immediacy, student perceptions of instructor use of verbal immediacy behaviors produced quite different results. As a group, they experienced ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) significantly less ( $t = 3.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ) verbal immediacy than they expected ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ), creating a negative expectancy violation. When the sample is broken down into the two age groups, it is the traditional students who appear to be driving this result. They reported a statistically significant difference ( $t = 3.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in their expectation for verbal immediacy behaviors ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) and the level they experience in the last class they had each week ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ). The nontraditional students, on the other hand, reported met expectations ( $t = 1.14$ ,  $p = .25$ ) for verbal immediacy behaviors (expectation:  $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ; experience:  $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) indicating their instructors' communication behaviors in this area satisfied them.

The instructional literature has consistently reported students responding positively to an instructor's use of verbal immediacy behaviors, and since most appear to deal with traditional-age students, this result is not surprising. In fact, studies that have examined student reactions to instructors who know students' names, who tell interesting stories or jokes, and who disclose personal views and information have reported increased levels of student affective and cognitive learning and state motivation to study

(Gorham, 1988; Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). One study even determined verbal immediacy had a greater impact on learning than nonverbal immediacy (Rodriquez, et al., 1996), which may be one reason for the perceived level of unmet expectations of verbal immediacy rather than nonverbal immediacy in this study. In addition, traditional students listed verbal immediacy behaviors as five of the nine top instructor communication expectations in Pilot Study One (see Appendix A). With the degree of desirability for this behavior, it may be difficult for any instructor to meet students' needs, which could explain the statistically significant difference and the negative violation of verbal immediacy in the classroom. This age group has perceived a difference in what they want and what they get from their instructors. Research by Christophel (1990) concluded that verbal immediacy was necessary to impact state motivation to study to affect learning. If this is the case, since the traditional students are not receiving enough verbal immediacy, their classroom performance may be affected.

Nontraditional students, on the other hand, reported met expectations for verbal immediacy behaviors in their classes. They expect instructors to perform behaviors such as encouraging them to talk, knowing their name, and using personal examples. The instructors they have in their last class each week fulfill their expectations. They appear to recognize verbal immediacy when they see it and are satisfied with the levels they are receiving. Examining the results, once again, of Pilot Study One (see Appendix A), nontraditional students reported the highest frequency for positive instructor communication behaviors experienced was "Recognize students/respect as individuals/diverse opinions." This response appears to reflect instructor verbal immediacy behaviors and they have noticed instructors engaging in these behaviors.

Since Christophel (1990) reported verbal immediacy impacting motivation and learning, it will be interesting to see whether these met expectations for the nontraditional students are predictive of their outcome behaviors.

The final instructor communication variable addressed in RQ5, RQ5a, and RQ5b was affinity-seeking. This is defined as a perception of liking that includes positive perceptions we have of someone else's credibility, attraction, and similarity to us. As a whole, this sample of students reported that their instructors in the last class they have each week significantly exceeded ( $t = -3.09, p < .01$ ) their expected levels for their affinity-seeking behaviors. In other words, instructors positively violated students' expectations ( $M = 4.22, SD = 1.06$ ) by engaging in higher levels of affinity-seeking ( $M = 4.45, SD = .92$ ). When the group scores for affinity-seeking expectations and experiences were split, it was the nontraditional students who appeared to create the statistically significant difference for the entire group. Nontraditional students reported experiencing ( $M = 4.47, SD = .91$ ) significantly more ( $t = -3.98, p < .001$ ) affinity-seeking behaviors from their instructor than they perceived needing ( $M = 4.03, SD = .99$ ). Traditional students' expectations, on the other hand, were met ( $t = -.37, p = .70$ ), as they reported experiencing ( $M = 4.44, SD = .93$ ) as much affinity-seeking from their instructors as they desired ( $M = 4.40, SD = 1.09$ ).

Nontraditional students reported they expected instructors to use affinity-seeking behaviors in the classroom. However, when they were asked to evaluate a specific instructor's use of these behaviors, their expectations were positively violated. This may or may not be a good thing. Based on the results of Pilot Study One (see Appendix A), it appears nontraditional students had some expectations for instructors' use of affinity-



seeking behaviors. For example, they stated they expected them to be experts in the subject matter, respect their students, and treat students as equals. Perhaps, though, the conceptual definition of affinity-seeking did not fully describe the expected instructor behaviors represented by the more lengthy and descriptive 30-item scale intended to measure student experiences in the second half of the survey. Many of these behaviors, for example, were also mentioned in conjunction with other instructor communication behaviors such as being “open-minded” and “adapting to student uniqueness,” which may overlap with student-centeredness. Perhaps affinity-seeking is simply not something adult learners contemplate needing from their instructors.

It seems, in fact, that based on the focus group discussions in Pilot Study One, it was easier for them to think of negative experiences with instructors than the positive ones. This may explain why their expectations for affinity-seeking were exceeded. Instead of having an open-ended discussion of positive and negative experiences in the classroom, these students were given a list of instructor behaviors and asked to report how often a particular instructor performed them. So, when they were given a list of behaviors, such as affinity-seeking, they were forced to stop and examine them. Affinity-seeking was first introduced as an interpersonal communication construct intended to elicit positive feelings from another person (McCroskey & Wheeless, 1976; Bell and Daly, 1984). However, nontraditional students who are more focused on how course material will meet their needs (Donaldson, 1989; Polson, 1993; Richardson & Lane, 1993; Zemke & Zemke, 1984) may simply not feel the need, or be aware they have a need for instructor affinity-seeking. Perhaps it is only when they are asked about a specific instructors’ use of affinity-seeking behaviors that they give it any thought. Based

on this result, it will be interesting to discover if this positively violated expectation has an effect on nontraditional students' levels of state motivation and learning.

The traditional students' affinity-seeking expectations were met; they perceived the instructors they have in their last class each week are sensitive, dynamic, comfortable in class, and good listeners. Traditional students desire significantly more affinity-seeking behaviors from their instructors than nontraditional students. If this is the case, these met expectations should lead to enhanced motivation and learning, and research has supported the connection between instructor use of affinity-seeking behaviors and perceived motivation and learning (Beebe & Butland, 1993; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Roach, 1991). Beebe & Butland (1993) suggested these behaviors affected students' emotions by fostering positive feelings. For younger students, this might be especially important to them, as research suggests the traditional undergraduate student prefers instructors who present a friendly, open, attentive and dramatic classroom style (Comadena, et al., 1992). In addition, the present research reveals a significant correlation (Table 4.2) for traditional students between student affinity-seeking experiences and state motivation ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ) and learning indicators ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). Based on this research and the met affinity-seeking expectations for these traditional students, it will be important to determine if their experiences influence of their perceived learning and motivation.

The results of the three research questions (RQ5, RQ5a, and RQ5b) revealed significant differences in student expectations and experiences for every communication variable. While this information is valuable on its own, more importantly it provides a link to discovering the role each one plays in learning and motivation for students.

Traditional and nontraditional students reported met expectations (both groups: nonverbal immediacy and instructor-centeredness; traditional students: affinity-seeking; nontraditional students: verbal immediacy and student-centeredness), negatively violated expectations (both groups: instructional clarity; traditional students: verbal immediacy and student-centeredness) and positively violated expectations (nontraditional students: affinity-seeking) for instructor communication. Instructor clarity was the only violated communication variable they responded to in a similar direction (negatively violated). This indicates basic differences between the two groups, which could be valuable information for instructors teaching classes comprised of both traditional and nontraditional students.

### **Outcome Variables: Cognitive Learning and State Motivation**

The instructional communication literature has consistently reported that instructor use of communication behaviors in the classroom has a bearing on student performance. Nonverbal immediacy (Comstock, et al., 1995; Messman & Jones-Corley, 2001), verbal immediacy (Powell & Harville, 1990 Rodriguez, et al., 1996), affinity-seeking (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Richmond, 1990; Roach, 1991), clarity (Chesbro & McCroskey, 2001), instructor-centeredness (Nunan, 1995), and student-centeredness (Brookfield, 1986; Nunn, 1996) have all been associated with student learning and motivation in the classroom. To determine if traditional and nontraditional students' classroom performance was affected by their prescriptive expectations and experiences, it was first necessary to discover their different levels of cognitive learning and state motivation.

RQ6: To what extent do traditional and nontraditional students differ in their

levels of cognitive learning?

An Independent Samples  $t$ -test was conducted to determine if traditional and nontraditional students experienced different levels of cognitive learning. A significant difference ( $t = 3.59, p < .001$ ) in the mean level of cognitive learning was found between traditional students ( $M = 23.95, SD = 7.74$ ) and nontraditional students ( $M = 26.86, SD = 6.76$ ).

The results suggest that in the last class these students have each week, nontraditional students more frequently perform behaviors that indicate cognitive learning. They reported, for example, that they more frequently “see connections between this course’s content and my career goals,” “talk about what I’m doing in this class with friends and family,” and “think about this course’s content outside of class.” Although there was no significant difference between traditional and nontraditional students’ experiences with instructor communication in the last class they have each week, there must be some explanation for this difference in cognitive learning.

One explanation might be that the nontraditional students differ significantly ( $p < .001$ ) from their younger counterparts in their levels of trait motivation, as discussed earlier. Nontraditional students reported a mean of 24.7 and standard deviation of 5.61, whereas traditional students reported a trait motivation mean of 19.63 and a standard deviation of 5.41. The fact that the adult learners in this sample were already more inherently motivated to learn than the traditional students, may have had a bearing on the learning they reported in their specific class. In addition, many of the items on the Revised Learning Indicators Scale are similar to the Learning Oriented Behaviors reported earlier in the results. For example, “I discuss interesting material that I’ve

learned in class with my friends and family,” and “I stay after interesting classes to discuss material with the instructors,” are closely related to learning indicators items previously presented. In addition, nontraditional students reported statistically significantly higher levels ( $p < .001$ ) of Learning Orientation Behaviors ( $M = 24.03$ ,  $SD = 4.71$ ) than traditional students ( $M = 19.07$ ,  $SD = 5.46$ ). Therefore, if nontraditional students report they more frequently discuss material outside of class and stay after to discuss what they’ve learned with their instructors, this may be related to their higher level of perceived cognitive learning. As Pollio and Beck (2000) reported, learning oriented students view college as an opportunity to acquire information that is personally relevant to their lives; perhaps this perspective leads nontraditional students to perceive they also learn more in their classes.

As it has been reported that student state motivation levels are affected by instructor behavior (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Frymier, et al., 1996), it will be important to initially determine whether traditional and nontraditional students in the sample reported different levels of state motivation in the last class they have each week. Therefore, the following research question was put forth:

RQ7: To what extent do traditional and nontraditional students differ in their levels of state motivation?

To answer this question an Independent Samples  $t$ -test was conducted to compare student reports of state motivation levels in the last class they have each week. A statistically significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) was reported between traditional students’ ( $M = 21.48$ ,  $SD = 7.12$ ) and nontraditional students’ ( $M = 24.21$ ,  $SD = 6.93$ ) state motivation levels, with nontraditional students experiencing a higher level of state motivation in the

classroom. Previous research has separated trait from state motivation (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, et al., 1996), so while there is not, at this point, a clear explanation for why nontraditional students would be more motivated within the particular class on which they were asked to report, additional research supports the idea of instructor influence and teaching style on state motivation levels (Bandura, 1981; Brophy, 1983; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Frymier, 1994).

To help explain the significant difference in mean state motivation levels it was necessary to examine the impact of student characteristics and instructor communication variables in the study. In other words, how much do they predict the levels of state motivation students experience in class? To address this issue and to compare the impact for traditional and nontraditional students, the following three research questions were put forth:

RQ8: To what extent does age and learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict state motivation?

RQ8a: To what extent does age and learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict state motivation for traditional students?

RQ8b: To what extent does age and learning orientation and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict state motivation for nontraditional students?

To answer RQ8, a Stepwise Regression analysis was conducted to indicate the unique and shared contributions of different combinations of the 16 predictor variables on state motivation. Stepwise Regression is the most commonly used method of variable selection (Norusis, 1998), especially, as in this case, when “there are correlations among the independent variables.” (SPSS Base 10.0 Applications Guide, 1999, p. 216). The variables were entered in the following steps: 1.) age, learning orientation behavior, grade orientation behavior, and trait motivation; 2.) nonverbal immediacy expectation, verbal immediacy expectation, clarity expectation, instructor-centeredness expectation, student-centeredness expectation, and affinity-seeking expectation; 3.) nonverbal immediacy experience, verbal immediacy experience, clarity experience, instructor-centeredness experience, student-centeredness experience, and affinity-seeking experience. Follow-up Stepwise Regressions were conducted in the same way to answer RQ8a and RQ8b and are discussed within the results of the regression on the entire sample. In the Stepwise Regression analysis, a higher value of  $R^2$  indicates that more of the variance or differences in the outcome variable can be explained systematically by the predictor variables.

Results of this analysis revealed that trait motivation, clarity experience, student-centeredness experience, nonverbal immediacy experience, and affinity-seeking expectation accounted for 49 percent of the variance in state motivation ( $F = 61.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Examination of the partial correlations indicated that trait motivation of the students in this sample accounted for 44 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .001$ ) in state motivation. While this is considerably larger than the other predictor variables, the other four were strong. Student experiences with instructor clarity accounted for 23 percent of

the unique variance ( $p < .001$ ), student-centeredness experiences accounted for 20 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .001$ ), affinity-seeking expectations accounted for 13 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .05$ ), and nonverbal immediacy accounted for 11 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .05$ ) in state motivation. Student age was not a predictor of state motivation, which indicates the importance of trait motivation and these four specific instructor communication variables. Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 present the results of the Stepwise Regression analyses for RQ8, RQ8a, and RQ8b.

Trait motivation is a strong predictor of the variance in state motivation by students in the sample. Since instructor behavior has been reported to have little impact on trait motivation, it is important to note its impact on these results (Frymier, et al., 1996). Nonetheless, students' trait motivation scores are predictive of their state motivation in class. In addition, even though nontraditional students reported significantly higher levels of trait motivation than traditional students, it was a statistically significant predictor of state motivation for both age groups (traditional:  $t = 4.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ; nontraditional:  $t = 5.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ). So, the more inherent levels of motivation are predictive of how motivated students will be in class and nontraditional students report significantly higher levels. It was initially surprising that age was not a predictor of the variance in state motivation. However, RQ1 indicated trait motivation for nontraditional students is significantly higher than it is for traditional students, thus this result may be viewed as a representative characteristic of age, which is predictive of state motivation.

Instructor clarity was again a prominent factor for students in the sample. In this case, clarity represented an important predictor of the students' state motivation to study



Table 4.6  
Stepwise Regression: State Motivation for All Students

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.562 <sup>a</sup>	.316	.314	5.9310
2	.661 <sup>b</sup>	.437	.433	5.3885
3	.689 <sup>c</sup>	.474	.470	5.2139
4	.696 <sup>d</sup>	.484	.478	5.1739
5	.701 <sup>e</sup>	.491	.483	5.1467

- a. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE  
b. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT  
c. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, SCEXPAVE  
d. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, SCEXPAVE, affinity seeking expectation  
e. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, SCEXPAVE, affinity seeking expectation, NVEXPAVE

**Coefficients <sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.757	1.750		1.004	.316
	CLEXPAVE	4.648	.380	.562	12.244	.000
2	(Constant)	-4.814	1.774		-2.714	.007
	CLEXPAVE	4.051	.352	.490	11.501	.000
	TMOTTOT	.420	.050	.356	8.350	.000
3	(Constant)	-5.540	1.723		-3.215	.001
	CLEXPAVE	2.336	.493	.282	4.734	.000
	TMOTTOT	.426	.049	.361	8.750	.000
	SCEXPAVE	2.190	.456	.283	4.804	.000
4	(Constant)	-2.989	2.001		-1.494	.136
	CLEXPAVE	2.304	.490	.279	4.704	.000
	TMOTTOT	.430	.048	.364	8.897	.000
	SCEXPAVE	2.267	.453	.293	5.000	.000
	affinity seeking expectation	-.661	.270	-.099	-2.452	.015
5	(Constant)	-4.510	2.118		-2.129	.034
	CLEXPAVE	2.133	.494	.258	4.317	.000
	TMOTTOT	.432	.048	.365	8.974	.000
	SCEXPAVE	1.854	.492	.240	3.767	.000
	affinity seeking expectation	-.647	.268	-.096	-2.412	.016
	NVEXPAVE	.838	.399	.109	2.101	.036

a. Dependent Variable: STMOTTOT

Table 4.6 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

CLEXPAVE: Clarity Experiences  
TMOTTOT: Trait Motivation Score  
SCEXPAVE: Student-Centeredness Experience  
NVEXPAVE: Nonverbal Immediacy Experience  
STMOTTOT: State Motivation Score

Table 4.7  
Stepwise Regression: State Motivation for Traditional Students

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.573 <sup>a</sup>	.328	.324	5.8605
2	.650 <sup>b</sup>	.422	.415	5.4522
3	.671 <sup>c</sup>	.451	.441	5.3318
4	.683 <sup>d</sup>	.467	.454	5.2695

a. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT

c. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, ICEXPAVE

d. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, ICEXPAVE, LOACTTOT

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.435	2.373		.183	.855
	CLEXPAVE	4.699	.520	.573	9.036	.000
2	(Constant)	-5.332	2.471		-2.157	.032
	CLEXPAVE	4.180	.494	.510	8.462	.000
	TMOTTOT	.412	.079	.313	5.191	.000
3	(Constant)	.299	3.087		.097	.923
	CLEXPAVE	4.372	.487	.533	8.967	.000
	TMOTTOT	.435	.078	.330	5.575	.000
	ICEXPAVE	-1.667	.569	-.172	-2.930	.004
4	(Constant)	-.739	3.087		-.240	.811
	CLEXPAVE	4.274	.484	.521	8.834	.000
	TMOTTOT	.361	.084	.274	4.292	.000
	ICEXPAVE	-1.810	.566	-.187	-3.197	.002
	LOACTTOT	.185	.083	.142	2.220	.028

a. Dependent Variable: STMOTTOT

Table 4.7 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

CLEXPAVE: Clarity Experience  
TMOTTOT: Trait Motivation Score  
ICEXPAVE: Instructor-Centeredness Experience  
LOACTTOT: Learning Orientation Behavior Score  
STMOTTOT: State Motivation Score

Table 4.8  
Stepwise Regression: State Motivation for Nontraditional Students

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.594 <sup>a</sup>	.352	.348	5.6023
2	.672 <sup>b</sup>	.452	.445	5.1709
3	.694 <sup>c</sup>	.482	.472	5.0425
4	.705 <sup>d</sup>	.497	.484	4.9855
5	.701 <sup>e</sup>	.491	.481	4.9972

a. Predictors: (Constant), ASEXPAVE

b. Predictors: (Constant), ASEXPAVE, TMOTTOT

c. Predictors: (Constant), ASEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, SCEXPAVE

d. Predictors: (Constant), ASEXPAVE, TMOTTOT, SCEXPAVE, CLEXPAVE

e. Predictors: (Constant), TMOTTOT, SCEXPAVE, CLEXPAVE

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.004	2.238		1.789	.076
	ASEXPAVE	4.516	.490	.594	9.213	.000
2	(Constant)	-3.645	2.519		-1.447	.150
	ASEXPAVE	4.032	.462	.530	8.735	.000
	TMOTTOT	.397	.075	.322	5.302	.000
3	(Constant)	-4.032	2.460		-1.639	.103
	ASEXPAVE	1.861	.853	.245	2.182	.031
	TMOTTOT	.413	.073	.335	5.641	.000
	SCEXPAVE	2.556	.853	.332	2.999	.003
4	(Constant)	-5.989	2.600		-2.303	.023
	ASEXPAVE	1.183	.901	.155	1.313	.191
	TMOTTOT	.400	.073	.324	5.497	.000
	SCEXPAVE	2.206	.859	.287	2.569	.011
	CLEXPAVE	1.453	.682	.180	2.132	.035
5	(Constant)	-5.486	2.578		-2.128	.035
	TMOTTOT	.412	.072	.333	5.690	.000
	SCEXPAVE	3.009	.604	.391	4.981	.000
	CLEXPAVE	1.769	.639	.219	2.767	.006

a. Dependent Variable: STMOTTOT

Table 4.8 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

ASEXPAVE: Affinity-Seeking Experience  
TMOTTOT: Trait Motivation Score  
SCEXPAVE: Student-Centeredness Experience  
CLEXPAVE: Clarity Experience  
STMOTTOT: State Motivation Score

in the class they reported on in the survey. The mean score for instructor clarity expectations reported by both traditional ( $\underline{M} = 5.59$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .68$ ) and nontraditional students ( $\underline{M} = 5.58$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .66$ ) was higher than any other instructor communication variable. In addition, both groups reported statistically significant differences in clarity expectations and experiences, meaning they received less than they reported needing. Since clarity is highly valued by these students, as indicated by the results in RQ3 and RQ5, it makes sense that it would be a strong predictor of their classroom motivation. The follow-up regressions for traditional and nontraditional students supported the importance of this instructor communication variable, as clarity experiences were significant predictors for both (traditional:  $t = 8.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ; nontraditional:  $t = 2.76$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The value of clarity in RQ8 is supported by the focus group responses for Pilot Study One, as both traditional and nontraditional students described the desire for clarity and the appreciation of it when it occurred.

Clarity was significantly correlated with student experiences of instructors' student-centeredness in the classroom ( $r = .72$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating students perceived these two instructor communication behaviors to be highly related. So, teachers who "use different teaching techniques throughout the course," "adapt the learning objectives to match the individual abilities and needs of the students," and "organize class activities to reflect problems students encounter in everyday life" may also be viewed as being clear. In other words, they "present knowledge in a way that students understand" (Simonds, 1997, p. 279). Experiencing student-centered instruction is a valuable predictor of classroom motivation for students in the sample ( $t = 3.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This makes sense as past research reported that greater student-centered instruction is a boost

to student motivation (Nunn, 1996). In the follow-up regressions, instructor use of student-centeredness behaviors was predictive of the variance in state motivation only for the nontraditional students ( $t = 4.98, p < .001$ ). The positive beta weight ( $\beta = 3.00$ ) would appear to indicate these students appreciate the experiences with an instructor who “plans learning activities that take into account students’ prior experiences,” and “allows students to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating student performance in class.” Though traditional and nontraditional student experiences did not differ from one another (RQ4), the results of this follow-up regression indicate teachers who engage in these behaviors influence state motivation levels of nontraditional students more than traditional students.

Instructors who engage in nonverbal immediacy behaviors also appear to predict the variance in student levels of state motivation ( $t = 2.1, p < .05$ ). As nonverbal immediacy is highly correlated with student-centeredness ( $r = .62, p < .01$ ), this result makes sense. Though there does not appear to be an overlap in the types of behaviors comprising these two variables, students, nonetheless, respond comparably to both. Therefore, instructors who smile at their students, engage in eye contact, and move around the classroom, are also likely to be the same instructors who focus on a more student-centered method of instruction. Students who experience this type of communication from their instructors may become more motivated in class. Past research has reported students respond differently to instructor use of nonverbal immediacy and that it is not equally beneficial to all students (Frymier, 1993a; Frymier, 1993b; Kearney, Plax, Smith & Sorensen, 1988). This finding would appear to be supported by the results of the follow-up regression with traditional and nontraditional



students. When the sample was divided, nonverbal immediacy did not appear to be a strong predictor for either group. When the sample is split, nonverbal immediacy simply does not have as much predictive power. Nonetheless, since instructor use of nonverbal immediacy behaviors predicted state motivation for the entire sample, it is still an important variable for teachers looking for ways to help motivate students.

Expectations for instructor use of affinity-seeking behaviors also predicted the variance in state motivation. However, the beta weight of the variable ( $\beta = -.64$ ) would appear to indicate that it has a negative effect on motivation. In other words, student expectations for instructors to see things from their point of view, to try and make class a fun place to learn, or to give advice or guidance are predictive of the variance in state motivation, though in a negative direction. Students in the sample don't expect instructors to engage in affinity-seeking behaviors. Past research, however, has supported a link between affinity-seeking techniques and motivation (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Richmond, 1990; Roach, 1991). What may be happening is that students respond positively when they experience these behaviors, but don't necessarily think they expect instructors to engage in them.

Since RQ5b reported affinity-seeking expectations of nontraditional students were positively violated, it will be interesting to determine if the difference in their expectations and experiences affects their levels of state motivation. With this research question, however, regressing each variable separately did not reveal affinity-seeking expectations to be a strong predictor of state motivation for either traditional or nontraditional students. Once again, the large sample size may have aided in the

predictive power of affinity-seeking. With the sample split in two separate groups, it is simply not as strong.

Two additional variables revealed in the follow-up regression for traditional students were instructor-centeredness experience and learning orientation behaviors. Instructor-centeredness, which may be considered a more controlling and authoritative classroom communication style (Conti, 1989; Grasha, 1994), had a negative impact on state motivation for traditional students ( $\beta = -1.81$ ). What this means is that while they may expect some of this behavior from their instructors ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), experiencing instructors who “primarily use lectures as the method of presenting subject matter to students” and “maintains a quiet, orderly, and controlled classroom” may be demotivating (Christophel & Gorham, 1995). The degree with which traditional students engage in learning orientation behaviors was also predictive of their state motivation. Even though they reported engaging in significantly lower levels of these behaviors than nontraditional students, it was, nonetheless, a factor in the regression model for them ( $\beta = .186$ ,  $t = 2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ). So, their perceived use of learning orientation behaviors such as staying after classes to discuss course material with instructors and doing optional, suggested readings are predictive of state motivation for traditional students.

The results of RQ8, RQ8a, and RQ8b provide valuable information for instructors who hope to motivate their students in class. However, it is also important to note that it is not completely under the instructor’s control. Instructors can certainly enhance their levels of clarity in the classroom by engaging in behaviors such as previewing daily class material, communicating classroom process and expectations, asking students if they understand assignments and know how to do them, and providing student feedback. Trait

motivation, on the other hand, is more inherent. It is a level of motivation the students bring with them to class. In fact, it is made up of behaviors students have most likely engaged in frequently and with which they have become accustomed. However, instructors should not assume there is nothing they can do to motivate students if at first they don't appear as motivated as they'd hoped. Instructors would be wise to practice some of the nonverbal immediacy techniques and engage in increased levels of student-centeredness behaviors. The Stepwise Regression analyses provide strong evidence of the value in doing this.

To also help explain the significant difference in mean levels of cognitive learning reported in RQ6 it was necessary to examine the impact of student characteristics and instructor communication variables in the study. In other words, how much do they predict the levels of cognitive learning students experience in class? To address this as well as to compare the impact for traditional and nontraditional students, the following research questions were put forth:

RQ9: To what extent does age, learning and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict cognitive learning?

RQ9a: To what extent does age, learning and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict cognitive learning for traditional students?

RQ9b: To what extent does age, learning and grade orientation behaviors, trait motivation, student prescriptive expectations and student experiences predict cognitive learning for nontraditional students?

To answer RQ9, a Stepwise Regression analysis was conducted to indicate the unique and shared contributions of different combinations of the 16 predictor variables on cognitive learning. The variables were entered in the following steps: 1.) age, learning orientation behaviors, grade orientation behaviors, and trait motivation; 2.) nonverbal immediacy expectation, verbal immediacy expectation, clarity expectation, instructor-centeredness expectation, student-centeredness expectation, and affinity-seeking expectation; 3.) nonverbal immediacy experience, verbal immediacy experience, clarity experience, instructor-centeredness experience, student-centeredness experience, and affinity-seeking experience. As with RQ8, a higher value of  $R^2$  indicates that more of the variance or differences in the outcome variable can be explained systematically by the predictor variables.

Results of this analysis revealed that clarity experience, learning orientation behaviors, nonverbal immediacy experiences, grade orientation behaviors, and instructor-centeredness behaviors accounted for 39 percent of the variance in cognitive learning measured by the Revised Learning Indicators Scale ( $F = 42.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Examination of the partial correlations indicated that student experiences with instructor clarity accounted for 33 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .001$ ), learning orientation behaviors accounted for 35 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .001$ ), nonverbal immediacy experience accounted for 12 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .05$ ), grade-oriented behaviors accounted for 14 percent of the unique variance ( $p < .05$ ), and instructor-centeredness behaviors in the classroom accounted for 13 percent of the unique variance in cognitive learning ( $p < .05$ ). Follow-up regressions on learning to answer RQ9a and RQ9b with traditional and nontraditional students were also conducted to determine

possible difference in the effects of these variables. The variables were entered in the same steps as RQ9. The findings are discussed within the results of the Stepwise Regression on the entire sample. Tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 present the results of the three Stepwise Regression analyses.

Instructor clarity was again a prominent factor for students in the sample. In this case, clarity represented an important predictor of the student levels of cognitive learning in the class they reported on in the survey. The mean score for instructor clarity expectations reported by both traditional ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) and nontraditional students ( $M = 5.58$ ,  $SD = .66$ ) was higher than any other instructor communication variable. Both groups also reported significant differences in clarity expectations and experiences, meaning they received less than they reported needing. This may be an indication that they know when they're not getting enough to satisfy them. Supportive of the value of instructor clarity, past research has indicated positive correlations between teacher clarity and cognitive learning (Book, et al., 1985; Civilkly, 1992). Since clarity is highly valued by these students, also indicated by the results in RQ3 and RQ5, it makes sense that it would be a strong predictor of their classroom learning. The follow-up regressions to answer RQ9a and RQ9b revealed clarity as a strong predictor of learning for both traditional and nontraditional students. An interesting result to note, however, in the follow-up regression for nontraditional students was the appearance of both clarity expectation and clarity experience in the model. In this regression equation on learning, clarity expectation had a negative predictive value ( $\beta = -1.51$ ) and clarity experience resulted in a positive predictive value ( $\beta = 1.96$ ). The interpretation of this may be that

Table 4.9  
Stepwise Regression: Cognitive Learning for All Students

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.463 <sup>a</sup>	.214	.212	6.5869
2	.592 <sup>b</sup>	.351	.347	5.9966
3	.610 <sup>c</sup>	.372	.366	5.9053
4	.621 <sup>d</sup>	.385	.377	5.8537
5	.629 <sup>e</sup>	.396	.386	5.8122

a. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT

c. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, NVEXPAVE

d. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, NVEXPAVE, GOACTTOT

e. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, NVEXPAVE, GOACTTOT, ICEXPAVE

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.397	1.943		3.807	.000
	CLEXPAVE	3.967	.422	.463	9.411	.000
2	(Constant)	.642	1.949		.329	.742
	CLEXPAVE	3.498	.388	.408	9.017	.000
	LOACTTOT	.414	.050	.374	8.254	.000
3	(Constant)	-2.024	2.080		-.973	.331
	CLEXPAVE	2.676	.455	.312	5.883	.000
	LOACTTOT	.417	.049	.377	8.455	.000
	NVEXPAVE	1.398	.420	.175	3.332	.001
4	(Constant)	2.398	2.676		.896	.371
	CLEXPAVE	2.638	.451	.308	5.848	.000
	LOACTTOT	.362	.053	.327	6.800	.000
	NVEXPAVE	1.329	.417	.167	3.190	.002
	GOACTTOT	-.144	.056	-.125	-2.592	.010
5	(Constant)	7.164	3.332		2.150	.032
	CLEXPAVE	2.926	.464	.341	6.305	.000
	LOACTTOT	.355	.053	.321	6.707	.000
	NVEXPAVE	1.009	.435	.126	2.318	.021
	GOACTTOT	-.143	.055	-.124	-2.587	.010
	ICEXPAVE	-1.086	.458	-.109	-2.370	.018

a. Dependent Variable: LNGTOT

Table 4.9 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

CLEXPAVE: Clarity Experience  
LOACTTOT: Learning Orientation Behavior Score  
NVEXPAVE: Nonverbal Immediacy Experience  
GOACTTOT: Grade Orientation Behavior Score  
ICEXPAVE: Instructor-Centeredness Experience  
LNGTOT: Learning Score

Table 4.10  
Stepwise Regression: Cognitive Learning for Traditional Students

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.436 <sup>a</sup>	.190	.185	6.9907
2	.536 <sup>b</sup>	.287	.279	6.5766
3	.583 <sup>c</sup>	.340	.328	6.3464
4	.608 <sup>d</sup>	.370	.354	6.2225
5	.626 <sup>e</sup>	.392	.373	6.1308
6	.643 <sup>f</sup>	.413	.391	6.0407

a. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT

c. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ICEXPAVE

d. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ICEXPAVE, student centeredness expectation

e. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ICEXPAVE, student centeredness expectation, affinity seeking expectation

f. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ICEXPAVE, student centeredness expectation, affinity seeking expectation, NVEXPAVE

Index: Variable Abbreviations

CLEXPAVE: Clarity Experience

LOACTTOT: Learning Orientation Behavior Score

ICEXPAVE: Instructor-Centeredness Experience

NVEXPAVE: Nonverbal Immediacy Experience

LNGTOT: Learning Score



Table 4.10 (continued)

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.581	2.830		2.325	.021
	CLEXPAVE	3.879	.620	.436	6.254	.000
2	(Constant)	.294	2.972		.099	.921
	CLEXPAVE	3.369	.593	.378	5.677	.000
	LOACTTOT	.450	.094	.317	4.764	.000
3	(Constant)	8.471	3.642		2.326	.021
	CLEXPAVE	3.641	.577	.409	6.306	.000
	LOACTTOT	.498	.092	.351	5.409	.000
	ICEXPAVE	-2.480	.681	-.236	-3.641	.000
4	(Constant)	4.513	3.848		1.173	.243
	CLEXPAVE	3.580	.567	.402	6.317	.000
	LOACTTOT	.461	.091	.326	5.061	.000
	ICEXPAVE	-2.585	.669	-.246	-3.865	.000
	student centeredness expectation	1.236	.447	.174	2.763	.006
5	(Constant)	7.265	3.956		1.837	.068
	CLEXPAVE	3.742	.562	.420	6.656	.000
	LOACTTOT	.476	.090	.336	5.291	.000
	ICEXPAVE	-2.712	.661	-.258	-4.103	.000
	student centeredness expectation	1.652	.473	.233	3.496	.001
	affinity seeking expectation	-1.146	.470	-.163	-2.438	.016
6	(Constant)	1.835	4.493		.408	.684
	CLEXPAVE	2.813	.673	.316	4.177	.000
	LOACTTOT	.464	.089	.327	5.217	.000
	ICEXPAVE	-2.053	.705	-.195	-2.910	.004
	student centeredness expectation	1.784	.469	.252	3.807	.000
	affinity seeking expectation	-1.172	.463	-.166	-2.531	.012
	NVEXPAVE	1.454	.598	.186	2.429	.016

a. Dependent Variable: LNGTOT

Table 4.11  
Stepwise Regression: Cognitive Learning for Nontraditional Students

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.495 <sup>a</sup>	.245	.240	5.8973
2	.620 <sup>b</sup>	.384	.376	5.3428
3	.643 <sup>c</sup>	.414	.403	5.2280
4	.656 <sup>d</sup>	.430	.416	5.1708
5	.672 <sup>e</sup>	.452	.434	5.0905
6	.683 <sup>f</sup>	.466	.445	5.0401

a. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT

c. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ASEXPAVE

d. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ASEXPAVE, instructional clarity expectation

e. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ASEXPAVE, instructional clarity expectation, TMOTTOT

f. Predictors: (Constant), CLEXPAVE, LOACTTOT, ASEXPAVE, instructional clarity expectation, TMOTTOT, student centeredness expectation

Index Variable Abbreviations

CLEXPAVE: Clarity Experience

LOACTTOT: Learning Orientation Behavior Score

ASEXPAVE: Affinity-Seeking Experience

TMOTTOT: Trait Motivation Score

LNGTOT: Learning Score

Table 4.11 (continued)

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.059	2.548		3.556	.000
	CLEXPAVE	3.887	.547	.495	7.109	.000
2	(Constant)	1.624	2.628		.618	.538
	CLEXPAVE	3.599	.498	.458	7.230	.000
	LOACTTOT	.364	.062	.375	5.921	.000
3	(Constant)	-.180	2.650		-.068	.946
	CLEXPAVE	2.182	.701	.278	3.110	.002
	LOACTTOT	.364	.060	.375	6.050	.000
	ASEXPAVE	1.854	.661	.250	2.807	.006
4	(Constant)	6.614	4.159		1.590	.114
	CLEXPAVE	2.187	.694	.278	3.152	.002
	LOACTTOT	.372	.060	.383	6.236	.000
	ASEXPAVE	1.917	.654	.259	2.932	.004
	instructional clarity expectation	-1.304	.620	-.129	-2.104	.037
5	(Constant)	5.654	4.114		1.374	.171
	CLEXPAVE	2.115	.684	.269	3.094	.002
	LOACTTOT	.285	.069	.294	4.144	.000
	ASEXPAVE	1.766	.647	.238	2.730	.007
	instructional clarity expectation	-1.518	.617	-.150	-2.462	.015
	TMOTTOT	.212	.088	.176	2.422	.017
6	(Constant)	8.507	4.312		1.973	.050
	CLEXPAVE	1.969	.681	.251	2.892	.004
	LOACTTOT	.294	.068	.303	4.306	.000
	ASEXPAVE	1.802	.641	.243	2.812	.006
	instructional clarity expectation	-1.518	.610	-.150	-2.487	.014
	TMOTTOT	.215	.087	.178	2.472	.015
	student centeredness expectation	-.672	.334	-.121	-2.013	.046

a. Dependent Variable: LNGTOT

an increase in clarity experience along and/or a decrease in clarity expectations would increase learning for nontraditional students.

While both groups of students strongly value instructor clarity, their own behaviors also play a role in predicting variance in cognitive learning. The Stepwise Regression model indicates students engaging in learning orientation behaviors ( $\beta = .35$ ) and avoiding grade orientation behaviors ( $\beta = -.14$ ) help account for the variance in cognitive learning. Learning oriented behaviors predicting student learning are items such as, "I browse in the library even when not working on a specific assignment," "I buy books for other courses other than those I am actually taking, " and "I discuss interesting material with my friends or family." In the follow-up regression models, learning orientation behaviors were predictive of learning for both age groups, even though RQ2 reported nontraditional students exhibiting significantly higher levels. Research would appear to support this finding for nontraditional students who have been described as interested in learning because they hope to acquire new knowledge for personal enlightenment to utilize in their own lives (Jacobs, 1992; Kauffmann, et al., 1987). This also reflects what the adult literature says about the nontraditional student's motivation to know how the course material will meet their needs (Donaldson, 1989; Polson, 1993; Richardson & Lane, 1993). Less predictive of cognitive learning would be grade-oriented behaviors such as, "I borrow old term papers or speeches from my friends to meet class requirements," "I get irritated by students who ask questions that go beyond what we need to know for exams," and "I'm tempted to cheat on exams when I'm confident I won't get caught." This makes sense when reviewing past research reporting students with high grade orientations have "poor study habits, high test anxiety, below

average SAT scores, and low grade point averages” (Pollio & Beck, 2000, p. 85).

Though the Stepwise Regressions on learning for traditional and nontraditional students revealed learning orientation was a strong predictor for both age groups, grade orientation did not emerge as a predictor in either model. A possible explanation for this could be that dividing the sample weakened the predictive value of grade orientation for traditional and nontraditional student learning.

Two additional instructor communication variables that help explain the variance in cognitive learning are students’ experiences with teacher use of nonverbal immediacy and instructor-centeredness behaviors. Nonverbal immediacy behaviors such as smiling in class, moving around the classroom, frequently gesturing, and engaging in vocal variety help account for some of the variance in cognitive learning ( $\beta = 1.00$ ,  $t = 2.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, when a teacher engages in instructor-centered behaviors, it is less predictive of cognitive learning ( $\beta = -1.08$ ,  $t = -2.37$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, students do not appear to perceive higher levels of cognitive learning when instructors are not flexible with learning objectives; when they use one primary teaching method; maintain a quiet and orderly, controlled classroom; and develop class rules and stick to them regardless of circumstances. Nunan (1995) tells us that it is the student-centered environment that has the ability to close the gap between teaching and learning.

Instructor-centeredness behaviors are at the opposite end of the continuum and this regression model indicates the negative effect it has on student perceptions of cognitive learning. The Stepwise Regressions reveal the predictive ability of these two variables primarily lies within the traditional students in the sample (Nonverbal Immediacy:  $\beta = 1.45$ ; Instructor-Centeredness:  $\beta = -2.05$ ). With the younger students,

increased experience with instructor use of nonverbal immediacy in class and less instructor-centeredness behaviors helps predict the variance in their perceived learning. In addition, student-centeredness expectation was included in the regression model on learning for traditional ( $\beta = 1.78$ ) and nontraditional students ( $\beta = -.672$ ). The inclusion of this expectation for traditional students can be linked to their experience with instructor-centeredness behaviors. The interpretation here may be that the negative predictive value of instructor-centeredness and the positive predictive value of student-centeredness together impacts traditional students' learning levels. The negative beta weight for student-centeredness expectations on learning may indicate they simply don't perceive they need instructors to engage in these behaviors. It is interesting to note, however, that RQ5b results identified their expectations for instructor use of student-centeredness were met. Since these expectations and experiences were not compared in this regression, it will be interesting to discover if this level of met expectations for student-centeredness will ultimately affect their learning.

A final variable included in the Stepwise Regression model on learning for traditional students was expectation of instructor use of affinity-seeking behaviors ( $\beta = -.17$ ). RQ5a revealed this expectation was met for traditional students in the classroom. Why would the expectation of affinity-seeking have a negative effect on learning indicators? As explained in RQ8, students may appreciate instructors engaging in cheerful behavior and making the class a fun place to learn, but they don't expect it or feel they need it. Past research, however, has supported a link between affinity-seeking techniques and learning (Richmond, 1990; Roach & Byrne, 2001). What may be

happening is that students respond positively when they experience these behaviors, but don't necessarily think they need instructors to engage in them.

In comparison to the negative predictive value of affinity-seeking expectations for traditional student learning, the regression model for nontraditional students revealed a positive impact of affinity-seeking experiences. An explanation for this could be the fact that they experienced significantly higher levels ( $p < .001$ ) of instructor affinity-seeking behaviors ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) than they expected ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = .99$ ), and this was predictive of the variance in their learning indicators. It will be interesting to discover whether the differential effect of affinity-seeking expectations and experiences impacts learning for nontraditional students since they are experiencing such positive levels of this instructor communication behavior.

Finally, trait motivation was a predictor variable for the variance in learning for nontraditional students in the Stepwise Regression ( $\beta = .215$ ,  $t = 2.47$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Their initial motivation positively impacts learning. Even though age was not a predictor of learning in this model, trait motivation could be perceived as a representation of age as scores were significantly higher for nontraditional students ( $p < .001$ ) than traditional students. Research tells us instructor behaviors have little impact on inherent motivational traits (Beatty, 1994; Christophel, 1990), therefore, trait motivation may represent a demographic variable differentiating the two groups of students in the present study.

Up to this point, we know that traditional and nontraditional students in the sample differ in mean levels of state motivation and cognitive learning in their classes. We also know that characteristics such as trait motivation and learning and grade

orientation behaviors and specific variables measuring students' expectations and experiences with instructor communication account for the variance in state motivation and cognitive learning. What we don't yet know, however, is what role, if any, level of met or unmet student expectations play. In other words, if students' expectations are positively or negatively violated by their actual classroom experiences, does it have an effect on the two outcome variables: state motivation and cognitive learning? Students in the survey were asked to evaluate their prescriptive expectations for instructors to engage in specific communication behaviors and then they were asked to evaluate whether a specific instructor actually performed these behaviors (experiences). According to Expectancy Violations Theory, the communication expectations we have for a particular context influence message interpretation and subsequent receiver behavior (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). If students in this sample had perceived expectations (desire, prefer, need) of their instructors' communication, did it influence their learning and motivation if the instructor failed to violate positively (experiences exceeding expectations) or at least meet their expectations?

RQ10: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation?

RQ10a: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation for traditional students?

RQ10b: To what extent does level of met expectations predict state motivation for nontraditional students?

RQ11: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning?

RQ11a: To what extent does level of met expectations predict cognitive learning for traditional students?



RQ11b: To what extent does level of met expectation predict cognitive learning for nontraditional students?

To answer RQ10 and RQ11 to determine the effects of the difference scores for instructor communication variables on learning and motivation, regression analyses were conducted. The results produced three significant predictors of both state motivation and learning: clarity difference score, instructor-centeredness difference score, and affinity-seeking difference score. In other words, the difference in students' expectations and experiences for these three variables predicted the variance in levels of state motivation and learning indicators. The difference scores for these three variables predicted 27 percent of the variance in state motivation and 20 percent of the variance in learning. The results of these regressions are reported in Table 4.12.

Throughout this research, students have reported clarity as one of the most important instructor communication variables. Unfortunately, the difference in student expectations ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) of instructor clarity and their actual experiences ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) in the classroom has been statistically significantly negatively violated ( $p < .001$ ). They are not having enough experiences where instructors perform behaviors such as previewing material or communicating classroom processes and expectations clearly. Because the expectations for instructor clarity were unmet for all students in the sample, their levels of state motivation ( $\beta = -2.40$ ) and learning ( $\beta = -2.58$ ) were negatively affected. The difference between clarity expectation and experiences must lessen if state motivation and learning are to be enhanced. Instructors would be wise to realize the high expectations students have of instructional clarity and that violating these expectations may hinder both motivation and learning. Recent research by Chesbro and

Table 4.12  
Regressions: All Students Difference Scores on State Motivation and Learning

### State Motivation

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.526 <sup>a</sup>	.277	.264	6.1430

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFSKDIF, INCTRDIF, CLARDIFF, NVDIFF, STUCTRDF, VIDIFF

#### Coefficients <sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	25.001	.529		47.292	.000
	NVDIFF	3.170E-02	.345	.006	.092	.927
	VIDIFF	6.767E-02	.354	.013	.191	.849
	CLARDIFF	-2.405	.369	-.359	-6.522	.000
	INCTRDIF	.750	.277	.131	2.703	.007
	STUCTRDF	-.203	.311	-.041	-.652	.515
	AFFSKDIF	-1.267	.357	-.241	-3.549	.000

a. Dependent Variable: STMOTTOT

### Learning

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.457 <sup>a</sup>	.209	.194	6.6610

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFSKDIF, INCTRDIF, CLARDIFF, NVDIFF, STUCTRDF, VIDIFF

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	27.612	.573		48.169	.000
	NVDIFF	4.720E-02	.374	.008	.126	.900
	VIDIFF	.493	.384	.093	1.283	.200
	CLARDIFF	-2.586	.400	-.372	-6.467	.000
	INCTRDIF	.872	.301	.147	2.898	.004
	STUCTRDF	-6.76E-02	.338	-.013	-.200	.842
	AFFSKDIF	-1.120	.387	-.206	-2.891	.004

a. Dependent Variable: LNGTOT

Table 4.12 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

NVDIFF:	Nonverbal Immediacy Difference Score
VIDIFF:	Verbal Immediacy Difference Score
CLARDIFF:	Clarity Difference Score
INCTRDIF:	Instructor-Centeredness Difference Score
STUCTRDF:	Student-Centeredness Difference Score
AFFSKDIF:	Affinity-Seeking Difference Score
STMOTTOT:	State Motivation Score
LNGTOT:	Learning Score

McCroskey (2001) stressed the importance of instructor clarity in motivating students to learn. The present research supports their claim and takes it a step further. Not only are students motivated to learn when they experience clarity in the classroom, but also their learning and motivation are negatively impacted due to unmet expectations for instructor clarity.

Perceived student differences in expectations and experiences for instructor-centeredness behaviors also predict the variance in state motivation and cognitive learning. As with clarity, instructor-centeredness expectations were negatively violated, meaning student expectations ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) for these behaviors were not as frequently experienced ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = .744$ ) in class. However the significant difference in expectations and experiences ( $p < .05$ ) in this case should be viewed more positively. Teachers who engage in instructor-centeredness behaviors do things such as primarily lecture; exclusively determine learning objectives for the class; maintain a quiet, orderly and controlled classroom; and stick to the rules they develop. These behaviors do not focus on students' needs and interests. Based on the mean expectation score, students still perceive they need instructors to perform some of these behaviors. This perceived expectation could be based on past experiences where instructors take sole control of the classroom such as in high school or in large college lecture classes where it is more of a necessity. Nonetheless, this regression supports the fact that when students did not experience expected levels of instructor-centered behavior, state motivation ( $\beta = .75$ ) and learning ( $\beta = .87$ ) were positively affected. As research reports a connection between a student-centeredness instructional style and an increased motivation to learn

(Nunan, 1995; Nunn, 1996), these results of the impact of instructor-centeredness difference scores lend additional support.

The third difference variable that predicts state motivation and learning in the regression models is affinity-seeking. In this case, instructor affinity-seeking behaviors were positively violated, meaning students experienced more frequent instructor use of these behaviors than expected. Instructors who engaged in these behaviors listened to students, were sensitive and optimistic, and treated them as equals. Students expressed they “often” needed these behaviors ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) and received significantly more ( $p < .01$ ) than expected ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = .92$ ) from the particular instructor they evaluated. The positive violation of these behaviors (receiving more than expected) helped predict the variance in state motivation and learning. However, the regression models revealed the exceeded expectation did not have a positive effect on state motivation ( $\beta = -1.26$ ) or cognitive learning ( $\beta = -1.12$ ). In other words, for learning and state motivation to increase the difference score between their expectations and experiences with affinity-seeking will decrease. Because of the negative effect, instructor affinity-seeking behaviors can be considered an unmet expectation where students receive too much. Perhaps too much affinity-seeking isn’t necessarily a good thing. Or perhaps students simply don’t need more than expected to perform well in class.

The results of RQ10 and RQ11 provide evidence of the value in comparing student expectations and experiences with instructor communication in the classroom. Looking back at RQ8 and RQ9 where each expectation and experience variable was entered separately did not produce the same results. With these research questions, expectancy violations theory was not taken into account. Measuring differences in

students' prescriptive expectations and experiences permits us not only to understand the valence certain groups or cultures (Burgoon, 1995; Manusov & Hegde, 1993), such as traditional vs. nontraditional students, assign to teacher communication behaviors but also to understand their impact. Since the impact of these difference scores on motivation and learning may be stronger for the traditional or nontraditional students, the results of RQ10 and RQ11 may be further understood by comparing their difference scores.

The results of RQ10a and RQ11a regressing the communication variables' difference scores on motivation and learning for traditional students revealed three significant predictors: clarity difference score, instructor-centeredness difference score, and student-centeredness difference score. Based on these findings, it appears the difference scores for two variables, instructor clarity and instructor-centeredness predict 23 percent of the variance in state motivation ( $F = 8.5, p < .001$ ) and difference scores for three variables, clarity, instructor-centeredness, and student-centeredness predict 22 percent of the variance in learning ( $F = 7.91, p < .001$ ) for traditional students. Results of the regression analyses are reported in Table 4.13. Referring back to the results of RQ5a, the expectations for both clarity and student-centeredness behaviors for traditional students were negatively violated and the expectations for instructor-centeredness were met. Examining the means for the differences in these instructor communication variables may help explain the results.

Throughout this study, traditional students have reported their highest expectations for instructor communication is clarity ( $M = 5.59, SD = .68$ ). Unfortunately,

Table 4.13  
Regressions: Traditional Students Difference Scores on State Motivation and Learning

### State Motivation

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.489 <sup>a</sup>	.239	.211	6.3319

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFSKDIF, INCTRDIF, CLARDIFF, NVDIFF, STUCTRDF, VIDIFF

#### Coefficients <sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	24.377	.745		32.718	.000
	NVDIFF	-6.66E-02	.491	-.012	-.136	.892
	VIDIFF	2.425E-02	.490	.005	.049	.961
	CLARDIFF	-2.906	.534	-.439	-5.441	.000
	INCTRDIF	.838	.399	.148	2.100	.037
	STUCTRDF	.355	.480	.070	.740	.460
	AFFSKDIF	-.922	.513	-.169	-1.796	.074

a. Dependent Variable: STMOTTOT

### Learning

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.476 <sup>a</sup>	.227	.198	6.9345

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFSKDIF, INCTRDIF, CLARDIFF, NVDIFF, STUCTRDF, VIDIFF

#### Coefficients <sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	26.359	.816		32.304	.000
	NVDIFF	-.701	.538	-.113	-1.303	.194
	VIDIFF	8.890E-02	.537	.017	.166	.869
	CLARDIFF	-3.119	.585	-.434	-5.331	.000
	INCTRDIF	1.223	.437	.199	2.797	.006
	STUCTRDF	1.446	.525	.264	2.752	.007
	AFFSKDIF	-1.076	.562	-.182	-1.914	.057

a. Dependent Variable: LNGTOT

Table 4.13 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

NVDIFF:	Nonverbal Immediacy Difference Score
VIDIFF:	Verbal Immediacy Difference Score
CLARDIFF:	Clarity Difference Score
INCTRDIF:	Instructor-Centeredness Difference Score
STUCTRDF:	Student-Centeredness Difference Score
AFFSKDIF:	Affinity-Seeking Difference Score
STMOTTOT:	State Motivation Score
LNGTOT:	Learning Score



the desired frequency of these behaviors has not been experienced ( $\underline{M} = 4.47$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .86$ ). This significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) has had an effect on levels of state motivation and learning. Traditional students' expectations for instructor clarity were negatively violated. In the regressions on state motivation and learning, this difference score produced a negative predictive value for these two outcome variables (state motivation:  $\beta = -2.90$ ; learning:  $\beta = -3.11$ ). In other words, the fact that expectations for clarity were not met (negatively violated) predicts less motivation and learning. This makes sense as past research has reported positive correlations between teacher clarity and motivation (Chesbro & McCroskey, 2001) and cognitive learning (Book, et al., 1985; Civilkly, 1992). Realizing the impact of unmet clarity expectations should provide an impetus for instructors to engage in more of the behaviors this construct represents.

Expectations for student-centeredness behaviors were negatively violated as well, with the results predicting learning. Traditional students expressed a perceived desire ( $\underline{M} = 4.34$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.09$ ) for their instructors to frequently engage in behaviors such as allowing them to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating their classroom performance, using the skills and abilities they already possess to help them learn, and organizing class activities to reflect problems they encounter in everyday life. Unfortunately, traditional students did not experience ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .94$ ) this as frequently as they expected ( $p < .001$ ). However, even though student-centeredness expectations were negatively violated this was a positive predictor of learning for traditional students ( $\beta = 1.44$ ). The effect of this difference was positive. In other words, greater learning is predicted by an increase in the difference between students' expectations and experiences. A possible explanation for this could be the individual

items in the student-centeredness instrument. Survey questions such as instructors allowing students to develop criteria, plan learning activities, and participate in making decisions about topics to cover in class may be foreign to students who have come to college directly from high school. Thus, if their instructors do not engage in these expected behaviors (as indicated by the lower experience score), they still learn and in fact the violation helps predict learning. Perhaps thinking about what they expect from instructors' student-centeredness behaviors in the classroom sounds good, but isn't really necessary for traditional students. This is valuable information to instructors who adhere to suggestions in the literature that student-centered instruction boosts student learning in the college classroom (Conti, 1989; Nunn, 1996). The results of RQ10a and RQ11a suggest student age should be taken into account.

When considering the impact of student-centeredness difference scores, the predictive value of instructor-centeredness on state motivation and learning makes sense. Traditional student expectations for instructor-centeredness behaviors ( $\underline{M} = 4.30$ ,  $\underline{SD} = 1.08$ ) were met by their experiences ( $\underline{M} = 4.16$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .73$ ) in the classroom ( $p = .13$ ). They received just enough of the more traditional instructor behaviors such as lecturing and having sole control of class learning objectives that both state motivation ( $\beta = .83$ ) and learning ( $\beta = 1.22$ ) were positively impacted. Traditional students fare just fine with the more traditional instructional methods, and even though they perceive a need for more student-centered behaviors, they don't appear to miss them.

The results of the regressions for the difference scores on state motivation and learning for nontraditional students produced three predictor variables: clarity difference scores, student-centeredness difference scores, and affinity-seeking difference scores.

Based on these regressions, the difference in clarity and affinity-seeking expectations and experiences predicted 32 percent of the state motivation of nontraditional students ( $F = 12.10, p < .001$ ) and the difference in clarity and student-centeredness expectations and experiences predicted 27 percent of the variance in their learning ( $F = 9.75, p < .001$ ). Results of the regression analyses are reported in Table 4.14. Referring back to the paired-samples  $t$ -test results of RQ5b, nontraditional students' expectation for instructor clarity was negatively violated, the expectation for instructor use of affinity-seeking behaviors was positively violated, and the expectation for student-centeredness was met. Examining the means for the differences in these instructor communication variables may help explain the results.

Expectations for instructor use of clarity behaviors have remained consistently high for nontraditional students. In fact, according to the focus group results in Pilot Study One (see Appendix A), using personal examples and real-life student examples were clarity behaviors mentioned frequently in the discussions. Unfortunately, as with the traditional students, these expectations ( $M = 5.58, SD = .66$ ) were not met by their experiences with the instructor they were asked to evaluate ( $M = 4.57, SD = .86$ ). This significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) helps predict the variance in their levels of state motivation ( $\beta = -2.31$ ) and learning ( $\beta = -1.96$ ). So as the clarity difference score decreases (either they lower their expectations or their experiences increase), state motivation and learning increase. Research supports this finding as clarity has been reported to have a positive impact on both classroom learning and motivation (Book, et al., 1985; Civilkly, 1992; Chesbro & McCroskey, 2001). With this knowledge,

Table 4.14  
Regressions: Nontraditional Students Difference Scores on State Motivation and Learning

### State Motivation

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.570 <sup>a</sup>	.325	.298	5.8143

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFSKDIF, INCTRDIF, CLARDIFF, NVDIFF, STUCTRDF, VIDIFF

#### Coefficients <sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	25.511	.746		34.182	.000
	NVDIFF	-.105	.487	-.019	-.215	.830
	VIDIFF	5.445E-02	.519	.011	.105	.917
	CLARDIFF	-1.967	.501	-.300	-3.925	.000
	INCTRDIF	.696	.382	.124	1.820	.071
	STUCTRDF	-.547	.405	-.117	-1.349	.179
	AFFSKDIF	-1.333	.497	-.268	-2.681	.008

a. Dependent Variable: STMOTTOT

### Learning

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.528 <sup>a</sup>	.279	.251	5.8552

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFSKDIF, INCTRDIF, CLARDIFF, NVDIFF, STUCTRDF, VIDIFF

#### Coefficients <sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	28.957	.752		38.528	.000
	NVDIFF	.568	.491	.105	1.158	.249
	VIDIFF	.515	.523	.103	.986	.326
	CLARDIFF	-2.313	.505	-.362	-4.584	.000
	INCTRDIF	.412	.385	.076	1.071	.286
	STUCTRDF	-1.115	.408	-.244	-2.732	.007
	AFFSKDIF	-.707	.501	-.146	-1.412	.160

a. Dependent Variable: LNGTOT

Table 4.14 (continued)

Index: Variable Abbreviations

NVDIFF:	Nonverbal Immediacy Difference Score
VIDIFF:	Verbal Immediacy Difference Score
CLARDIFF:	Clarity Difference Score
INCTRDIF:	Instructor-Centeredness Difference Score
STUCTRDF:	Student-Centeredness Difference Score
AFFSKDIF:	Affinity-Seeking Difference Score
STMOTTOT:	State Motivation Score
LNGTOT:	Learning Score

instructors would be wise to attempt to close the gap between student expectations and experiences in instructional clarity.

Affinity-seeking expectations were positively violated for nontraditional students, meaning they experienced ( $\underline{M} = 4.47$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .91$ ) significantly ( $p < .001$ ) more of these behaviors from their instructors than they perceived needing ( $\underline{M} = 4.03$ ,  $\underline{SD} = .99$ ). This difference resulted in a negative predictive value for state motivation ( $\beta = -1.33$ ). In other words, for state motivation to increase, the difference in expectations and experiences with affinity-seeking behaviors will decrease. Since their instructors already exceed what is expected this result would seem to indicate that the use of fewer affinity-seeking behaviors from their instructors would enhance state motivation. Affinity-seeking involves instructor behaviors that encourage student liking of them. Research tells us that adult learners are more concerned with how course material will meet their needs (Donaldson, 1989; Polson, 1993; Richardson & Lane, 1993), so perhaps there is not as strong a focus on affinity-seeking behaviors such as “conducts class in a cheerful manner,” “shows care and concern for student in class,” and “tries to make my class a fun place to learn.” Supporting this view, nontraditional students in Pilot Study One (see Appendix A) did not mention examples of instructor use of affinity-seeking in their experiences. Instead, they discussed issues focused more on the learning and less on relationship-engaging behaviors. This result would appear to indicate that while nontraditional students expect some level of affinity-seeking from their instructors, going overboard may have negative repercussions.

The one instructor communication variable that was met and was predictive of the variance in nontraditional student learning was instructor use of student-centeredness

behaviors. Perhaps because nontraditional students expected ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) significantly less student-centeredness from their instructors than traditional students ( $p < .001$ ), their expectations ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = .90$ ) were met ( $t = .70$ ,  $p = .48$ ). Whatever the reason, they report needing their instructors to perform behaviors such as encouraging dialogue, adapting learning objectives to student abilities, and allowing students to develop evaluation criteria. The nontraditional students' experiences did not differ significantly from their expectations and yet this was a statistically significant predictor of the variance in their learning ( $p < .01$ ).

However, it is also important to note that the beta weight for the student-centeredness mean difference score of .08 is  $\beta = -1.11$ . The difference between what nontraditional students expected and experienced with instructor student-centeredness behaviors was so miniscule that this negative regression effect is puzzling. It could be that any difference at all negatively impacted learning or simply that student-centeredness behaviors are just not as helpful to them. Since clarity expectations are so strong for these students, perhaps that overshadows many of the positive, student-centered behaviors their instructors afford them. This result certainly warrants further investigation as research in the adult literature has suggested "Student-centered learning may be particularly appropriate for diverse student populations who have experienced little academic success" (Perin, 2001, p. 307). On the other hand, perhaps these results simply indicate instructors should recognize nontraditional students' needs for a strong balance in their student-centeredness behaviors. As past research points out, "There is an interaction between a student's achievement orientation and the teaching style he is exposed to, and this interaction will differentially affect both the amount of learning that

takes place and the student's expressed satisfaction with his scholastic environment" (Domino, 1971, p. 427).

Overall, the results of these research questions provide undergraduate instructors information to help them better communicate with traditional and nontraditional students to motivate them to learn in their classes. Since the nontraditional student has rarely been considered in the instructional research literature, it is important to understand their expectations. Based on the findings in this study, traditional and nontraditional students do not have the same expectations for instructor communication behaviors, and because of this, appear to perceive their learning experiences differently. The differences in their expectations and experiences help explain the variation in classroom learning and motivation levels, which is certainly valuable information for any conscientious instructor.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to determine the extent met or unmet student expectations of instructor communication behaviors affect learning and state motivation for traditional and nontraditional college students. Understanding differences in perceived expectations and experiences these two groups of students have for their instructors' communication behaviors could open the door to rethinking how we communicate with today's more diverse student body. This study compared student characteristics, and instructor communication expectations and experiences of traditional and nontraditional college students and found there are, indeed, differences for instructors to consider. Expectancy Violations Theory (Burgoon, 1978), which formed the basis of the study, helped explicate the impact of different expectations and experiences for traditional and nontraditional students. The present study resulted in six major findings for traditional and nontraditional students: they differ significantly in every demographic variable, they report two major opposing expectations of instructor communication, the two groups experience no differences in actual instructor communication behaviors, they have different perceptions of their met and unmet expectations in the classroom, the groups differ in both outcome behaviors (learning and state motivation), and they perceive different communication variables as the most predictive of their classroom learning and state motivation. The meaning and value of these six major findings for classroom instructors is discussed along with limitations and suggestions for future research.

### **Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations**

To meet the goals created for this study, it was important to determine basic differences in the characteristics of traditional and nontraditional students as well as their expectations and experiences with important communication variables. The instructor communication behaviors investigated were: nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, student-centeredness, and instructor-centeredness. Once differences were discovered, their impact on classroom motivation and learning was determined. The following model (Figure 2) presents the results applied to the original research design model (Figure 1).

This study initially distinguished traditional and nontraditional students according to age. However, based on the findings in this study, trait motivation, academic orientation, marital status, employment, class rank and college finances are all good indicators of distinguishing characteristics for these two student groups. They differ at the most basic levels, and while age has consistently been an acceptable demographic variable used to separate the two, it is not the only one. Since many studies in both the adult and education literature have strived to analyze differences between traditional and nontraditional students (Comadena, et al., 1992; Donaldson, et al., 1993; Gorham, 1985; Ross & Stokes, 1984; Senter & Senter, 1998), perhaps the demographic characteristics reported here would be a new place to begin. As they are very diverse groups, beyond the more basic demographic characteristics, descriptive distinctions may be made through their trait motivation levels and learner orientation behaviors. Nontraditional students are more inherently motivated and learning oriented, and these characteristics are different

**TRADITIONAL STUDENTS****Student Characteristics**

Grade Oriented Behaviors  
 Lower Trait Motivation  
 Primary Class Rank: Soph. & Jr.  
 Predominantly Single  
 Part-Time Employment  
 Finances: Loans / Parents  
 Predominant Major: A & S

**Expectations of Instructor Communication**

Verbal Immediacy  
 Nonverbal Immediacy  
 Clarity  
 Instructor-Centeredness  
 Higher Affinity-Seeking Behavior  
 Higher Student-Centeredness

**Student Classroom Experiences of Instructor Communication**

Verbal Immediacy  
 Nonverbal Immediacy  
 Clarity  
 Instructor-Centeredness  
 Affinity-Seeking Behavior  
 Student-Centeredness

**Met / Unmet Expectations**

3 Negative Violations: Clarity  
 Verbal Immediacy, Student-Centeredness  
3 Met Expectations: Nonverbal Immediacy,  
 Instructor-Centeredness, Affinity-Seeking

**NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS****Student Characteristics**

Learning Oriented Behaviors  
 Higher Trait Motivation  
 Primary Class Rank: Jr. & Sr.  
 Predominantly Married  
 Full-Time Employment  
 Finances: Self / Loan  
 Diversity in Major

**Expectations of Instructor Communication**

Verbal Immediacy  
 Nonverbal Immediacy  
 Clarity  
 Instructor-Centeredness  
 Lower Affinity-Seeking Behavior  
 Lower Student-Centeredness

**Student Classroom Experiences of Instructor Communication**

Verbal Immediacy  
 Nonverbal Immediacy  
 Clarity  
 Instructor-Centeredness  
 Affinity-Seeking Behavior  
 Student-Centeredness

**Met / Unmet Expectations**

1 Negative Violation: Clarity  
1 Positive Violation: Affinity-Seeking  
4 Met Expectations: Nonverbal  
 Immediacy, Verbal Immediacy,  
 Instructor-Centeredness, Student-  
 Centeredness



Figure 2: Results Model for Traditional and Nontraditional Students

**TRADITIONAL STUDENTS****Outcome Behaviors**

Lower Learning Indicators  
Lower State Motivation

**Single Predictors of Outcome Variables**

State Motivation: Clarity Experience,  
Instructor-Centeredness Experience,  
Trait Motivation, Learning Orientation  
Behaviors

Learning: Clarity Experience, Instructor-  
Centeredness Experience, Nonverbal  
Immediacy Experience, Student-Centeredness  
Expectation, Affinity-Seeking Expectation,  
Learning Orientation Behaviors

**Difference Variable Predictors of Outcome Behaviors**

State Motivation: Clarity Difference,  
Instructor-Centeredness Difference  
Learning: Clarity Difference,  
Student-Centeredness Difference,  
Instructor-Centeredness Difference

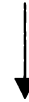
**NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS****Outcome Behaviors**

Higher Learning Indicators  
Higher State Motivation

**Single Predictors of Outcome Variables**

State Motivation: Clarity Experience,  
Student-Centeredness Experience,  
Trait Motivation

Learning: Clarity Experience, Affinity-  
Seeking Experience, Clarity  
Expectation, Student-Centeredness  
Expectation, Trait Motivation, Learning  
Orientation Behaviors

**Difference Variable Predictors of Outcome Behaviors**

State Motivation: Clarity Difference,  
Affinity-Seeking Difference,  
Learning: Clarity Difference,  
Student-Centeredness Difference

Figure 2: Results Model for Traditional and Nontraditional Students (continued)

from the traditional student whose learner orientation is more focused on grades. Since traditional students experience significantly lower levels of trait motivation and learning orientation, instructors need to focus on how best to motivate them in class while appealing to their concern for grades. One way to do this would be to consider their desire to impress parents, teachers and friends with grades (Landrum et al., 2000) as well as their need for instructor attention. With this in mind, classroom instructors might want to increase their praise for traditional student grades on assignments. This could be done through individual meetings designed to discuss their positive efforts and achievements. However, if class size deems individual sessions impractical, frequent personal and positive comments on traditional students' assignments and tests may be equally satisfying. While nontraditional students certainly may appreciate "positive strokes" from instructors, this research does not indicate a strong desire for this to occur. Traditional and nontraditional students are distinctly different and a basic awareness of these discriminating characteristics can initially help college instructors identify differences in traditional and nontraditional students as they enter the classroom.

Even greater diversity between the two groups is reflected in the variation in their expectations of two instructor communication variables. Traditional and nontraditional students do not expect the same levels of affinity-seeking and student-centeredness behaviors. Perhaps, reflective of their high school days or just due to youthfulness, traditional students desire more attention from their classroom instructors. Since they are less motivated to begin with (based on their trait motivation scores) instructors who establish relationships with them (affinity-seeking) and who encourage and adapt classroom objectives to their abilities (student-centeredness), may provide the extra,

needed incentive to motivate them to learn. Recommended affinity-seeking behaviors for instructors to consider would be to conduct classes in an easygoing and casual manner, with less formal lecturing and more engaging classroom discussion. Instructors should also be sensitive to students' problems by listening to them and remembering things they have said or done in class. Even in a larger lecture class, it is possible for instructors to engage in affinity-seeking behaviors. For example, students can routinely be asked to submit written comments or questions regarding daily course content. By reading these, instructors can ascertain what information may be confusing or especially relevant to students and reference it in upcoming class discussions. In comparison, and based on the results of this study, would this be advantageous for the adult learners as well? They expressed a strong desire for instructors to be clear and immediate in class. So, while they are not opposed to instructor attention, they simply don't need as much of the more relationally encouraging communication behaviors as younger students. Nonetheless, expectations still exist, and the more important question for instructors, based on this research, may be "How am I impacting my students' learning and motivation if I violate their expectations?"

The violation of student prescriptive expectations for traditional and nontraditional students is made more apparent in this study because experiences with classroom instructor communication behaviors do not differ for the two groups. This is a very important finding. If their experiences with all the instructor communication variables are the same, then the focus rests on their prescriptive expectations (what they desire, need, and prefer), and these results can be understood by applying Expectancy Violations Theory.

Traditional and nontraditional students reported different instructor communication variables that either met or failed to meet their expectations. Since positive violations of expectations create positive evaluations and outcomes (Burgoon, et al., 1989), it is important to note the instructor communication behaviors traditional and nontraditional students perceived as meeting their needs. Those that are perceived as met expectations are satisfying to students and should lead to positive classroom outcomes. However, according to Expectancy Violations Theory the negatively violated expectations also impact students and may “yield more unfavorable consequences than conforming to expectations” (Burgoon, 1995, p. 205). If this happens, instructors violating expectations for these behaviors could have a detrimental effect on their students.

For both groups of students in this study, the most negatively violated behavior is clarity. They have equally high expectations of instructor clarity and though it may be tough for instructors to meet their high needs, they would be wise to understand this extreme desire. A highly desired instructor communication behavior that is violated negatively could actually have a demotivating effect on student learning. The clarity construct (Simonds, 1997) is comprised of specific behaviors instructors may easily incorporate in large or small classes. Activities such using visual aids during lectures, previewing material to be covered, relating concrete examples to concepts being discussed, specifying how assignments should be done and providing adequate and timely feedback upon completion, and helping students prepare for exams (i.e., written test objectives) are all methods to enhance instructional clarity. As no other instructor communication behavior reported a higher mean prescriptive expectation than clarity, its

value to motivate both traditional and nontraditional students to learn in class is undeniable.

Though the two groups similarly perceived no other negatively violated communication behavior, other negative violations for each group are still important to consider because if instructors are not giving them enough of what they want, there may be negative consequences. The fact that traditional and nontraditional students perceive differences in met and unmet expectations for so many instructor communication variables is particularly revealing as it suggests they do not desire the same levels of these behaviors, nor do they perceive them the same. Understanding the results is another distinguishing characteristic for traditional and nontraditional students and extends the understanding and application of Expectancy Violations Theory to different groups or cultures (Burgoon, 1995).

Comparing motivation and learning levels may initially reveal the effect of these violations, or differences in expectations and experiences. In the present study, the nontraditional students scored higher in state motivation and learning. This is valuable information for classroom instructors who are willing to reflect on their communication with students. Knowing what expectations traditional and nontraditional students have of them and striving to meet their communication needs can affect motivation and learning. In this case, nontraditional students only experienced one negative violation, compared to three negatively violated expectations for traditional students. This may be what Burgoon (1995) was referring to when she reported that negative violations could produce even more negative consequences. Traditional students may have learned less and been less motivated due to experiencing more negative expectancy violations.



Another explanation for the higher learning and motivation scores for nontraditional students could relate back to their trait motivation as research tells us instructor behavior has little, if any, impact if students are already inherently motivated (Beatty, 1994; Richmond, 1990). Perhaps nontraditional students who experience more trait motivation will always be more motivated and learn more in their classes. Could there, however, be additional explanations for their higher learning and motivation levels?

Examining the predictive value of the variables' difference scores suggests an answer to this question. Aside from the significant difference in expectations and experiences with instructor clarity, no other difference variable had similar predictive values for learning and state motivation between traditional and nontraditional students. This is due to the fact that traditional and nontraditional students have different perceptions of the instructor communication variables examined in this study. This is extremely important for instructors to understand. If these two groups of students do not perceive, for example, student-centeredness behaviors in the same way, they are going to respond differently when they are used in class. Since traditional and nontraditional students did not report different experiences with each of these variables, these findings all link back to their perceived expectations. Knowing what they desire is crucial.

Nontraditional students desire less instructor affinity-seeking and when instructors delivered too much it negatively impacted their classroom motivation. Based on this finding, instructors must find a way to delineate the traditional and nontraditional students. From the first class meeting, instructors should strive to become familiar with the student age ranges. A simple questionnaire would be easy for instructors to create to help identify traditional and nontraditional students. This way affinity-seeking behaviors

such as sensitivity, openness, and encouraging self-disclosure could be targeted, more specifically, toward the younger students. Instructors would be wise to focus more on clarity issues and the learning orientation of the nontraditional students.

Instructor use of student-centeredness behaviors also produced negative repercussions for nontraditional students. There was very little discrepancy in their expectation and experience scores for student-centeredness behaviors, but the small difference still negatively impacted their learning. The adult literature frequently recommends a more student-centered environment, and this finding doesn't necessarily dispute that. However, it does indicate instructors need to understand just how much student-centeredness nontraditional students expect and strive to achieve a balance in how much they deliver. One of the simplest recommendations for instructors hoping to achieve minimal levels of student-centeredness would be to use different teaching techniques throughout the course, as this is one of the more common examples of student-centeredness behaviors. An instructor, for example, could combine class lectures with group discussions and supplement text material with videos, skits, or other creative methods. On the other hand, another possible explanation for the negative effect of student-centeredness behaviors could be the strong correlation between clarity experiences and student-centeredness experiences ( $r = .68$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The negative impact of one may be affecting the other. If nontraditional students perceive their instructors are unclear they may also interpret this as a lapse in student-centeredness behaviors. Regardless of the reason, nontraditional students expect some degree of this behavior, and instructors would be wise to balance it with their emphasis on classroom clarity.

Traditional students, on the other hand, expected more student-centeredness behaviors from their instructors than nontraditional students. They reported a failure to receive as much as they desired and this impacted their learning. However, a strange twist exists in this result because they reported that having this expectation negatively violated actually predicted greater learning. What is going on here? Perhaps the blame can be placed on their youthfulness and lack of experience with student-centeredness behaviors such as allowing students to plan activities and participate in class decision-making. While the opportunity to engage in these behaviors may sound good to them, in practice they may be foreign enough to be unappreciated, leading to lower learning, when experienced. Similar to Frymier and Weser's (2001), students respond positively to behaviors they had not reported expecting. This could be the exact opposite occurrence where traditional students "thought" they expected these behaviors, but when asked to evaluate them within an actual class, they responded differently. What should instructors do in this case? A recommendation would be for them to create a balance between student-centeredness and instructor-centeredness behaviors.

Traditional students' expectations for instructor-centeredness behaviors were met, but they perceived that experiencing fewer behaviors such as lecturing and maintaining a quiet, controlled classroom would have a positive impact on their learning and state motivation. So what does this mean and how should instructors proceed with this information? What college instructors should consider is that traditional students may not quite be able to explain how much of a specific communication behavior they want. The mean prescriptive expectation score for student-centeredness and instructor-centeredness was almost identical. Therefore, it would be helpful for instructors to

develop a list of some of the basic behavioral components within each variable and engage in them consistently over time. This should work for a class comprised of both traditional and nontraditional students as the effects of experiencing high levels of either behavior produced negative effects.

The difference in prescriptive expectations for traditional and nontraditional students warrants different instructor communication behaviors for the two groups. The ideal situation, based on these findings, would be providing separate sections. This would allow instructors to engage in increased affinity-seeking, verbal immediacy, and student-centeredness behaviors in order to motivate traditional student learning. In classes comprised of nontraditional students, communication behaviors such as enhancing classroom clarity and decreasing affinity-seeking behaviors could be the focus. Unfortunately, this may not be practical for every classroom instructor or university. Typically the ability to target teaching toward specific student groups is linked to institutional resources. Therefore, if it is not possible to provide adequate sections by which traditional and nontraditional students can be instructed separately, teachers must seek alternative methods to reaching them both in a single class. Achieving this balance may be an instructional challenge, however, outlining the specific behavioral methods recommended in this study is a good place to begin.

Based on the findings how do these results contribute to the literature? Perhaps the most obvious contribution is the knowledge that nontraditional students are different from traditional students. They differ in every demographic evaluated in this survey: class rank, family responsibility, employment and college finances. Perhaps even more importantly, they do not enter the classroom with the same focus. Traditional students

are more concerned with their grades and nontraditional students care more about learning and are inherently more motivated. The grade oriented students present a special challenge to instructors whose focus is on learning because everything must revolve around how grades are affected (Gorham, 1999). They are, quite simply, two very distinct groups of students, and this leads to the most valuable contribution: Because they are different, traditional and nontraditional students have different expectations for their instructors' communication and they react differently when their expectations are violated and even when they are met.

An investigation into student expectations of instructor communication behaviors has rarely been done (Frymier & Weser, 2001) as most examine existing student perceptions. Though the field of adult education has examined expectations and experiences of the classroom social environment (Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987), no study this researcher could locate has compared student expectations with actual classroom communication experience. Breaking down the communication expectations and experiences further into traditional and nontraditional students has offered an even more detailed and informative picture from which classroom instructors can learn. The face of college students today is changing and therefore, if instructors hope to reach everyone, they must gain an understanding of what changes are necessary. Though nontraditional students' expectations support some of the communication behaviors the instructional literature has valued over the years (nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, and clarity), the findings of this study have also revealed differences that should be acknowledged. Above all, teachers must be clear, but beyond this the particular desires of traditional and nontraditional students must be considered. This is an important

contribution because not only could this understanding alter the way many instructors teach, but also the possibility exists that if their classroom communication behaviors are changed, student learning and motivation may be impacted.

### **Limitations**

This was a large study with many variables being compared and evaluated. In a project of this magnitude there were bound to be limitations or areas that might have been investigated differently. Perhaps the more obvious limitations in this study were the sample and instrument issues. To begin, this sample was from a single institution in the southeastern portion of the United States. This student population may not be representative of a more diverse student body that exists in academia today. Though the nontraditional sample was randomly drawn via campus computer, the possibility that they represented the typical adult learner may still be questioned. It would be interesting to see if nontraditional students from campuses across the United States had similar expectations to the participants in this research. In addition, differences may have been created due to the variation in the way the student samples were drawn. For example, comparisons may be somewhat limited between the convenience sample of traditional students enrolled in speech classes and earning credit for participation and the random sample of nontraditional students completing mailed surveys at their leisure. Related to the sample issues were the instructors students were asked to evaluate. The technique used for this study to ask them to report on the last instructor they had each week with the intent of obtaining a wide variety of instructors. However, the survey simply asked students to "Think of the instructor you have in this class." Students were not forced to include a name or a department and no record of the instructors evaluated was made. Therefore,

while it is hopeful a wide variety of instructors from many different departments were evaluated it is uncertain whether this actually occurred. Since a majority of the traditional students were from Arts and Sciences and surveyed in their speech classes, most of the instructors evaluated may have been from more creative or dramatic fields. If this were the case, it would certainly reflect in their teaching and classroom communication style. While this occurrence would not necessarily be problematic, a student evaluating an instructor teaching a large lecture course in astronomy might never have an opportunity to experience nonverbal immediacy or affinity-seeking behaviors. Though instructor selection may not have been as broad as possible, the fact that traditional and nontraditional students reported no significant differences in their classroom communication experiences indicates this still may not be a concern.

A second, and perhaps more broadly based limitation involves two instrumentation issues: procedural issues creating the need for conceptual definitions and the correspondence between the definitions and measurement instruments. When this project was begun, the spring semester was underway. Students were already in their classes and becoming familiar with instructors. Therefore, there was no way to ask them what they “expected” (desire, prefer, and need) from a professor whose teaching styles and classroom methods they had already come to know. It also did not make sense to give them the same measurement instruments back to back in the same survey (e.g., asking them to answer the 8 verbal immediacy items regarding their “expectations” and answering the same 8 verbal immediacy items regarding their “experiences” with a specific instructor). In an effort to get around this measurement issue, they were given the conceptual definitions of the communication constructs (nonverbal immediacy, verbal

immediacy, clarity, affinity-seeking, instructor-centeredness, and student-centeredness) at the beginning of the survey and asked to evaluate the degree they expected “a classroom instructor to perform these behaviors in your classes.” The goal was to question open-minded students about how they want their instructors to communicate with them. Several pages later they were given the measures that reflected these same conceptual definitions. In an ideal situation, the exact same measurement instruments would be given to the same student sample twice—once on the first day of class and again toward the end of the semester.

The second possible instrument limitation was created through the development of the conceptual definitions. While the wording for these definitions was taken directly from the research and the scales themselves, the exact correspondence between them may not have been ideal. Students reading a paragraph about student-centeredness behaviors may not get the exact same impression of what it entails or how they feel about it as they do when they later answer 27 separate items intended to measure the same thing. While this method has been used before in research, if students are rushed or not reading carefully, it simply may not be the most ideal method.

### **Future Research**

Based on the limitations as well as the findings in this study and additional questions that arose during the analyses, this area appears ripe for future investigation. First, based on the present research, traditional and nontraditional students are different and they appear to have different expectations for instructor communication in the classroom. However, this research has only scratched the surface of communication variables available for investigation. While some of the more prominent variables were



selected for this study, there certainly may be many others that are particularly revealing. Communication involving student-teacher relationships, for example, seemed to crop up throughout this study with traditional students favoring more affinity-seeking behaviors from their instructors than adult learners. This finding could be more related to learning style or perhaps there is a connection to a lack of self-confidence (Berryman-Fink, 1982; Ross & Stokes, 1984) and a need for self-esteem (Zemke & Zemke, 1984) that can be gained from an enhanced student-teacher relationship. The older students do not appear to need this relationship as much, according to this research, and yet some of the adult literature disagrees (Conti, 1985; McCollin, 2000; Nunan, 1995). Thus this might be an interesting line of future instructional research.

In addition, there was a strong delineation continuously drawn between the traditional and nontraditional students, when the differences may not have been quite so clear. It would have been interesting in many of the research questions to investigate within group variance. For example, one of the early demographics reported that the majority of nontraditional students were made up of juniors and seniors. This finding makes it appear the university is about to graduate the majority of nontraditional students, which contradicts the statistics provided by the U. S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (1998). A chi-square test might have been conducted to determine within group differences, which might have revealed that most nontraditional students only take one or two classes per semester and are taking twice as long to graduate. The fact that more nontraditional students work full-time appears to bear this out. The same within group comparisons with *t*-tests or ANOVAS could have

been conducted to discover differences in levels of trait motivation, learning and grade orientation behaviors and student-centeredness and instructor-centeredness preferences.

Another area ripe for future research is the instructor communication, trait motivation, state motivation and learning relationship. There is a great deal of research claiming student levels of trait motivation are not related to cognitive learning (Frymier, et al., 1996), that state motivation is related to cognitive learning (Frymier & Houser, 1999), and teacher styles or teacher communication behaviors influence student motivation in the classroom (Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Richmond, 1990). The present study reported significant correlations between state and trait motivation, between trait motivation and learning, and between state motivation and learning for all students. In fact, this study reported trait motivation is a predictor of both motivation and learning for nontraditional students. Perhaps this is due to their statistically significantly higher score on the measurement instrument. Or maybe it goes back to one of the opening comments in this study reporting most of the instructional communication studies are conducted with traditional-aged students. Since the present study appears to question and in some cases contradict past findings, it seems there is still more to learn about the relationships among these variables.

Finally, worthy of future investigation are the final regression models in the study. The results were very descriptive in depicting what met or unmet communication expectations were the greatest predictors of learning and motivation for the traditional and nontraditional students. One study, of course, cannot tell the whole story. It is, however, a beginning. This study has managed to create a starting point by which instructors can understand how best to communicate and how best to motivate and

enhance learning with two very different student groups. There are differences to consider. Traditional and nontraditional students do not appear to have the same needs and do not always perceive their instructors' communication in the same manner. Future studies need to delve into these findings to discover whether the expectation differences are truly age-based, whether the more inherent student characteristics (e.g., trait motivation) perhaps have the greatest influence, or whether student learning and classroom motivation outcome behaviors are primarily under the instructor's control. Further validation of this model would be helpful not only to the instructional communication field, but also to the adult literature.

### **Final Thoughts**

This study compared the expectations and experiences traditional and nontraditional students have of their instructor communication behaviors. What was discovered was these are two very distinct student groups of students—one group who comes to class more motivated to learn and another who cares most about the grade. Expectancy Violations Theory provided the basis for examining these two groups. Traditional and nontraditional students do not respond in the same manner to instructor communication, and as a result both learning and classroom motivation are affected. Instructors can impact student outcome behaviors, but they must first recognize what communication behaviors are important to these two diverse groups of students. For example, how do you simultaneously please both of these students—"I need constructive comments for improvement; I don't need a pat on the back" (nontraditional student) and "You can pull a better grade at the end if you have a better relationship with your teacher. You need them to motivate you" (traditional student)? As colleges and universities

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continue to enroll both traditional and nontraditional students, instructors need to consider the expectations of ALL students if they hope to thrive and succeed.

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## APPENDIXES

**Appendix A**  
**Pilot Study One Results**

## Pilot Study One Results

### Instructor Communication Expectations and Positive and Negative Experiences of Nontraditional Students

<b>Instructor Communication Behavior</b>	<b>Number of Student Responses</b>
<b><u>Expected Instructor Communication Behaviors</u></b>	
1. Open-mindedness during in-class participation/discussion	26
2. Know students as individuals/respect diversity/adapt to uniqueness	24
3. Use personal examples/relate real-life student examples to lectures	24
4. Enthusiasm/Passion for subject matter/exhibiting teaching desire	22
5. Flexibility in class/rules/absences	16
6. Expert in subject matter/teach important & useful information	15
7. Treat students as equals/respect/taken seriously	13
8. Instructor self-disclosure/2-way exchange of personal information	11
9. Organized/Structure in syllabus/class routine/on task with material	10
10. Informal atmosphere/comfortable/personal & conversational	7
<b><u>Positive Instructor Communication Behaviors Experienced = Subcategory: Responses</u></b>	
1. Recognizes students/respect as individuals/diverse opinions	16
2. Examples bring subject to life/reflect student experiences = increase participation & clarifies material	15
3. Contact with students out of class (email, phone, appointments) = students value grades & develop confidence	7
4. Exhibit passion for subject/desire to teach students/positive = confidence & positive view of instructor	7
<b><u>Negative Instructor Communication Behaviors Experienced = Subcategory: Responses</u></b>	
1. Fill-in-blank teaching/lecture/regurgitation = anger & learning on own	25
2. Demeaning & belittling students/talking down = feel like a child/ "who cares" attitude frustration/anger/tension	20
3. Excessive rules/rigidity/punishment for absences = belittled/demeaned/high schooler	16
4. Waste class time/chit-chat/off topic	11
5. Straight lecture/no participation or discussion = tune out instructor/keep opinions in	9
6. Egotistical Teacher/stress Dr. title	9
7. Unclear class goals & learning expectations	8
8. Students are social security numbers/no names	7
9. No concern for students and their learning	7

### Pilot Study One Results

#### Instructor Communication Expectations and Positive and Negative Experiences of Traditional Students

Instructor Communication Behavior	Number of Student Responses
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<b><u>Expected Instructor Communication Behaviors</u></b>	=	<b><u>Subcategory: Responses</u></b>
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1. Clarity in: presentation, difficult material, expectations for assignments	45
2a. Enthusiasm for subject and presentational/conversational style = increased participation	31
motivation & attendance	31
2b. Care if students learn and understand class material	31
3a. Encourage discussion/interactions & student questions/call on students	18
3b. Nonverbals: vocal variety, eye contact, gestures, circulate room	18
4. Make time for students – email, phone, office hrs., home phone	17
5. Stories, examples, share personal experiences	15
6. Presentation of written examples on board, overhead, powerpoint	12
7. Know student names = earn higher grade; respect instructor; teacher-student relationship	10

<b><u>Positive Instructor Communication Behaviors Experienced</u></b>	=	<b><u>Subcategory: Responses</u></b>
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1. Upbeat, exciting, dynamic, loud, joke = learn more; perform better; more interest; lighten mood; make class seem easier	21
2. Nonverbal behaviors: vocal variety; powerful speaking ability; conversational style	13
3. Relate class materials to student goals and real life examples	10
4. Availability: after class; phone; email; office hours = increases grades; creates student-teacher relationship	9
5. Make certain student are involved and understand = fewer absences; greater accountability	9
6. Tell stories including personal teacher stories = make class interesting; increase attendance	6
7. Know student names	5

<b><u>Negative Instructor Communication Behaviors Experienced</u></b>	=	<b><u>Subcategory: Responses</u></b>
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1. Always lecturing, reading notes or book so students are uninvolved = boredom; lack of motivation	33
2. Nonverbals: negative face/body expressions/no eye contact/monotone voice = embarrassed	27
3. Unclear or no explanations for assignments = frustration, students stop asking	16
4a. Class timing: teacher late; start early; go over = annoyed & frustrated	13
4b. Acting “above” students = fear of instructor; afraid to talk or ask questions	12
5a. Poor speaking skills or can’t speak English = irritating, frustrating, no learning	12
5b. Don’t care if students are learning	12
5c. Wasting time: off topic or assign busy work = distracting learning	12
6. Attendance Policies / Rigid Rules-docking points	10

## Appendix B

### Pilot Study Two Questionnaires

**Pilot Study Two Questionnaires  
Needs or Expectations – Part 1  
LOGO II and PALS – Part 2 and 3**

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**Instructor Communication Behavior**

The following survey is an investigation into instructor communication behaviors in the undergraduate classroom. Please take your time and carefully consider your responses regarding your **NEEDS** (*or expectations in second version of survey*) from an instructor's communication. This survey is completely anonymous and answers will be reported in the aggregate.

**Part 1**

**Below, you will read 7 definitions of communication concepts. In order to determine what you NEED** (*or expectations in second version of survey*) **from your instructor to support these concepts, list as many specific behaviors as possible that indicate your NEEDS** (*or expectations in second version of survey*) **from your classroom instructors.**

1. ***Nonverbal Immediacy*** is made up of behaviors (actions) you exhibit to indicate you feel close to others, like them, and overall have positive feelings toward them. They are behaviors that cause the two of you to be closer, both physically and mentally because they communicate closeness and warmth. List any behaviors you NEED (*or expect in second version of survey*) from your classroom instructor that reflect Nonverbal Immediacy behaviors.

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2. ***Verbal Immediacy*** is made up of things you say to indicate you feel close to others, like them, and have positive feelings toward them. List things you NEED (*or expect in second version of survey*) for your classroom instructor to say which would indicate they are using Verbal Immediacy behaviors.

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3. **Instructional Clarity** is an instructor's ability to present knowledge in a way that students understand. List things you NEED *(or expect in second version of survey)* your instructor to say and do to indicate Clarity in the classroom.

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4. **Teacher-Centeredness** is a teaching style made up of behaviors where an instructor controls the content, timing, and the instruction environment. List things you NEED *(or expect in second version of survey)* your instructor to say and do in the classroom to indicate their classroom focus is Teacher-Centered.

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5. **Student-Centeredness** is a teaching style made up of behaviors where the students and teacher share responsibility for what is taught and how students will learn it. List things you NEED *(or expect in second version of survey)* your instructor to say and do in the classroom to indicate their classroom focus is Student-Centered.

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6. ***Affinity-Seeking*** is defined as a perception of liking. This includes positive perceptions we have of someone else's credibility, attraction, and similarity to us. It involves verbal and nonverbal behaviors that individuals use to gain affinity or liking from another person (what they do to get people to like them). List things you NEED (or expect in second version of survey) your instructor to say and do in the classroom to indicate they are Seeking Affinity from you.

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7. A ***Mixed*** teaching style is made up of behaviors where the teacher controls the content, timing, and the instruction environment and also shares responsibility for what is taught and how students will learn it. List things you NEED (or expect in second version of survey) your instructor to say and do in the classroom to indicate they engage in a Mixed Teacher-Centeredness and Student-Centeredness focus.

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**Part 2**

**Directions:** Below is a series of statements taken from interviews with a large number of college students concerning their reactions to various courses, instructors, and classroom policies. Please read each statement carefully, and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each item using the following rating scale:

**1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Somewhat Disagree  
4=Somewhat Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree**

1. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy classes in which the instructor attempts to relate material to concerns beyond the classroom.
2. \_\_\_\_ I think that it is unfair to test students on material not covered in class lectures and discussions, even if it is in the reading assignments.
3. \_\_\_\_ I dislike courses which require ungraded out-of-class assignments.
4. \_\_\_\_ I prefer to write a term paper on interesting material rather than take a test on the same general topic.
5. \_\_\_\_ I get annoyed when lectures or class presentations are only rehashes of easy reading assignments.
6. \_\_\_\_ Written assignments (such as homework, projects, and so on) that are not graded are a waste of a student's time.
7. \_\_\_\_ I appreciate the instructor who provides honest and detailed evaluation of my work, although such evaluation is sometimes unpleasant.
8. \_\_\_\_ I think that without regularly scheduled exams I would not learn and remember very much.
9. \_\_\_\_ Instructors expect too much out-of-class reading and study by students.
10. \_\_\_\_ I find the process of learning new material fun.
11. \_\_\_\_ I dislike courses in which a lot of material is presented in class, or in readings, that does not appear on exams.
12. \_\_\_\_ Easy classes that are not pertinent to my educational goals generally bore me.
13. \_\_\_\_ A teacher's comments on an essay test mean more to me than my actual test score.

<b>1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Somewhat Disagree 4=Somewhat Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree</b>
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14. \_\_\_\_ I do not find studying at home to be interesting or pleasant.
15. \_\_\_\_ I am more concerned about seeing which questions I missed than I am with finding out my test grade.
16. \_\_\_\_ I think grades provide me a good goal to work toward.

**Please refer to the following scale to answer the next set of questions: 17 – 32.**

<b>1=Never 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Almost Always 6=Always</b>
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17. \_\_\_\_ I do optional reading that my instructors suggest even though I know it won't affect my grade.
18. \_\_\_\_ I try to make time for outside reading despite the demands of my coursework.
19. \_\_\_\_ I try to get old tests when I think the instructor will use the same questions again.
20. \_\_\_\_ I will withdraw from an interesting class rather than risk getting a poor grade.
21. \_\_\_\_ I get irritated by students who ask questions that go beyond what we need to know for exams.
22. \_\_\_\_ I stay after interesting classes to discuss material with the instructors.
23. \_\_\_\_ I discuss interesting material that I've learned in class with my friends or family.
24. \_\_\_\_ When looking at a syllabus on the first day of class, I turn to the section on tests and grades first.
25. \_\_\_\_ I participate in out-of-class activities even when extra credit is not given.
26. \_\_\_\_ I buy books for courses other than those I am actually taking.

1=Never 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Almost Always 6=Always
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27. \_\_\_\_ I borrow old term papers or speeches from my friends to meet class requirements.
28. \_\_\_\_ I cut classes when confident that lecture material will not be on exams.
29. \_\_\_\_ I try to keep all my old textbooks because I like going back through them after a class is over.
30. \_\_\_\_ I try to find out how easy or hard an instructor grades before signing up for a course.
31. \_\_\_\_ I'm tempted to cheat on exams when I'm confident I won't get caught.
32. \_\_\_\_ I browse in the library even when not working on a specific assignment.

### **Part 3**

**Directions:** Below are several behaviors that an instructor may use within the classroom. Please use the following scale to indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement based on **your personal preferences as a student.**

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Somewhat Disagree 4=Somewhat Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree
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#### **I prefer an instructor that....**

1. \_\_\_\_ allows students to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating student performance in class.
2. \_\_\_\_ allows students more time to complete assignments when they need it.
3. \_\_\_\_ helps students figure out the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance in class.
4. \_\_\_\_ primarily dispenses knowledge rather than serving as a resource person to help me gain knowledge on my own.
5. \_\_\_\_ sticks to the learning objectives that he/she wrote at the beginning of the course.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Somewhat Disagree  
4=Somewhat Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

6. \_\_\_\_ participates in informal counseling of students.
7. \_\_\_\_ primarily uses lectures as the method of presenting subject matter to the students.
8. \_\_\_\_ arranges the seating in the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.
9. \_\_\_\_ determines the learning objectives for the students instead of the students deciding or assisting in deciding them.
10. \_\_\_\_ plans learning activities that take into account students' prior experiences.
11. \_\_\_\_ allows students to participate in making decisions about the topics that will be covered in class.
12. \_\_\_\_ uses one primary teaching method only (e.g., only lecture; only discussion; etc.)
13. \_\_\_\_ uses different teaching techniques throughout the course (videos, skits, projects, etc.)
14. \_\_\_\_ encourages dialogue among students.
15. \_\_\_\_ uses the skills and abilities students already possess in order to help them learn.
16. \_\_\_\_ accepts mistakes as a natural part of learning in class.
17. \_\_\_\_ holds individual conferences with students to help them identify their educational needs.
18. \_\_\_\_ allows each student to work at his/her own rate when attempting to learn a new concept.
19. \_\_\_\_ helps students develop short-range as well as long-range learning objectives for the specific course they are in.
20. \_\_\_\_ maintains a quiet, orderly, and controlled classroom.
21. \_\_\_\_ adapts the learning objectives to match the individual abilities and needs of the students.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Somewhat Disagree  
4=Somewhat Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

**I prefer an instructor that....**

22. \_\_\_\_ allows the students' motives and personal goals for attending college to be a major determinant of the learning objectives and class activities.
23. \_\_\_\_ organizes class activities to reflect problems students encounter in everyday life.
24. \_\_\_\_ encourages competition among students.
25. \_\_\_\_ uses different materials with different students based on the variety of needs.
26. \_\_\_\_ helps students relate new learning to their prior experiences.
27. \_\_\_\_ discourages student questions.
28. \_\_\_\_ helps students develop short range as well as long range learning objectives which will benefit them in their career choices.
29. \_\_\_\_ encourages collaboration (working together) between students.
30. \_\_\_\_ meets with students outside of class (e.g., during office hours).
31. \_\_\_\_ is completely objective and open to student thoughts and opinions.
32. \_\_\_\_ encourages students to ask questions.
33. \_\_\_\_ is flexible with rules in the class.
34. \_\_\_\_ encourages students to express their subjective opinions.
35. \_\_\_\_ develops rules and sticks to them.
36. \_\_\_\_ is open to learning things from their students.

**Background Information**

37. My Sex \_\_\_\_\_ (Male or Female)
38. My Age \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Pilot Study Two Results

## Pilot Study Two Results

### Needs vs. Expectations of Instructor Communication Behaviors

NEEDS	EXPECTATIONS
<p><b><u>Nonverbal Immediacy</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Smile – 14</li> <li>2. Eye contact – 10</li> <li>3. Sit on table/relaxed – 5</li> <li>4. Circulate room – 5</li> <li>5. Enthusiastic/animated/laughs – 5</li> <li>6. Supportive reassuring nods – 2</li> <li>7. Pat on back – 2</li> <li>8. Gestures – 1</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Verbal Immediacy</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supportive/encouraging statements – 15</li> <li>2. Greet students by name – 6</li> <li>3. Talk/ask about student experiences – 5</li> <li>4. Personal stories shared – 3</li> <li>5. Use of “you” and “us” – 2</li> <li>6. Constructive Criticism – 2</li> <li>7. Funny stories – 2</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Clarity</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relate examples to students – 7</li> <li>2. Cover exam material and inform what isn’t on exam – 4</li> <li>3. Provide demonstrations/illustrations – 3</li> <li>4. Ask students if they understand – 2</li> <li>5. Use simple terminology – 2</li> <li>6. Use good English/grammar – 2</li> <li>7. Main lecture points on board or overhead - 2</li> <li>8. Provide outline of assignments - 2</li> <li>9. Present material in orderly fashion - 2</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Nonverbal Immediacy</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eye contact – 10</li> <li>2. Smile – 9</li> <li>3. Circulate room – 6</li> <li>4. Nod head in understanding</li> <li>5. Use hand gestures - 5</li> <li>6. Relaxed body / sit on desk - 3</li> <li>7. Enthusiastic/animated – 2</li> <li>8. Inviting/friendly attitude – 2</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Verbal Immediacy</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage/praise – 10</li> <li>2. Use Humor/jokes – 6</li> <li>3. Use student names – 5</li> <li>4. Share personal stories – 2</li> <li>5. Constructive Criticism – 2</li> <li>6. Speak with respect – 1</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Clarity</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examples related to students – 9</li> <li>2. Re-explain difficult material – 6</li> <li>3. Speak on student level – 4</li> <li>4. Ask students if they understand-4</li> <li>5. Outline daily lectures – 3</li> <li>6. Use overheads - 3</li> <li>7. Use good English/grammar – 2</li> </ol>

NEEDS	EXPECTATIONS
<p><b><u>Affinity-Seeking</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Care &amp; make time for students' problems – 8</li> <li>2. Tell personal stories students can relate to - 6</li> <li>3. Treat students like adults (seriously) – 5</li> <li>4. Feedback &amp; encouragement – 4</li> <li>5. Smile at students &amp; positive attitude – 4</li> <li>6. Dress and talk like students – 4</li> <li>7. Do things students prefer – 1</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Affinity-Seeking</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand, know, care about students - 10</li> <li>2. Personal stories students relate - 5</li> <li>3. Confidence in material – 5</li> <li>4. Treat students like adults – 3</li> <li>5. Dress like a professor – 3</li> <li>6. Use humor – 3</li> <li>7. Make promises &amp; keep them – 2</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Teacher-Centeredness</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepared – follow syllabus – 6</li> <li>2. Lecture – 4</li> <li>3. Stay within time limits – 4</li> <li>4. Set daily objectives – 3</li> <li>5. Announce class start – 3</li> <li>6. In control at all times – 3</li> <li>7. Stay on task entire class – 2</li> <li>8. Follow through – 2</li> <li>9. Stern and focused – 2</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Teacher-Centeredness</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organized – follow syllabus – 7</li> <li>2. Maintain control – 5</li> <li>3. Lecture organized in main pts. with Visual Aids– 5</li> <li>4. Stay within time limits – 3</li> <li>5. Always prepared – 3</li> <li>6. Stay focused – 2</li> <li>7. Lecture – 2</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Student-Centeredness</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open to student comments/questions – 10</li> <li>2. Encourage group discussion/not always lecture – 5</li> <li>3. Group work and group activities in class – 4</li> <li>4. Meet students after class – 3</li> <li>5. Respect student opinions – 3</li> <li>6. Students select topics/assignments – 2</li> <li>7. Never intimidate or belittle students – 2</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Student-Centeredness</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage student discussion &amp; questions – 10</li> <li>2. Allow students to guide class - 8</li> <li>3. Cover topics students like - 3</li> <li>4. Students select topics &amp; assignments – 2</li> <li>5. Offer positive feedback - 2</li> <li>6. Offer creative projects/assign.- 2</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Mixed-Centeredness</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask for student opinions/feedback – 5</li> <li>2. Class discussion – 3</li> <li>3. Student input on timing of assignments – 2</li> <li>4. Choices on how to earn grade – 2</li> <li>5. Keep class under control – 2</li> <li>6. Outline lecture &amp; important points – 2</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Mixed-Centeredness</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow students to take some lead – 6</li> <li>2. Class discussion/interaction – 5</li> <li>3. Allow questions/offer feedback-4</li> <li>4. Instructor control what's taught- 3</li> <li>5. Lecture using overheads - 3</li> <li>6. Stay on time/schedule – 2</li> <li>7. Organized teaching plan – 2</li> </ol>

\* The numbers following each behavior reflect the number of times students listed them.



## Appendix D

### Letter to Nontraditional Students

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

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College of Communications  
Department of Speech Communication  
293 Communications Building  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0324  
(865) 974-0696  
FAX (865) 974-4879

March 13, 2002

Dear Fellow UT Student:

My name is Marian Houser. I am a graduate student here at UT and need your help. In order to finish my dissertation, I need students to complete the survey I have included with this letter. It only takes about 10 to 15 minutes, I promise.

The topic is "student expectations of teachers' communication behaviors," and I am hoping to discover what it is students like and dislike about how their instructors communicate with them in their classes. I really want to hear what you think. The Evening School program is helping me, as they are also very interested in how students, such as you, expect their undergraduate instructors to communicate.

I've included the **survey**, a **consent form** assuring your anonymity, and an **envelope** for you to return these two items as soon as possible. Rest assured your complete confidentiality will be maintained, as the survey is not attached to the consent form. There is no place for your name on the survey, and the Evening School has no way of tracking participants. I know the survey may seem long, it's 10 pages, but it has honestly taken no more than 15 minutes for students to complete. I just ask that you seriously consider every question as you answer them. I intend to publish my results, which will be used to help instructors understand what it is students want from them. Feel free to call or email me with any questions or concerns. By filling this out, you will help me graduate!

I need over 500 students to respond, so please consider helping me with my project!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marian L. Houser".

Marian L. Houser  
Speech Communication  
University of Tennessee  
865/983-9059  
s\_houser@bellsouth.net

## Appendix E

### Consent to Participate in Research

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Thank you for participating in this research project on instructor communication behaviors in the college classroom. The survey is completely anonymous. There are no markings or other indicators to identify your individual survey.

By signing this form, you are allowing your survey responses to be utilized in this research project.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Marian L. Houser  
Speech Communication Department  
293 Communications  
974-0696 (office)  
[s\\_houser@bellsouth.net](mailto:s_houser@bellsouth.net)

Participant Signature:

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**Appendix F**  
**Reminder Postcard**

## **A Friendly Reminder . . .**

Two weeks ago, I mailed you a survey to complete to help me with my dissertation. If you have already completed and returned it, THANK YOU!

If you still have it, I would be so grateful if you would fill it out and return it in the envelope provided.

Your Assistance Will Help Me Graduate!!!!



Marian L. Houser  
Doctoral Candidate  
Speech Communication  
University of Tennessee

**Appendix G**  
**Survey Instrument**

# Instructor Communication Behavior Survey

You are participating in research studying teacher communication behaviors in the college classroom and your expectations for those behaviors. Your responses will be completely anonymous and will in no way affect your grade. Please read each item and answer honestly. Your responses will help contribute to further improving higher education.

### Background Information:

1. My sex (circle)                      1-Male                      2-Female
2. My class rank (circle)            1-Freshman            2-Sophomore  
    3-Junior                 4-Senior
3. My marital status (circle)        1-Married            2-Single            3-Divorced
4. My employment status (circle)   1-Full-time           2-Part-time        3-Not employed
5. My age (circle)                    1- Under 25        2- 25 or older
6. My College Finances (circle)    1- Pay for self    2- Loan/Scholarship/Grant  
  
    3 - Parents
7. My college major is \_\_\_\_\_  
(If you are undecided, list the college/school - e.g., Arts & Sciences)

**Directions:** These next 5 items are concerned with how you feel about studying in GENERAL.

(Thinking of no class in particular). Please circle the number toward either word which best describes your feelings, in general, toward studying.

- |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                       |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Motivated    | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Unmotivated           |
| 2. Excited      | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Bored                 |
| 3. Uninterested | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Interested            |
| 4. Involved     | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Uninvolved            |
| 5. Dreading it  | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Looking forward to it |



**Directions:** Below are descriptions of some behaviors **teachers** have been observed doing or saying in class. Use the following scale and respond to the statements by describing the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer, and need) a classroom instructor to perform these behaviors in your classes.

1=Never 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Almost Always 6=Always

1. \_\_\_\_\_ *Nonverbal Immediacy* is made up of behaviors (actions) people exhibit to indicate they feel close to others, like them, and overall have positive feelings toward them. Smiling, engaging in eye contact, using vocal variety, looking relaxed, and moving around the room and closer to others are some examples. Indicate the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer, and need) your instructors to engage in Nonverbal Immediacy.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ *Verbal Immediacy* is made up of things people say to indicate they feel close to others, like them and have positive feelings toward them. Knowing your name, encouraging you to talk, using personal examples, and talking to students before and after class are examples. Indicate the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer, and need) your instructors to engage in Verbal Immediacy.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ *Instructional Clarity* is an instructor's ability to present knowledge in a way that students understand. Using examples, speaking clearly, staying on the topic, providing feedback, and preparing students for exams are examples. Indicate the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer, and need) your instructors to engage in Instructional Clarity.
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ *Teacher-Centeredness* occurs when the instructor controls the content, timing, and the instruction environment. Keeping students on task, having a classroom routine, closely following the syllabus, primarily lecturing, and determining learning objectives for students are examples. Indicate the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer, and need) your instructors to be Teacher-Centered.
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ *Affinity-Seeking* is defined as a perception of liking. This includes positive perceptions we have of someone else's credibility, attraction, and similarity to us. In the classroom, these are behaviors teachers use to get their students to like them. Being dynamic, responsive, praising, showing concern for students and considering their opinions to be important are examples. Indicate the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer and need) your instructors to use Affinity-Seeking behaviors.

1=Never   2=Rarely   3=Sometimes   4=Often   5=Almost Always   6=Always
---

6. \_\_\_\_\_ *Student-Centeredness* is teaching made up of behaviors where the students and the teacher share responsibility for what is taught and how students will learn it. Encouraging student interaction, adapting objectives to student abilities, using a variety of teaching methods, understanding that mistakes are part of learning, and allowing students to help develop evaluation criteria are examples. Indicate the extent to which you EXPECT (desire, prefer, and need) your instructors to be Student-Centered.

**Directions:** Below is a series of statements taken from interviews with a large number of college students concerning their reactions to various courses, instructors, and classroom policies. Please read each statement carefully, and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each item using the following rating scale:

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy classes in which the instructor attempts to relate material to concerns beyond the classroom.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I think that it is unfair to test students on material not covered in class lectures and discussions, even if it is in the reading assignments.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I dislike courses which require ungraded out-of-class assignments.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I prefer to write a term paper on interesting material rather than take a test on the same general topic.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I get annoyed when lectures or class presentations are only rehashes of easy reading assignments.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Written assignments (such as homework, projects, and so on) that are not graded are a waste of a student's time.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I appreciate the instructor who provides honest and detailed evaluation of my work, although such evaluation is sometimes unpleasant.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I think that without regularly scheduled exams I would **not** learn and remember very much.

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

9. \_\_\_\_ Instructors expect too much out-of-class reading and study by students.
10. \_\_\_\_ I find the process of learning new material fun.
11. \_\_\_\_ I dislike courses in which a lot of material is presented in class, or in readings, that does **not** appear on exams.
12. \_\_\_\_ Easy classes that are not pertinent to my educational goals generally bore me.
13. \_\_\_\_ A teacher's comments on an essay test mean more to me than my actual test score.
14. \_\_\_\_ I do **not** find studying at home to be interesting or pleasant.
15. \_\_\_\_ I am more concerned about seeing which questions I missed than I am with finding out my test grade.
16. \_\_\_\_ I think grades provide me a good goal to work toward.

**Directions:** Please read each of the following statements. Using the following scale, indicate how frequently your behavior coincides (matches) with the action described:

1 = Never   2 = Rarely   3 = Sometimes   4 = Often   5 = Almost Always   6 = Always
---

17. \_\_\_\_ I do optional reading that my instructors suggest even though I know it won't affect my grade.
18. \_\_\_\_ I try to make time for outside reading despite the demands of my coursework.
19. \_\_\_\_ I try to get old tests when I think the instructor will use the same questions again.
20. \_\_\_\_ I will withdraw from an interesting class rather than risk getting a poor grade.
21. \_\_\_\_ I get irritated by students who ask questions that go beyond what we need to know for exams.

<b>1 = Never   2 = Rarely   3 = Sometimes   4 = Often   5 = Almost Always   6 = Always</b>
--

22. \_\_\_\_ I stay after interesting classes to discuss material with the instructors.
23. \_\_\_\_ I discuss interesting material that I've learned in class with my friends or family.
24. \_\_\_\_ When looking at a syllabus on the first day of class, I turn to the section on tests and grades first.
25. \_\_\_\_ I participate in out-of-class activities even when extra credit is not given.
26. \_\_\_\_ I buy books for courses other than those I am actually taking.
27. \_\_\_\_ I borrow old term papers or speeches from my friends to meet class requirements.
28. \_\_\_\_ I cut classes when confident that lecture material will not be on exams.
29. \_\_\_\_ I try to keep all my old textbooks because I like going back through them after a class is over.
30. \_\_\_\_ I try to find out how easy or hard an instructor grades before signing up for a course.
31. \_\_\_\_ I'm tempted to cheat on exams when I'm confident I won't get caught.
32. \_\_\_\_ I browse in the library even when not working on a specific assignment.

**FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SURVEY**

**Think of the last class you have each week. Think of the instructor you have in this class. Keep this class and this instructor in mind while completing all of the following items.**

**(You may use initials in order to retain this instructor's anonymity.)**

The last class I have each week is: (fill in)

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Use the scale below to answer the following questions.**

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week): \_\_\_\_\_**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ allows students to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating student performance in class.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ allows students more time to complete assignments when they need it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ helps students figure out the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance in class.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ primarily dispenses knowledge rather than serving as a resource person to help me gain knowledge on my own.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ sticks to the learning objectives that he/she wrote at the beginning of the course.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ participates in informal counseling of students.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ primarily uses lectures as the method of presenting subject matter to the students.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ arranges the seating in the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week):** \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_ determines the learning objectives for the students instead of the students deciding or assisting in deciding them.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ plans learning activities that take into account students' prior experiences.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ allows students to participate in making decisions about the topics that will be covered in class.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ uses one primary teaching method only (e.g., only lecture; only discussion; etc.)
13. \_\_\_\_\_ uses different teaching techniques throughout the course (videos, skits, projects, etc.)
14. \_\_\_\_\_ encourages dialogue among students.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ uses the skills and abilities students already possess in order to help them learn.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ accepts mistakes as a natural part of learning in class.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ holds individual conferences with students to help them identify their educational needs.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ allows each student to work at his/her own rate when attempting to learn a new concept.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ helps students develop short-range as well as long-range learning objectives for the specific course they are in.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ maintains a quiet, orderly, and controlled classroom.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ adapts the learning objectives to match the individual abilities and needs of the students.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ allows the students' motives and personal goals for attending college to be a major determinant of the learning objectives and class activities.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ organizes class activities to reflect problems students encounter in everyday life.

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week): \_\_\_\_\_**

24. \_\_\_\_\_ encourages competition among students.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ uses different materials with different students based on the variety of needs.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ helps students relate new learning to their prior experiences.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ discourages student questions.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ helps students develop short range as well as long range learning objectives which will benefit them in their career choices.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ encourages collaboration (working together) between students.
30. \_\_\_\_\_ meets with students outside of class (e.g., during office hours).
31. \_\_\_\_\_ is completely objective and open to student thoughts and opinions.
32. \_\_\_\_\_ encourages students to ask questions.
33. \_\_\_\_\_ is flexible with rules in the class.
34. \_\_\_\_\_ encourages students to express their subjective opinions.
35. \_\_\_\_\_ develops rules and sticks to them.
36. \_\_\_\_\_ is open to learning things from his or her students.
37. \_\_\_\_\_ offers me assistance in my class assignments.
38. \_\_\_\_\_ conducts class in a calm, easy going manner.
39. \_\_\_\_\_ is active and enthusiastic in class.
40. \_\_\_\_\_ encourages students to talk.
41. \_\_\_\_\_ listens carefully to my comments and questions.

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week):** \_\_\_\_\_

42. \_\_\_\_\_ shows care and concern for the students in class.
43. \_\_\_\_\_ gives me advice when I need guidance.
44. \_\_\_\_\_ assumes he/she has the better answer when students offer responses in class.
45. \_\_\_\_\_ appears to be enjoying teaching the class.
46. \_\_\_\_\_ prefers to be in control at all times.
47. \_\_\_\_\_ is responsive to my ideas.
48. \_\_\_\_\_ conducts class in a cheerful manner.
49. \_\_\_\_\_ is sensitive to students' problems.
50. \_\_\_\_\_ acts superior to his/her students.
51. \_\_\_\_\_ tries to make my class a fun place to learn.
52. \_\_\_\_\_ remembers things students have said or done in class.
53. \_\_\_\_\_ allows the students to get to know his/her personal side.
54. \_\_\_\_\_ tries to see things from my point of view.
55. \_\_\_\_\_ treats students as equals.
56. \_\_\_\_\_ does not seem interested in our feelings or views.
57. \_\_\_\_\_ does not listen to what students have to say.
58. \_\_\_\_\_ complains about things in class.
59. \_\_\_\_\_ fails to take time to help students.
60. \_\_\_\_\_ does not assist me in my classwork.



<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week):** \_\_\_\_\_

61. \_\_\_\_ considers the students' views and opinions equally as important as his/her own.
62. \_\_\_\_ gives the impression that he/she is not relaxed in the classroom.
63. \_\_\_\_ invites students to share control in classroom situations.
64. \_\_\_\_ fails to get us involved in class discussion.
65. \_\_\_\_ does not attempt to liven up the class with stories or entertaining topics.
66. \_\_\_\_ tells us what's on his/her mind.
67. \_\_\_\_ discloses information about his/her interests and views.
68. \_\_\_\_ participates in lively discussion.
69. \_\_\_\_ tells interesting stories, and/or jokes.
70. \_\_\_\_ asks questions about our interests and opinions.
71. \_\_\_\_ praises students in class.
72. \_\_\_\_ allows the students to have an influence on class actions and topics.
73. \_\_\_\_ addresses students by their name.
74. \_\_\_\_ invites students to telephone or meet with him/her outside of class.
75. \_\_\_\_ looks at the class while talking.
76. \_\_\_\_ smiles at individual students in class.
77. \_\_\_\_ moves around the classroom near the students.
78. \_\_\_\_ speaks in a monotone voice.

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week):** \_\_\_\_\_

- 79.\_\_\_\_ looks at his/her notes or the blackboard when talking to the class.
- 80.\_\_\_\_ stands behind the desk or podium during class.
- 81.\_\_\_\_ gestures while talking to the class.
- 82.\_\_\_\_ uses examples when presenting class content.
- 83.\_\_\_\_ uses the board, transparencies, or other visual aids during class.
- 84.\_\_\_\_ previews material to be covered.
- 85.\_\_\_\_ relates examples to the concept being discussed.
- 86.\_\_\_\_ stresses important points we need to know.
- 87.\_\_\_\_ stays on the topic.
- 88.\_\_\_\_ gives summaries of what we've covered when presenting content.
- 89.\_\_\_\_ communicates classroom processes and expectations clearly.
- 90.\_\_\_\_ explains how we should prepare for our exams.
- 91.\_\_\_\_ clearly explains the objectives for the content being presented (why we need to know it).
- 92.\_\_\_\_ does not offer me adequate and/or timely feedback on assignments or papers.
- 93.\_\_\_\_ describes assignments and how they should be done.
- 94.\_\_\_\_ asks us if we know what to do and how to do it.
- 95.\_\_\_\_ doesn't adequately prepare us for his/her exams.
- 96.\_\_\_\_ communicates classroom policies and consequences for violations.

<b>1-Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2-Disagree</b>	<b>3-Somewhat Disagree</b>
<b>4-Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>5-Agree</b>	<b>6-Strongly Agree</b>

**My instructor (in the last class I have each week):** \_\_\_\_\_

97. \_\_\_\_\_ prepares me for the tasks I will be doing in class.
98. \_\_\_\_\_ provides students with feedback of how well they are doing.
99. \_\_\_\_\_ provides rules and standards for satisfactory performance.
100. \_\_\_\_\_ has trouble staying on the topic.
101. \_\_\_\_\_ helps prepare students for upcoming exams.

**Directions:** These items are concerned with **how you feel about studying for THIS Instructor's class.** Please circle the number toward either word which best describes your feelings toward the last class you have each week with \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                       |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Motivated    | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Unmotivated           |
| 2. Excited      | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Bored                 |
| 3. Uninterested | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Interested            |
| 4. Involved     | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Uninvolved            |
| 5. Dreading it  | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Looking forward to it |

**Directions:** Indicate how frequently *you* perform each of these behaviors regarding **the class you have each week with THIS instructor** \_\_\_\_\_.  
Use the following scale:

<b>1=Never   2=Rarely   3=Sometimes   4=Often   5=Almost Always   6=Always</b>
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1. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to talk about what I'm doing in this class with friends and family.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I explain this course's content to other students.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I think about this course content outside of class.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I see connections between this course's content and my career goals.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I review this course's content.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I compare the information from this class with other things I have learned.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I have learned a lot in this class.

## VITA

Marian L. Houser was born in Jackson, Missouri and attended the University of Missouri Columbia, earning her B.A. in speech communication. She earned her M.A. in speech communication from Miami University in 1994 and during her time there was responsible for teaching two sections each semester of the basic public speaking course. While a master's student at Miami, she was named "Outstanding Graduate Student" and received the "Graduate Student Teaching Award."

Marian was employed by Miami University, following her graduation, from 1994-1998. She served as the Assistant Course Director, was a member of the Interpersonal Communication Departmental Committee, and taught four courses per semester in public speaking, interpersonal communication, and small group communication. As a member of the Eastern Communication Association (ECA), the National Communication Association (NCA), and the International Alliance of Teaching Scholars, during this time she delivered nine conference papers (two top paper awards), published two journal articles, one book chapter, and was awarded the CII Grant for the Lilly-West Eighth Annual Conference on College Teaching.

Marian was employed as a research assistant in the speech communication department in 1998 at The University of Tennessee and was a full-time instructor during the spring semester of 1999, teaching courses in introduction to communication, basic public speaking and persuasion, and developing the Advanced Public Speaking course for the department. She became a graduate teaching associate in the speech communication department in 1999 with the responsibility of teaching two courses per semester. Courses

for which she was responsible were the basic public speaking course, advanced public speaking, persuasion, research methods, and speech communication theory. She was named "Outstanding Graduate Teaching Associate" in 2000, "Outstanding PhD Student" for 2001-2002, earned the "Graduate Student Research Award" for 2001-2002 and was awarded "Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student," sponsored by the Instructional and Developmental Division of the International Communication Association (ICA) in 2002. During the 2001-2002 school year she served as the graduate student representative for the speech communication department. She was inducted into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi by election of the Chapter at The University of Tennessee in 2000. As a Ph.D. student at The University of Tennessee, Marian presented five conference papers, two of which were ranked top papers, at the Eastern Communication Association Convention in 2002 and the Southern States Communication Association Convention in 2002, had two journal publications, and published one book chapter.