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**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IMPACT ON UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR'S  
NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY**

by

**AVIVA GORDON**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

2020

MAJOR: LEARNING DESIGN AND

TECHNOLOGY

Approved By:

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Advisor

Date

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## DEDICATION

**Hashem, the Almighty.** Everything you do is a blessing! Thank you, thank you, thank you, for blessing me with this calling and bringing into my life the best family, friends, and colleagues.

### **My family, in Heaven.**

My beloved husband, Dr. Eddie Gordon, Z”L, of blessed memory - you are, and always will be the wind beneath my wing, even from the other side.

Mom and Dad, Davida and Nathan Barris, No words. I love you both so much and wish for your goodness, on the other side, EVERY day. I hope I have made you proud.

Grandma Esther Smolka—my best friend for 34 years—I continue to share your wisdom with all who will listen.

### **My family on Earth.**

My children, Binyomin, Sarah and Mordy, and Estie, and my self-assured grandson Eitan. Each of you are JOY. I love you all so much. Continue to follow your aspirations, and remember the Rambam’s letter...

My sister Judy Herman. You are my soul sister! We have really come a long way;).

My brother Sandy Barris. You personify the steady kind heart.

My cousin, Moshe “Micky” Davis. Thank for always being my “big brother”- from magic shows to navigating as a new immigrant in our real home, Israel.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research was to explore how Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva,1987) impacts university instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy (Mehrabian, 1971). Seeking to engage and educate learners is an ongoing process for instructors. At times, a classroom lesson cannot be remedied with traditional classroom strategies and other options are sought, such as non-instructional strategies that promote the student's classroom engagement and the likeability of their instructor.

Non-instructional strategies are a key component of instructors' learning outcomes (Richey, Klein, & Tracey, 2011) and should be explored for greater higher educational engagement. Nonverbal communication is a useful non-instructional strategy for meeting those needs. It comprises 93% of communication skills (Knapp & Hall, 2013, 2018).

Nonverbal Immediacy is a construct of specific nonverbal behaviors promoting likeability. Nonverbal behaviors include eye-contact, physical gestures, relaxed body position, directing body position toward students, smiling, vocal expressiveness, moving around the classroom, and touching (Mehrabian, 1971).

Immediacy means “people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer” (Mehrabain, 1971, p.1). It promotes likeability, motivates positive emotional responses, and brings people together. There is well-established research that people are willing to be closer in proximity to those whom they like more in instructional interactions (Furlich & Dwyer, 2007; Kalat, Yazdi, & Ghanizadeh, 2018; Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991; Mehrabian, 1969,1972; Miller, Katt, Brown, & Sivo, 2014 & Wilson, 2008). Emotional responses create likeability during the instructor-learner interaction and promote positive motivational feelings and responses

(Darwin, 1872; Russell & Mehrabian, 1974) as well as contribute to cognitive and affective learning.

Some of those behaviors require mitigation in current society. With regard to moving around the classroom, for example, instructors do not want to appear stilted, but this concern must be weighed against the needs of students, such as those with hearing disabilities, who would have difficulty in following the lecture (Nambo et al., 2012) in the absence of the instructor wearing a transmitter. Similarly, with regard to touching, there are current societal concerns likely to lead to a lawsuit and dismissal.

### **Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) is an interview process concentrating on what is working well (appreciative) by questioning and storytelling (inquiry) (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). It is a strength-based interview process that identifies positive attributes in past, present, and future endeavors. Appreciative Inquiry has been successfully demonstrated in higher educational settings (2013; Masika & Jones, 2016; Pill, 2015; Royer, & Latz, 2016; Thibodeau, 2011). Together with Nonverbal Immediacy, it is a positive and engaging non-instructional strategy or communication method.

Appreciative Inquiry enhances self-impression, which transfers into interpersonal communication in both personal and professional social contexts. In social intercourse, people present themselves and their activities to others in an attempt to guide and control the impressions formed about them. Instructors may self-present well because they are knowledgeable about their craft and may be pleasant and engaging professionals. However, their Nonverbal Immediacy behavior is manifested based on how much instructors enjoy teaching the subject matter, whether

they enjoy teaching the learners, and whether or not they have self-efficacy (Adams & Biddle, 1970; Goffman, 1959; Mehrabian, 1971).

Over a century of research exists on Nonverbal Immediacy and its influences on affective learning. This includes teacher effectiveness (Barr, 1929), teacher warmth and permissiveness (Christiansen, 1960), emotions (Darwin, 1872), communication affect (Ekman, 1965), affiliation motivation (Exline, 1960), orientation behavior (Mehrabian, 1967), and communication in education (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987). Appreciative Inquiry has been shown to strengthen employees' interest in and commitment to educational institutions, like the Academy for Educational Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Lawrence Technological University, Southfield, Michigan; Milton Hershey High School, Hershey, Pennsylvania; the Scandinavian School System; and the Utah Education System, Sandy, Utah (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008).

Nonverbal Immediacy is not new to learning; however, the degree to which instructors choose to incorporate Nonverbal Immediacy as part of their overall (non-)instructional methods has not been studied. Most research conducted on Nonverbal Immediacy has been conducted from the learner's perspective (Lybarger, Rancer, & Lin, 2017; Miller et al., 2014; Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987; Richmond et al., 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Self-determination Theory (Deci, 1975) was originally developed as a psychological construct pertaining to the economic and political maturity of third world countries that were learning to be autonomous, resulting in increased motivation within domains and cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination Theory focuses on competence, relatedness, and autonomy. It

is helpful for human motivation and personality, highlighting the value of human's evolved inner resources for personality growth and regulating behavioral (Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997).

Hoffman, Field, and Sawilowsky (2004) developed self-determination into a curriculum and intervention model for students, teachers, and parents. Their self-determination model is comprised of varying perspectives of cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors: (1) know yourself, (2) value yourself, (3) plan, (4) act, and (5) feedback or experience outcomes. Field and Hoffman's (1994) premise is that self-determination is "the ability to identify and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself" (p. 164). Other models of self-determination also have been developed, such as the ARC model by Wehmeyer (1996), which pertains to (1) autonomy, (2) self-regulation, (3) psychological empowerment, (4) self-realization, and (5) total self-determination. Collectively, the various self-determination theories and models (e.g., Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment, The University of Oklahoma's self-determination assessments) align with the Appreciative Inquiry method because they seek to enhance behavioral and affective behaviors, strengthening inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs, which perhaps can influence Nonverbal Immediacy.

### **Problem Statement**

According to Richardson and Watt (2006, 2008), instructors choose their level of teaching based on their own motivations, experience, and career commitment. Instructors typically commencing at the undergraduate level do so to gain teaching experience. Instructors who teach graduate students are more mature, professional, and committed to their career choices. In addition, they have a greater sense of self and have developed people skills germane to graduate instruction (Richardson and Watt, 2006, 2008 (Appendix A)).

Nonverbal Immediacy in the undergraduate classroom promotes likeability, motivates positive emotional responses, and brings people together rather than separating people. Nonverbal Immediacy is influenced by how much instructors enjoy teaching their subject matter, whether they enjoy teaching, and the degree to which they have self-efficacy (Adams & Biddle, 1970; Goffman, 1959; Mehrabian, 1971). Nonverbal Immediacy communication is a non-instructional strategy typically inherent within instructors (Goffman, 1959; Mehrabian, 1971). Because Nonverbal Immediacy is often inherent, instructors may not be aware of its influence in the classroom. Most research has focused on how the learner perceives and responds to the instructor (Kerssen-Griep, 1998; Lybarger et al., 2017; Miller, et al., 2014; Witt et al., 2014). There is limited research on how much the instructor knows about the role of Nonverbal Immediacy embedded in instructional strategies (Liando 2010; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, the focus of this study was on undergraduate instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of Appreciative Inquiry on the level of Nonverbal Immediacy of undergraduate instructors teaching in the traditional classroom, as measured by the *Nonverbal Immediacy Scale Observer Report* (NIS-O), a checklist developed by Richmond, et al. (2003). The study employed a quantitative, prospective pretest-posttest treatment vs. comparison experimental design, in which students assessed their instructor using a checklist after a four-week period of instruction, and again following the 14<sup>th</sup> week of instruction. Three Appreciative Inquiry interviews were conducted by this researcher with half of the instructors randomly assigned into the treatment (Appreciative Inquiry) group.

## Operational Definitions

**Appreciative Inquiry.** Appreciative Inquiry is a generative interview process design to identify one's strengths to change behavior in an affirmative way. Appreciative Inquiry develops well-being, fosters good communication, and builds trust (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Kluger and Nir, 2010). It is designed with Five Principles of Design and the 4-D model.

**Appreciative Inquiry Principles.** Appreciative Inquiry principles guide participants by drawing awareness to their strengths and potential for additional growth and change. These principles are part of each 4- D phase. For a more comprehensive description of the following principles, see Figure 1.

- Constructionist: We understand our social reality and communication dynamics through our language and conversation.
- Simultaneity: Change is happening the moment we speak, listen, and respond to communication.
- Poetic: Truth is based on perception and focus of attention, and consideration of multiple realities.
- Anticipatory: Our expectations inform what we encounter.
- Positive: The more positive and generative the conversation, questions and response, the more positive and long-lasting the outcome.

**Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Model.** Governed by Appreciative Inquiry's five principles, the 4-Ds listed below comprise system for specific topics, such as specific organizational needs and gaps (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

- Discover. An appreciation and valuing of the best of what is based on social and historical contexts; discovering what gives life and appreciating the best of what is through meaning-making.
- Dream. The researcher and participant share and envision what might be by discussing key points and/or stories.
- Design. Identifying what elements should comprise the ideal future design.
- Destiny. Creating the future, envisioning what will be and how to empower, learning to adjust, and improvising in sustainable ways.

**Autonomy.** Autonomy pertains to controlling the course of life, including interesting, enjoyable, and valuable activities. It arises when there is a sense of willingness to act and a choice to do so is perceived. Autonomy refers to self-initiating and regulating behavior. It leads to greater engagement, and wellness in motivation and psychological and physical health (The Brainwaves Video Anthology, 2017, 0:44).

**Competence.** Competence is the need to feel mastery in interacting with others and contexts. It involves being able to see oneself as capable of producing the desired outcome.

**Generative strategies.** Generative strategies are generative elements. Every circumstance allows for positive generative questions. Stories told through conversation are a meaningful tool. As Gergen (1978) explained, “Generativity is the capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions, to raise fundamental questions, to foster reconsideration of that which is taken for granted, and thereby to generate fresh alternatives for social action” (p. 1344). Questions resulting in generativity evoke surprise, engage the heart and spirit, build relationships, and change the way reality is experienced.

**Instructor.** Someone who is a member of the faculty at a community college, college, or university. Instructors also may be referred to as academics, academicians, educators, pedagogues; professors, or teachers.

**Intrinsic motivation.** Intrinsic Motivation refers to initiating an activity for its own sake because it is interesting and satisfying in itself (Deci, 1975). Without external factors “intrinsically motivated behaviors are behaviors which a person engages in to feel competent and self-determining” thus to receive life’s enjoyment and vitality (Ryan, 1995, p. 61).

**Learner.** A learner in this context can be anyone from a young adult to a senior citizen. Learners also may be referred to as students or participants.

**Non-instructional strategies.** Non-instructional strategies are strategies that enhance motivation and supportive organizational structures. Strategies include methods of communication and collaboration by training, facilitating instruction in group sessions, engaging in role-play, and interviewing (Molenda & Pershing, 2004; Wile, 1996).

**Nonverbal Immediacy.** Mehrabian’s (1971) construct of nonverbal immediacy is a core component of non-verbal behaviors, such as eye contact, smiling, gesturing, body movements and orientation, tone of voice, and touching. Nonverbal Immediacy emphasizes that “people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer” (Mehrabain, 1971, p.1). Immediacy cues “are approach behaviors which increase sensory stimulation and produce interpersonal closeness” (Anderson et al., 1979, p. 153). A nonverbal immediacy cue may be approach or avoidance of “eye contact, proximity, gestures...body position and movement” (Kearney, 1994, p. 238), as measured by Anderson, 1979; Richmond, Gorham & McCroskey et. Al. 1987; and Richmond., et al (2003).

**Relatedness.** Relatedness is feeling cared for by others and caring for others. The feeling of belonging and close, meaningful relationships in various groups are important to one's well-being. Relatedness is developing secure and satisfying connections with others in one's social context, including work environments (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

**Self-determination theory.** People's "inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration as well as for the conditions that foster the positive process" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68) or their volition about how to act in their environment. Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) have proposed that humans have three basic innate psychological needs: the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which make up self-determination theory. A self-determined behavior is generally seen as self-initiated and not controlled by others. Hoffman, Field, and Sawilowsky's (2004) theory of self-determination evolved into a curriculum and intervention model for evaluating the magnitude and type of self-determination, and it is comprised of steps that assess varying perspectives of cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors.

### Summary

This study explored how the Appreciative Inquiry interview (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) influences instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy (Mehrabian, 1971) in the traditional undergraduate classroom. Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy are positive and engaging non-instructional strategies (communication methods). Previous research indicates that instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy behavior manifests based on how much the instructor enjoys teaching their subject matter, enjoys working with the learners, and demonstrates self-efficacy (Adams & Biddle, 1970; Goffman, 1959; Mehrabian, 1971). Self-determination Theory informed

this research. Its core constructs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy are inherent in both Nonverbal Immediacy and Appreciative Inquiry.

In Chapter 2, I analyze the literature that informed the study. Next, I share my methods of data collection and analysis in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I analyze my data to demonstrate my findings. Finally, in Chapter 5, I make meaning of the results, discuss the limitations and implications of my study, and offer my conclusions.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Non-instructional strategies in instructional design are a key component of higher education instructors meeting their educational goals (Richey, et al. 2011). The current research is designed to be an exploration of how Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) influences instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy (Mehrabian, 1971) in the undergraduate traditional classroom. Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy are methods of communication and non-instructional strategies with similar properties of positivity and motivation. Nonverbal Immediacy communication is a non-instructional strategy useful in meeting the non-instructional strategy needs. Nonverbal communication comprises 93% of communication skills in most environments, including instruction (Knapp & Hall, 2010). Learners appear to receive information more readily when they have an engaging instructor because Nonverbal Immediacy engagement breeds learners' receptivity. Nonverbal Immediacy's properties are transmitted through a host of non-verbal behavior, such as eye contact, smiling, moving around the classroom, body orientation, gesturing, and touching.

This set of behaviors was researched for over a century as emotions (Darwin, 1872), characteristic differences (Barr, 1929), teacher effectiveness (Harrington, 1955), self-presentation (Goffman, 1959), affiliation motivation (Exline, 1960), teacher warmth and permissiveness (Christiansen, 1960), communication affect (Ekman, 1965), and orientation behavior (Mehrabian, 1967). Mehrabian (1971) coined the term "Nonverbal Immediacy," which became the conventional terminology for positive (and negative) nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal Immediacy behavioral cues typically are inherent and present when people are motivated to positively display themselves and engage with others (Ekman, 1967). Nonverbal Immediacy behavior is subtly motivated when a person is feeling good, likes the people they are with, or appreciates the

instructional strategies they are facilitating. These behaviors typically are inherent except when communicators are familiar with how to use Nonverbal Immediacy (Goffman, 1959).

Nonverbal Immediacy behavior was found in over 30 recent studies to be attached to a behavioral construct, such as credibility (Lybarger et al., 2017; Miller, Katt, Brown & Sivo, 2014), enthusiasm (Keller, Hoy, Goetz, & Frenzel, 2016), friendliness (D'souza, 2018), influence (Talley & Temple, 2015), motivation (Bolkan & Griffin, 2018), and self-disclosure (Miller et al., 2014). These constructs are based on perceptions of Nonverbal Immediacy. However, the majority of the research on Nonverbal Immediacy was not focused on the instructor. It examined learners' perceptions of their instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy. Also, today's learners are more opinionated about their instructor's behavior and Nonverbal Immediacy helps to ameliorate these judgements (Kalat, et al., 2018; Lybarger, Rancer, & Yin, 2017). This may be in part due to the rise of incivility (Knepp, 2012; Summers, Bergin, & Cole, 2009) in learning environments. Because Nonverbal Immediacy is often inherent, instructors may not be aware of the influence of Nonverbal Immediacy in their classrooms.

Appreciative Inquiry properties include an interview process, which works as a motivation for bringing out one's positive core (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008; Kluger & Nir, 2010). It is a generative interviewing process with the potential to awaken dormant knowledge, along with identifying untapped and previous knowledge and self-determination through self-reflection and self-discovery. It may be a motivational and positive influence for new and veteran undergraduate instructors across the educational spectrum, which can translate into greater Nonverbal Immediacy classroom engagement. This may expand their repertoire of Nonverbal Immediacy with the Appreciative Inquiry interview as an intervention method. Appreciative Inquiry also works positively as it creates the ability to think, to learn how

to know. Duffy & Cunningham (1996) describe “knowing how to know” as a thought process advantageous for the design and delivery of non-instructional strategies. Knowing how to know is embedded in Appreciative Inquiry’s interviewing process when talking about our thoughts and ideas, visiting, revisiting, or revising our beliefs, or revising an existing one (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

Appreciative Inquiry is designed to help learners know how to know by responding to generative questions promoting self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence and relatedness. These attributes are the expansion of Intrinsic Motivation Theory (Deci, 1971, 1975), or known today as Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT’s core premise focuses on one’s inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs (and motor skills applicable to Nonverbal Immediacy), which influence one’s self-motivation, character, and the context that enables a positive process (Deci, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Woodworth, 1918).

Positivity and intrinsic motivation manifest in Appreciate Inquiry. Nonverbal Immediacy is potentially where the positivity and intrinsic motivation can be used as a non-instructional strategy in the traditional classroom. According to Kacin (2013), “it can be said that if motivation is important... [to non-instructional design] then it would be important to incorporate rich intrinsically motivating interventions within the academic environment to assist students [instructors] and promote academic achievement” (p. 21).

This study is designed (1) to explore how an instructor’s Nonverbal Immediacy (Mehrabian, 1971) is impacted by the Appreciative Inquiry interview in the face-to-face classroom (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) and (2) to possibly create a greater awareness of the value of strategy using nonverbal immediacy in teaching environments.

The first section of this literature review includes Nonverbal Immediacy's evolution, its conceptual framework, and its motivation and influence in educational settings. The second section explains the requisites of Appreciative Inquiry and how its transformative role in educational settings has shaped non-instructional strategies. Third, Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is discussed as the theoretical framework between Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy, with the plausible premise that it has the potential to strengthen Nonverbal Immediacy as part of non-instructional strategies in the traditional undergraduate classroom. Perhaps, Nonverbal Immediacy may have the potential to become a regular strategic attribute of the instructional design knowledge base (Richey et. al., 2011). Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy's key properties, such as positive behavior, insights and motivation, are reflected into Self-Determination Theory. SDT's components are highlighted and detailed within the context of empirical studies

### **Nonverbal Immediacy**

Mehrabian's (1971) construct of Nonverbal Immediacy includes behaviors such as eye contact, physical gestures, relaxed body position, directing body position (toward students), smiling, vocal expressiveness, movement, proximity, and touching. Immediacy emphasizes that "people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer" (Mehrabain, 1971, p.1). Immediacy promotes likeability and motivates positive emotional responses. Immediacy brings people together and non-immediacy separates people. There is well-established research to suggest that people are willing to be closer in proximity to people whom they like more, such as friends, rather than strangers (Mehrabian, 1969, 1972). These emotional responses created during the instructor-learner interaction promote motivational feelings and responses (Darwin, 1872;

Russell & Mehrabian, 1974) as well and contribute to cognitive and affective learning. An instructor's Nonverbal Immediacy communication is displayed by approach: drawing learners in where students listen to, learn from, and will approach the instructor. Conversely, nonverbal and non-immediate communication can be displayed by avoidance: pushing students away, not listening, avoiding eye contact, a non-receptive body orientation, or sitting behind a desk (Richmond & McCroskey, 2000).

As an example, smiling and eye contact express the instructor's an invitation to empower learners to ask questions and engage more with the instructor (Harrington, 1955; Knapp & Hall, 2013), whereas limited smiling and eye contact create avoidance and convey less interest for the instruction. Nonverbal Immediacy is used in the teaching environment, mostly non-strategically, because the assumption is instructors are not typically aware of the cause and effect of Nonverbal Immediacy. Goffman (1959) stated, "the true or real attitudes, beliefs, and emotions of the individual can be ascertained only indirectly, through his avowals or through what appears to be involuntary expressive behavior" (p. 2). In other words, nonverbal behavior is involuntary unless the instructor consciously thinks about how to use nonverbal cues. Otherwise, the universal non-strategic behaviors are inherent, basic and the behaviors we defer to without even thinking about it. (Ekman, 1973; Goffman, 1959; Harrington, 1955). The most prevalent Nonverbal Immediacy is the facial expressions of surprise, fear, disgust, anger, happiness and sadness. Ekman (1973) investigated the facial expressions in seven countries and found when presented with scenarios provoking the emotional expression the facial responses were all the same. True happiness reflexes with a true smile has crow's feet around the eyes; sadness reflexes lips down or trembling, and surprise expressions reflex the eyelids to open wide. Another prevalent Nonverbal Immediacy is the use of hand gestures. Darwin's (1872) and Ekman and Friesen's

(1969) research on the Nonverbal Immediacy found while delivering instruction, emotions leak out through their hand gestures. Talley and Temple (2013) found certain hand gestures are more effective creating immediacy between the leader (instructor) and follower (learner). Learners are positively influenced by instructors' hands face up or vertical to the ground, clasped in front of one's waist or formed as a steeple with fingertips touching. This messaging says the instructor is engaged with the learner and interested in their needs. On the contrary, learners are negatively influenced by instructors who keep one or both hands in their pockets, hands crossed in front of their chest, or hands behind their back, freely or crossed (Talley and Temple, 2013). This Nonverbal Immediacy messaging conveys closed and protective disengagement with the receiver.

There is scant evidence pertaining to the instructor's knowledge about and view of Nonverbal Immediacy as a non-instructional strategy. Two studies included the instructor's knowledge of Nonverbal Immediacy reporting. Wilson (2008) found that liking teaching and liking students should be measured as two different constructs, whereas Liando's (2015) investigation of pedagogical and interactional characteristics of Indonesian master teachers encouraged him to see the two constructs as interdependent. Houser and Waldbuesser's (2017) research reports that expressive instructors open the forum for students to be self-expressive. In other words, they expect their students to respond in kind. Houser and Waldbuesser (2017) also contended that instructors need to be mentored and trained in Nonverbal Immediacy. In a study of Turkish pre-service teachers, Cakir (2015) concluded that making connections between Nonverbal Immediacy and empowerment encourages intrinsic motivation. Frymier, Shulman, and Houser (1996) introduced learner empowerment as intrinsic motivation. This term was originally used for corporate settings and then transferred to educational contexts. Cakir (2015) also

suggested that non-instructional strategy training can be created for instructors to learn and use Nonverbal Immediacy behaviors in their instructional toolkits.

### **Appreciative Inquiry**

The Appreciative Inquiry interview is a non-instructional strategy (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) designed to identify strengths, to encourage change in an affirmative way, to develop well-being and good communication, and to build trust rather than focus on weaknesses (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008; Kluger & Nir, 2010). People practice Appreciative Inquiry when asking engaging, positive, and affirming questions relative to another's life experiences and encouraging them to repeat these successes rather than "solving problems" (Hammond, 2013, p.18). It is based on assumptions, principles, and rules synergizing ideas about what people do best. For example, some assumptions are that certain things work well in every group, such as focusing on the positive and asking the right questions creates confidence. Appreciative Inquiry permits differences to be valued and encourages people to appreciate that language creates reality (Hammond, 2013; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The Appreciative Inquiry processes' *modus operandi* is exclusively administered from a positive perspective. Ziglar (1997) contended that asking at least five positive questions creates endorphins, which stimulate a natural optimistic interaction. Appreciative Inquiry interviewing contains critical information about the values and judgments (of instructors), which identifies gaps for potential change where latent energy may exist. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) stated that by reframing the process of inquiry change can be empowering and sustainable. Depending on the area of research or to meet the needs of the business structure, the Appreciative Inquiry method has been modified and renamed as Feedforward (Kluger & Nir, 2010), Appreciative Advising (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008), Appreciative Education (Bloom, Hutson, He, & Konkle, 2013), and SOAR (Stavros, Cole,

& Hitchcock, 2014). Current research into the Appreciative Inquiry interview includes variations of questions from the aforementioned and renamed Appreciative Inquiry sources. Cooperrider et al. (1980) discovered Appreciate Inquiry while advising a doctoral student on physician leadership. During this process, they were drawn to positive narratives and subsequent organizational positive cooperation. The focus was on “everything that served to give life to the system and to people when they were most alive, effective, committed, and empowered” (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. xxvii). Appreciative Inquiry evolved with two core components. First, Cooperrider et al. (1980) designed the Five Principles of Design, which are a series of principles detailing the varying means of generative, positive conversation. The Principles are defined as Constructionist, Simultaneity, Poetic, Anticipatory, and Positive (see Table 1.0). Utilizing the Five Principles, the 4-D system was added to Appreciative Inquiry as an action research system for specific topics, including specific organizational needs and gaps (Bushe, 1999). The 4-D dialogue includes “Discover,” appreciating and valuing; “Dream,” envisioning; “Design,” co-constructing the future; and “Destiny,” improvising to sustain the future (Stavros & Torres, 2018).

The Five Principles of Appreciative Inquiry and primarily the 4-D Discover and Dream steps were used in this study as generative interview questions, seeking what gives life to instructors as they strategize and deliver their instruction. It is possible the Design and Destiny phases could come out during the interview, such as how the instructor can employ positive change to something already working. However, the Design and Destiny interview phase may need to be exercised cautiously because design and destiny steps may be beholden to the University protocol.

### Appreciative Inquiry Principles

Principle	Details
<p>Constructionist Principle</p> <p>Words create worlds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reality, as we know it, is a subjective vs. objective state and is socially created through language and conversations.</li> <li>• Multiple realities exist based on perceptions and shared understandings.</li> <li>• The questions we ask change the way we talk together.</li> <li>• Consider one's viewpoint lightly with an open mind.</li> <li>• Social knowledge and its construction are intertwined with organizational change.</li> <li>• Integrate imagination and reasoning to construct knowledge is fundamentally different than traditional strategies.</li> </ul>
<p>Simultaneity Principle</p> <p>Inquiry is intervention, creating change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The moment we ask a question, make a comment, or enter the conversation creates change.</li> <li>• Clarify other people's intentions, instead of reacting to them.</li> <li>• The topics people think and talk about, discover and learn, inform conversation and inspire images of the future.</li> <li>• Reality is an evolving social construction.</li> <li>• Simultaneously with inquiry, it is possible to influence the reality of an organization.</li> </ul>
<p>Poetic Principle</p> <p>We can choose how we see things</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many perspectives and ways of knowing how to know and understand.</li> <li>• Stay open and avoid judgment, while recognizing we see only part of the picture.</li> <li>• Attend to possibilities instead of ruminating on fear or worry.</li> <li>• Within this framework, the organization itself becomes a source of inspiration; the organization's past, present, and future guide the inquiry process.</li> <li>• People are like an open book and its story is coauthored continually by its members.</li> </ul>

<p>Anticipatory Principle</p> <p>Images inspire action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We move in the direction of our thoughts and the images we hold.</li> <li>• The more positive and hopeful the image of the future, the more positive the present-day action.</li> <li>• We see what we expect to see; what we look for, we find. Expect positive outcomes.</li> <li>• An organization's positive images of its future will anticipate, or lead to welcome change.</li> <li>• Actions taken in the present are guided by the vision for the future.</li> <li>• Conversation and inquiry are tools which help the organization's members develop and sustain similar goals.</li> </ul>
<p>Positive Principle</p> <p>Positive images, actions and questions lead to positive change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Momentum change, small or large, requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding.</li> <li>• This momentum is best generated through positive questions which amplify the positive core.</li> <li>• The more positive and generative the questions, the more positive and generative the outcome.</li> <li>• Ask bold generative questions that elicit strong, affirmative images of possibility.</li> <li>• The more positive the Appreciative Inquiry questions are, the more engaged and excited participants become, and the more successful and longer lasting the change effort becomes.</li> <li>• Positive outcomes promote creativity, energy, and happiness in organizations.</li> </ul>

Figure 1. Appreciative Inquiry Principles as adapted from Cooperrider and Srivastva, (1987); Cooperrider and Whitney (2000); Preskill, and Tzavaras Catsambas (2003); Stavros and Torres (2008); and Watkins and Mohr (2001).

Appreciative Inquiry has been researched in many contexts, including higher education (Stavros, Cockell & McArthur-Blair (2012). Relative to this literature review, the Appreciative Inquiry interview may be embedded as a life-giving alternative to traditional instruction, manifesting in higher education as greater engagement through reflection. When the poetic principle is applied, the coach (or instructor) engages learners by having teams interact by sharing stories.

Pill (2015) investigated how Game Sense (GS) could be strengthened by incorporating the strength-based Appreciative Inquiry. GS was used as an alternative to traditional games-teaching performance, measuring game context as well as specific coaching techniques. The questions directing the project were based on Appreciative Inquiry's core premises of how to best discover, dream, and design one's destiny, answering the two core questions: 1) Can Appreciative Inquiry effectively depict and heighten awareness or the positive and possibly, a transformational change in coaching? and 2) What conditions successful adoption of GS coaching? In addition to these questions, researchers utilized Appreciative Inquiry's Poetic Principle, which is key because team interaction is a fluid story rather than a state of being. The findings demonstrated a re-culturing of coaching practice, which sustained and highlighted GS coaching, bringing life to the coaches. Appreciative Inquiry benefits GS coaching across the range of sports at all levels.

Appreciative Inquiry works as a reflective process through the constructionist principle because social realities are constructed and reconstructed through shared conversations and can readily be incorporated for change. This reflective process is valuable because cultural competence is important to consider in mixed cultural learning environments and should be taken into consideration for future teaching design and interactions (He, 2013). Appreciative Inquiry also can serve as an assessment tool and as an effective guide to bringing out the positive aspects of teachers' cultural competence potential (He, 2013). The Appreciative Inquiry model creates room to experience (generative) conversation through a cultural journey. Hence, the implications of Appreciative Inquiry synthesized with cultural competencies have the potential to expand beyond the macro and micro levels of higher education, well into the mega society as a responsive and engaging cultural benchmark for all educational instructional design (He, 2013).

Gray, Treacy, and Hall (2017) researched how physical education (PE) teachers seek to re-engage students with a curriculum that is socially and culturally relevant. Teachers and pupils from three major Scottish high schools participated in a study using Appreciative Inquiry to identify their strengths as a starting point for positive change, with one-on-one, semi-structured focus groups and workshops. The results revealed that the strongest factors were trusting relationships between student and teacher and student-to-student relationships. The importance of talking and listening to each other helped develop a greater sense of awareness and understanding of their own and each other's successes.

Giles and Kung (2010) found that higher education instructional design does not appear to be a regular positive, engaging aspect of an instructor's day-to-day teaching experience. Accordingly, it is possible to "lose their sense of purpose and feel an alienation from colleagues and students. Moreover, this negative, problem-centered way of being can engender deficit-based thinking on the part of the educator" (Giles & Kung, 2010, p. 309). By exercising Appreciative Inquiry principles as an alternative discourse, participants can convey meaningful life stories and experience heartfelt discoveries as the beginning of new action plans (Giles & Kung, 2010).

### **Appreciative Inquiry 4-D System**

As earlier mentioned, the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D system was added to Appreciative Inquiry as an action research system for specific topics, such as organizational needs and gaps. The essence of the 4-D dialogue includes "Discover," appreciating and valuing; "Dream," envisioning; "Design," co-constructing the future; and "Destiny," improvising to sustain the future (Stavros & Torres, 2018).

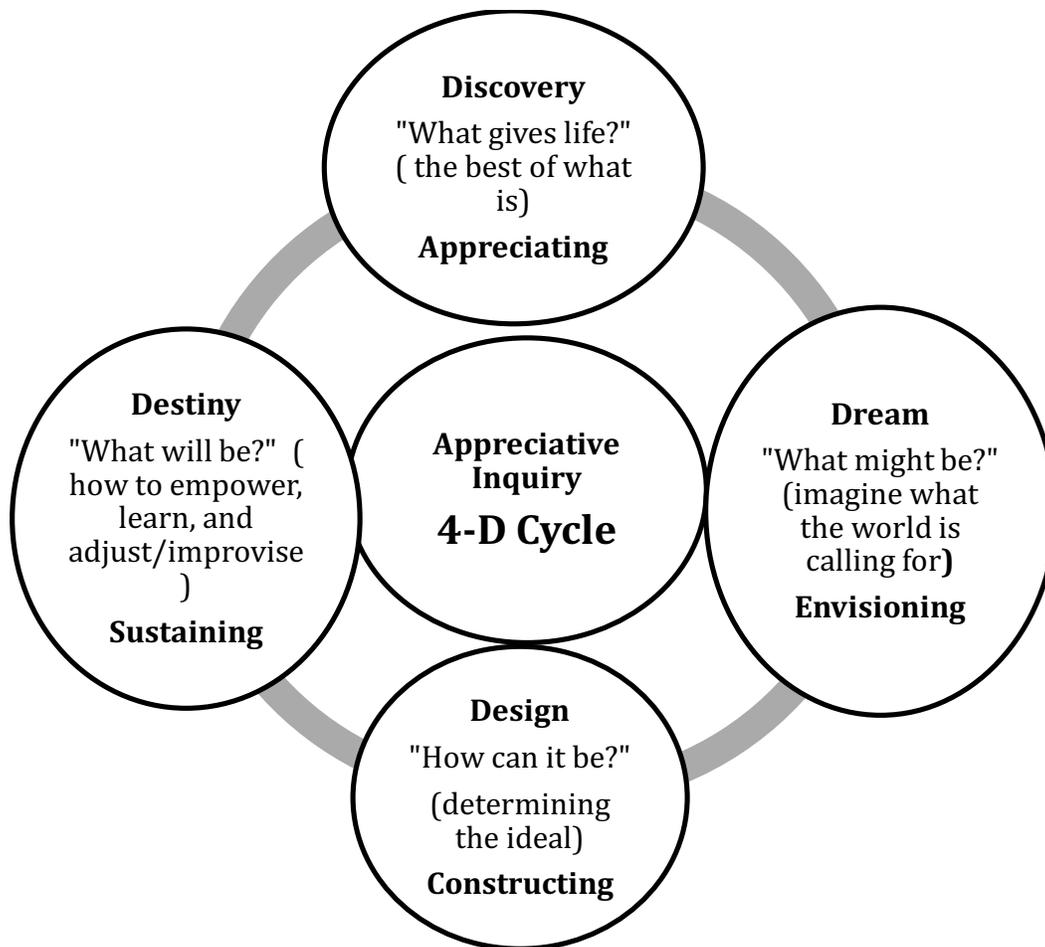


Figure 2. *Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Model*. (Cooper, Whitney, & Stavros 2003).

### **Discovery**

Storytelling starts in the Discovery phase by identifying what gives life to the experience within the story, as the best of what is. Appreciative Inquiry discovery is comprised of carefully crafted positive interview questions relative to the person's personal or professional topic. The questions explore the best of the instructor's instructional strategies. For example, "Tell a story about the best instructional design experience in your class this year." The nature of this inquiry is important because the first questions set the stage for what people discover and how they construct their future. Next, "What are the things you value about work? Putting humility aside, what do you value most about yourself as an instructor, and what are three wishes if granted would make you

an even better instructor?” These questions pertain to past experiences, allowing reflection for future endeavors. The themes are then collected and synthesized to discuss the idealized and practical future (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Kluger & Nir, 2010; Stavros & Torres, 2018). During the Discovery phase, the interviewee is asked to share exceptional stories and details about these experiences. It typically is when one is motivated to discuss and expand their attributes.

As an example of the Design phase, Royer and Latz (2016) investigated the framework of Appreciative Inquiry and the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR) method, a derivative of Appreciative Inquiry, during a community college leadership transitional period. For one part of the transition, a new dean of nursing facilitated an introductory retreat with faculty focusing on the Discover segment of Appreciative Inquiry with the following themes: discussing a shared vision, mobilizing resources, and creating a positive environment. The data were reviewed by a third party, and then shared with the faculty. During the design phase, teams carefully reviewed the results of the discovery phase and created action plans aligned with the overall mission of the Discovery phase results.

### **Dream**

The Dream phase is the response to questions about shared, collected Discovery narratives and past historical relationships to create as preferred future image as one envisions what the future might bring. This phase starts centered around the history of one’s role within their respective organization. This Dream narrative then becomes a new narrative, giving new life to the person and the organization. These developments can include a tailored intervention and “involve co-construction of norms, beliefs, behaviors (the creation of new cultural elements) ...” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 84). Dream interview questions might include: (1) What was a small change

you made in your instructional strategies with the most significant impact? (2) What was key to your success and classroom success? (3) How can your positive past help you become more innovative? (4) What is your greatest dream for higher education? The Dream phase positions organizations today to be concerned with the social wellbeing of their employees as well as the bottom line (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The Dream phase is grounded in organizational history. Also, it is generative, keeping in mind that the organizational stakeholder's hope and future vision often stems from the instructor's classroom experience.

### **Design**

The Design phase occurs when attention turns to the social architecture or actual design of the system, seeking to find what should be the ideal scenario, so an infrastructure can be put in place. For this research, the past ideal classroom scenario can be examined during the Design phase, and new ideas may emerge by asking "How do instructional strategies from past practice lead to improving their classroom scenarios? In the Design phase, there may be a need to return to the Dream phase to examine it in relationship to how to implement it; with back and forth iterations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000). In the Design phase, possibilities are generated, and instructors are encouraged to think about instructional strategies, which help them come to know their needs. Questions that might guide this process include: How might we make your vision a reality? What can you do in the next two weeks to move one step closer to your goals? How can this be made to happen easily? Appreciative Inquiry works in a way in which the experience talked about becomes rediscovered and reconfigured into a catharsis, which in turn integrates as a tuning schema into existing craft knowledge (Conklin & Hartman, 2014).

In the Appreciative Inquiry research of Calabrese (2014), school administrators and university faculty implemented story telling as part of their training design. The Appreciative

Inquiry benefits of storytelling they experienced were the impetus to change administrators' and faculty's perceptions of storytelling as a worthwhile craft-knowledge. These changes were the culmination of the stakeholder's reflective knowledge, embedded in story telling through whole group discussions and field notes. Calabrese (2014) found that storytelling served as a catalyst for generative conversation about what works. The result was faculty meetings designed around stories of what works and practices promoting "a culture of, optimism, mutual respect and new ideas to help the administrator meet the challenges of his/her work" (p. 220).

### **Destiny**

The Destiny phase addresses What will be, how to empower, learn, and adjust/improvise. How are positive changes sustained? Although it is not the purpose of the current study to capture the 4-D Destiny, it was useful to provide an explanation of how the 4-D Destiny (delivery) can bring Appreciative Inquiry full circle. Destiny involves "allow[ing] yourself to dream and . . . [discovering] that destiny is yours to design" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.199). Destiny is where Appreciative Inquiry becomes part of the culture by building in Appreciative Inquiry competencies. For example, it could occur when employees of a hotel replaced its usual problem-solving efforts with Appreciative Inquiry and improved it from a one star to a four-star hotel (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Appreciative Inquiry is ongoing, allowing people to make adjustments, improvise, and learn. Like-minded people will get together and focus on feasible action plans and experiment with other possibilities. Generative competence allows participants to see and discuss how their actions and progress are meaningful. Also, complete and timely feedback is critical in the Destiny phase to remind participants that their contributions are in fact meaningful.

## Generative Questions

Appreciative Inquiry Principles and the 4-D system describe conversational generative elements—in which every circumstance allows for positive generative questions and stories told through conversation—are a meaningful tool for regeneration. Gergen (1978) explained “Generativity is the capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions, to raise fundamental questions, to foster reconsideration of that which is taken for granted, and thereby to generate fresh alternatives for social action” (p. 1344). Moreover, questions resulting in generativity have the following qualities: they evoke surprise, engage the heart and spirit, build relationships, and change the way we look at reality Gergen (1978). Bushe (2007) reasoned that generative questions bring out the best in people, resulting in surprise, relationship building, and engagement of the heart and spirit. Generative questions are nonjudgmental and build trust among people, which can shift mindsets. Bushe (2007) says the power of Appreciative Inquiry is asking generative questions about things people really know and care about.

There are often naysayers for theories and research methods. Openo (2016) stated that Appreciative Inquiry sometimes can be boring and that it is important to make it useful for academic professionals with meaningful instructional strategies, especially when a higher-level institution is in dire straits. Openo (2016) focused on the problems a broad group of educators faced when they were confronted with the need to innovate.

Thibodeau (2011) conducted a study of generative-based Appreciative Inquiry on institutional effectiveness in higher education. this study contended that Appreciative Inquiry “may be seen as the next management fad or another contributor to initiative fatigue...” (Thibodeau, 2011, p. 142). Perhaps, in this Appreciative Inquiry environment, the educators were able to freely express their autonomy in their group setting, where there were common goals and

concerns, and a sense of relatedness amongst the colleagues. These responses are part of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) which informs Appreciative Inquiry (and Nonverbal Immediacy).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Self-Determination**

In the 1970s, early self-determination studies pertained to comparing and contrasting intrinsic and extrinsic behavior. Deci (1975) developed self-determination as a psychological construct pertaining to that economic and political maturity of third world countries learning to be autonomous, a process that resulted in increased motivation within domains and cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination Theory focuses on competence, relatedness, and autonomy. It is helpful for human motivation and personality, highlighting the value of humans evolved inner resources for personality growth and regulating behavioral (Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997).

Deci and Ryan's (1985) approach was researched and applied in areas of personal and professional settings, such as instruction (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007). Similar to Appreciative Inquiry, Deci and Ryan (1985) focused on inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs (applicable to Nonverbal Immediacy) that drive self-motivation, character, and contexts that enable a positive process (Deci, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Woodworth, 1918). As Ryan and Deci described, "social contexts catalyze both within-and between-person differences in motivation and personal growth, resulting in people being more motivated, energized, and integrated into some situations, domains and cultures than in others" (2000, p. 68). Self-determination was approached from multiple perspectives, each with a specific focus and purpose (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Field and Hoffman, 1994; Wehmeyer, 1996). They share the elements of control, choice, and freedom. Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-determination Theory focused on the

psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy as optimal to growth and integration, constructive social development, and personal well-being in a spectrum of contexts including education. Field and Hoffman's (1994) Model of Self-determination focused on promoting resiliency and well-being by developing how to (1) know yourself, (2) value yourself, (3) plan, (4) act, and (5) experience outcomes and learning. Their model led to the development of five assessment scales relative to educational outcomes (Hoffman, Field & Sawilowsky, 2004). Wehmeyer's (1996) Self-determination Model was based on the behavioral causes of purpose and function of behavior, rather than the actual behavior. According to the four behavioral characteristics of Wehmeyer's model, (1) The person acted autonomously, (2) the behavior is self-regulated, (3) the person initiated and responded to an event in an empowered way, and (4) the person acted via a self-realization. Wehmeyer's (1996) model contained instructional design activities for students to promote self-advocacy/knowledge/awareness, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.

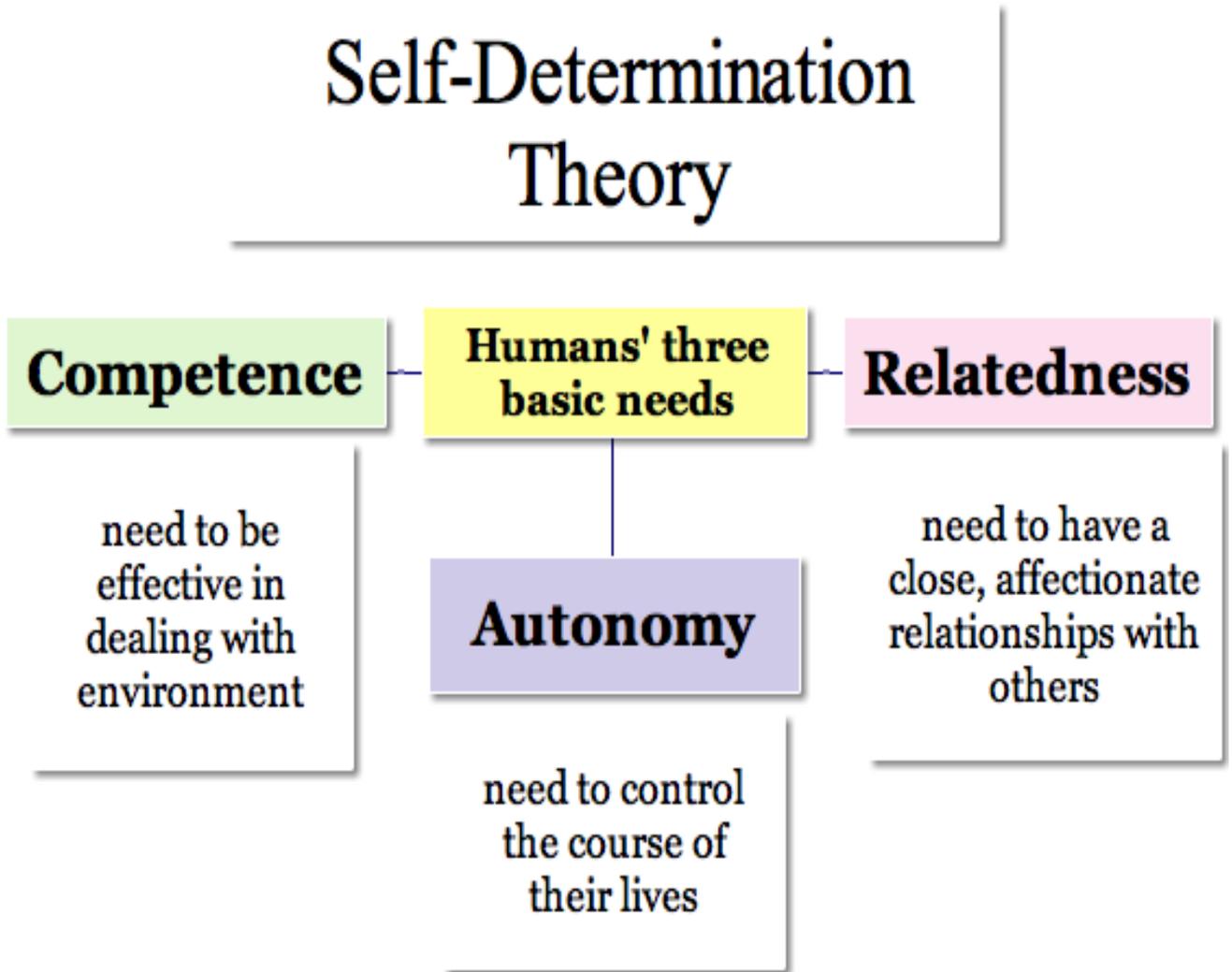


Figure 3. Self-Determination Theory. (Ryan & Deci, 1985).

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Deci (1975) explained intrinsic motivation as initiating an activity for its own sake because it is interesting and satisfying in itself, as opposed to doing an activity to obtain an external goal (extrinsic motivation): “intrinsically motivated behaviors are behaviors which a person engages in to feel competent and self –determining” (p. 61), thus to receive enjoyment and vitality (Ryan, 1995).

Intrinsic motivation, originally a behavior-primacy theory, was introduced by Woodworth (1918, 1958). The theory posited that innate capacities are driven by human energies, such as curiosity, self-assertion, and constructiveness to satisfy themselves in their respective environments. According to Deci (1975), Woodworth called these energies “native equipment” modifiable by learning (p. 25).

Appreciative Inquiry is an example of intrinsic motivation. Energies are stimulated by positive interviewing, and this activity, as an example, has the capacity to drive behavior. These modifications may be internalized or modified in social situations, such as instructional environments. Perhaps, these motivations may be manifested through Nonverbal Immediacy because feeling motivated led to an instructor projecting their likeability for learners.

Allport (1937) reframed Behavior-primacy Theory as “functional autonomy,” meaning “activities, regardless of its initiating motive, can become intrinsically interesting” (Deci, 1975, p. 25). Deci and Ryan (1991) expanded this process by introducing three innate intrinsic needs involved in self-determination. These needs are (1) autonomy, how much a person feels control over their own choices; (2) competence, the perception a person is capable of the work at hand; and (3) relatedness, a feeling of connection with others in a group. These needs have the ability to positively (or negatively) impact motivation (The Brainwaves Video Anthology, 2017, 5:10).

Intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971), and Nonverbal Immediacy (Mehrabain, 1971), were studied together (Furlich & Dwyer, 2007) in a mathematics community classroom setting. Typically, Nonverbal Immediacy research was conducted in the realm of social science instruction, where instructor/student interaction is more frequent, rather than math and science classes where the information is more definitive. Their study shed light on the less researched topic of mathematics and instructor Nonverbal Immediacy dynamics. They found levels of

Nonverbal Immediacy and intrinsic motivation were helpful in boosting confidence and indicating the relevance of mathematics to the learners' lives. Specifically, they found that student motivation increased 4.5% based on the instructor's Nonverbal Immediacy and that the learners appreciate a caring attitude from friendly and approachable instructors. Nonverbal Immediacy may be more critical when taking into consideration math anxiety (extrinsic motivation) and the potential for positive instructor behaviors to counter this anxiety (Furlich & Dwyer, 2007).

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy pertains to controlling the course of life, including interesting, enjoyable, and valuable activities, because it is what one wants to do when feeling a sense of willingness and choice. It also refers to being self-initiating and regulating behavior. Autonomy leads to greater engagement and wellness in motivation as well as psychological and physical health (The Brainwaves Video Anthology, 2017, 0:44). For example, instructors may discover through an Appreciative Inquiry interview that they most enjoy facilitating learning through gaming, and this instructional design may also engage students.

Nonverbal Immediacy may be displayed because instructors like what they are doing. However, non-autonomy-controlled motivation refers to doing something for a reward or to avoid punishment because of pressure, demands, or obligations to do a task. An instructor may deliver instruction in a certain way to satisfy the department standards, to avoid punishment, and to possibly earn a reward for departmental compliance. The Nonverbal Immediacy may be less frequent because of the external motivations. SDT makes the case that autonomy maximizes creativity, so people may cultivate and apply their talents to make organizations (and instruction) more effective and generative (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

## **Competence**

Competence is the need to feel confident, effective, efficacious in performing actions. This occurs when a person feels related to others and their environment. When they are feeling a sense of volition, they will be autonomously motivated, and positive consequences will follow (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Consider the question, “Tell me a story about your classroom instruction that made you feel full of life?” It sets the stage for the speaker to feel confident about accomplishments (Stavros & Torres, 2018). Deci and Ryan (1985) and Ryan and Deci (2000) posited that classroom environments enhance student motivation, especially when they help students feel competent (i.e., able to complete learning objectives). When instructors use Nonverbal Immediacy to enhance the teacher-student relationship, students find their instructors competent, which creates a sense of inter-personal security for both the teacher and the student (Witt, Schrodtt, Wheelless, & Bryand, 2014). Notably, one’s Nonverbal Immediacy messages are more accurately initiated and understood with competence (Bar-On, 1997).

## **Relatedness**

Relatedness is feeling cared for by others and to care for others, along with a feeling one of belonging. It has close meaningful relationships in various groups important to well-being. Relatedness involves developing secure and satisfying connections with others in one's social context, including one’s work environments (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

Mehrabian’s (1967) Nonverbal Immediacy is influenced by relatedness, as the degree of perceived physical and/or psychological closeness between people and is a basis of behavioral research in instruction. Andersen (1979) suggested that Nonverbal Immediacy behavior potentially is a major factor in relatable instructional effectiveness. Nonverbal Immediacy was

studied as a means to enhance students' self-reports of their learning and likability, thus gaining more awareness of how they feel about others and how others feel about them (Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Mehrabian, (1971); Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987).

Kerssen-Griep (1998) opined that Nonverbal Immediacy is not motivational *per se*. Immediacy behaviors get their motivation from “face-addressing properties, their contribution to the support of face needs for autonomy, competence, or relatedness among their students” (p. 137). They also stated face-to-face interaction is inherent and makes the class more relatable and interesting for students and possibly instructors. Because instructors are often viewed as leaders, Roche (2013) found leaders’ relatedness to workers breeds well-being. This seems to add support to Ryan and Deci (2000) stipulation that self-determined support is dependent on enhanced relatedness.

Field Hoffman and Sawilowsky (2004) and Weyermer (1996) brought self-determination from a theory to psychological constructs permeating the educational process. Field et al. (2004) developed a battery of self-determination assessments including the *Self-determination Scale* (SDS) as a construct applicable to all people. Field and Hoffmans’s (2004) model was initiated with students with disabilities, and subsequently was expanded to students without disabilities (Baker, Horner, Sappington, & Ard, 2000; Hong, Haefner & Slekar, 2011) and the incarcerated (Holt, 2006). The model also has been translated into Arabic (Alamri, 2017).

The model is based on a definition of self-determination as “one’s ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself” (Field and Hoffman, 1994, p. 159). Field and Hoffman’s (2007) self-determination approach included pertinent information to establish psychological empowerment and self-realization, which is similar to Appreciative Inquiry, as noted in Table 1.

**Table 1***Comparison of Self-Determination and Appreciative Inquiry Factors*

Model	
Field, Hoffman, & Sawilowsky (2004) Self-Determination	Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987)
Value Yourself	Discover
Know Yourself	Dream
Plan	Design
Act	
Feedback	Destiny

For example, the Appreciative Inquiry Discover phase is similar to their category of Value Yourself, believing in oneself through discovering strengths as an instructor, and discussing and evolving unique qualities. If an instructor creates effective lessons utilizing classroom engagement, then more of this non-instructional strategy will benefit classroom learning outcomes. The Appreciative Inquiry Dream phase is similar to the Self-determination category of Know Yourself through the medium of dreaming for wishes and wants. The instructor who is efficient with group activities could use these more often in their curriculum. The Appreciative Inquiry Design phase is similar to the Self-determination steps of Act, developing new and creative ideas and making changes. The instructor can revise or adapt group activities by observing learners' responses. The Inquiry Destiny phase is similar to the Self-determination category of Experience Outcomes and Learn, evaluating progress by comparing accomplishments and crystallizing the process. This step accentuates evaluating efforts and celebrating successes.

According to Hong, et al. (2011), instructors are the conduits for student's access to knowledge and skills. Meaningful instruction depends on the perceptions and biases brought to instructional strategies by college faculty. When asked about interests in learning and promoting self-determination, two-thirds of students, especially freshman, agreed that they would benefit from self-determination. It is important to note that 50% of those who agreed were women. Mason,

Field, and Sawilowsky (2004) reported that instructors who were the “most involved...tended to express the greatest satisfaction...They also expressed considerable interest in receiving more [Self-determination] training” (p. 447). Support enhancing teacher knowledge and skills to better instruction would benefit the educational process in the university. Denney and Daviso (2012) viewed self-determination as a positive method for teaching, but the educators they surveyed indicated a lack of training, methods, and basic materials.

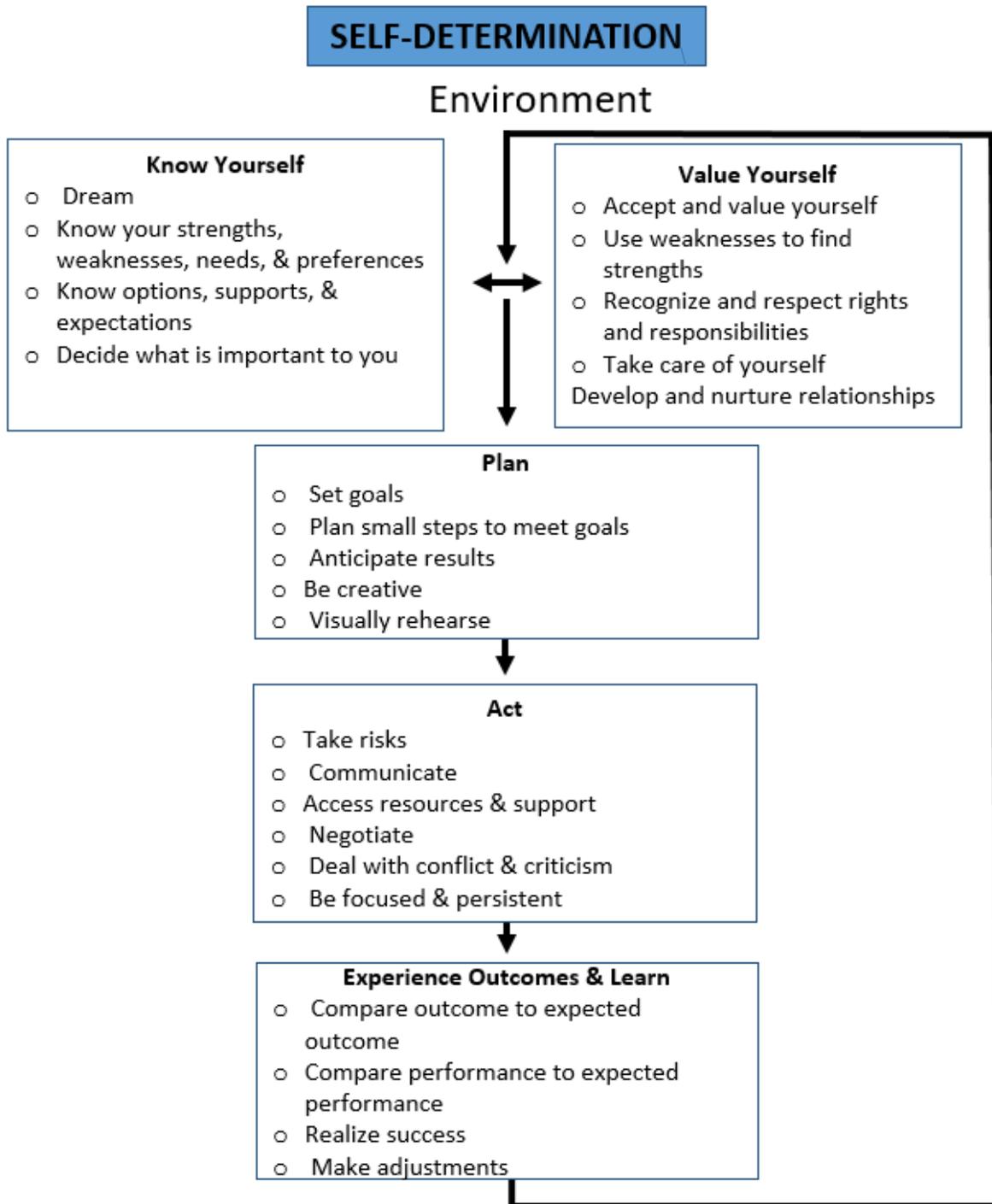


Figure 4. Model of self-determination, (Revised (2003) from Development of a Model for Self-Determination,” by S. Field and A. Hoffman (1994). *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 17(2), p. 165. Copyright 1994 by CDEI. Reprinted with permission.

Wehmeyer (1996) defined self-determination as focusing on the purpose and action function, but not on what people do. It is a functional model “acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions regarding one’s quality of life free from undue external influence or interference” (p. 24). The model pertains to (1) autonomy, (2) self-regulation, (3) psychological empowerment, (4) self-realization, and (5) total self-determination. Collectively, various self-determination theories and models (Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment, The University of Oklahoma), also align with the Appreciative Inquiry method; they both seek to enhance behavioral and affective behaviors by strengthening inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs.

Similar to Field & Hoffman’s (1996) model, Wehmeyer’s (1996) work, which began as a means to aid students with disabilities, evolved to meet the needs of all students and educators (Field, Martin, Miller Ward, Wehmeyer, 1998). All stakeholders, educators, businesspeople, politicians, and parents are concerned within the current educational system. Educators are a key component because their strategies (instructional and non-instructional) are the functions of interactions between learners’ skills, environment, and learning opportunities.

### **Summary**

The aim of this literature review was to explore whether Appreciative Inquiry impacts Nonverbal Immediacy in traditional higher education classrooms. Research thus far suggests that Nonverbal Immediacy and Appreciative Inquiry have individually impacted classroom instruction. Appreciative Inquiry breeds a level of confidence, change and ingenuity within instructors. Appreciative Inquiry has numerous bodies of research helping organizations, and it is plausible that this same success is transferrable to instructors who are designing their curriculum. Instructor Nonverbal Immediacy has been investigated mostly through the student’s perception. Instructors

appear to have little knowledge of the impact and value of their Nonverbal immediacy behavior in the classroom, as a non-instructional strategy or otherwise. Nonverbal Immediacy has been researched for over a century, yet a substantial gap remains: the instructor's own knowledge of their Nonverbal Immediacy in the higher education classroom.

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to determine if Appreciative Inquiry, as an intervention, will statistically significantly increase instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy, as measured by the *Nonverbal Immediacy Scale Observer Report's* (Richmond et al, 2003).

#### Population

Wayne State University (WSU) was non-randomly selected due to convenience (i.e., availability, location, time, and expense). WSU is an undergraduate institution in Michigan. Its Communication courses were selected to ensure there was at least a minimal level of opportunities to express Nonverbal Immediacy factors. Some courses, such as mathematics instruction, may provide fewer opportunities to touch or move around the classroom, whereas other courses, such as drama, may already be inundated with these types of activities.

#### Sample

There are 23 Communication courses at Wayne State University. Of these, up to 14 classes originally were selected at random. The R sample function was used to randomly assign six classes to the Appreciative Inquiry group; the other six classes were assigned to the control group. The average enrollment of each class was expected to be 27 students.

Permission was obtained from the Chair of the Communication Department at WSU (Appendix B), and potential instructors were given the opportunity to participate or decline (Appendix C). Instructors originally were randomly assigned as shown in Figure 5. The R code is given to randomly assign up to 10 instructors to the AI group and 10 instructors to the comparison group from the 17 courses available at WSU. Based on this code, instructors for eight classes (15, 12, 14, 1, 9, 5, 10, and 13) originally were invited to participate. Of them, the instructors for classes 5, 12, and 13 were given the AI Intervention. A contingency plan was created in case

an instructor (e.g., #14) declined to participate. Of those instructors not originally chosen (#2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11), a replacement would be randomly selected (#6).

```

Console ~/ |
> #Number of classrooms at OCC = 17
> total.number.classrooms = c(1:17)
> total.number.classrooms
[1] 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
> #Randomly sample 8 of the 17
> total.sample = sample(total.number.classrooms,8)
> total.sample
[1] 7 5 13 10 2 16 15 12
> #Identify 4 to receive AI Intervention
> ai.grp = sample(total.sample,4)
> ai.grp
[1] 13 2 15 16
> #Contingency if an instructor declines, e.g. Instructor 14
> #Identify those not originally selected
> not.participating = c(2,3,4,6,7,8,11)
> not.participating
[1] 2 3 4 6 7 8 11
> #Randomly obtain replacement instructor
> replacement.instructor = sample(not.participating,1)
> replacement.instructor
[1] 2
> |

```

Figure 5. R Code to Randomly Assign Instructors to Appreciative Inquiry and Comparison Groups.

### Research Protocol

IRB approval from WSU's HIC was obtained prior to conducting the study. Informed consent from students and their instructor were obtained. In addition to the standard format at WSU, students were told that participation was voluntary. All responses were held in confidence by the researcher, with their identity coded to link their pretest with their posttest checklist. Only

the researcher had knowledge of the coding, which was kept on an USB flash drive in a secure location in a local bank safe deposit box.

Students in both the intervention and control classes were asked to complete the 15-minute pretest checklist during the 4<sup>th</sup> week of classes (Appendix A). The plan was to have them take the posttest using the same instrument after the 14<sup>th</sup> week of class. The instructor was not given advanced notice of what the checklist contained, but students were instructed to use it to rate their instructors' classroom pedagogy and instructional delivery. The instructor was not present while the students completed the checklist. Both the pretest and posttest were to be administered and proctored by the researcher. Students were provided an information sheet about the pretest and posttest scheduled for weeks 4 (Appendix D) and 14 (Appendix G).

Three scheduled open-ended Appreciative Inquiry interview (Appendix E) sessions were scheduled with the instructor on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> weeks of the semester. Each session lasted approximately 20 minutes. Instructors were told there would be an opportunity to be debriefed with regard to the results of this study in aggregate form following its conclusion. At that time, they could request a brief report regarding their aggregate scores based on their students' observations.

### **Psychometrics**

The *Non-verbal Immediacy Scale Observer Report's* reliability estimates were .90 or above, except for the touch items observed, which were less than .30. Validity correlations ranged from .58 to .82 (Richmond et al., (2003). According to Richmond et al. (2003), "one caution is necessary... This difference is consistent with arguments in the literature indicating the females are more sensitive to nonverbal cues than males and females are more immediate than males" (p. 516). The reliability of the total instrument and its subscales should they emerge from the data analysis,

would be assessed via Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency. This would have been especially important if the touch items emerged as a separate factor, due to its low reliability estimate from Richmond et al. (2003).

The internal structure validity of the usage of the checklist would have been assessed with an Exploratory Factor Analysis using principal components extraction and varimax rotation. Should subscales emerge from this analysis, Cronbach's alpha and the Spearman-Brown correction would be reported for them.

### Data Analysis

The layout for this study is depicted in Figure 6 below, where R = Random Assignment, T is the Treatment Group, C = Comparison Group, O<sub>1</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> are the pretest checklist scores to have been used as the covariate, x = Appreciative Inquiry intervention, and the dependent variables are the O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>4</sub> are posttest checklist total scores.

R	→	T	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
R	→	C	O <sub>3</sub>	-	O <sub>4</sub>

Figure 6. Univariate Layout.

The statistical analysis for this layout is the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on the posttest scores, with the pretest scores serving as the covariate. Invoking random assignment is a requirement for ANCOVA (Sawilowsky, 2007).

If the Exploratory Factor Analysis had yielded viable subscales, the study would change to a multivariate layout, as depicted in Figure 7, where the subscripts are listed in bold to indicate that they represent each of the subscales. In this case, the statistical analysis would have been Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA).

R	→	T	<b>O<sub>1</sub></b>	X	<b>O<sub>2</sub></b>
R	→	C	<b>O<sub>3</sub></b>	-	<b>O<sub>4</sub></b>

Figure 7. Multivariate Layout.

All statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS (version 26). Nominal alpha was set to  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### **Sample Size**

Operating on the assumption that the effect size is moderate ( $f = 0.25$ ) and the required statistical power is 0.8, the minimum sample size per treatment and comparison group is  $n_1 = n_2 = 71$  based on G\*Power (ver 3.1.9.4). With an average of 25 students per class and four classes per group, this sampling scheme allows for a reasonable 71% participation rate.

### **Tests for Underlying Assumptions**

As with Analysis of Variance, ANCOVA requires independence, homoscedasticity, and normality. The use of treatment versus comparison groups ensured independence. The assumption was the covariate is highly correlated with the dependent variable and need not be tested, because in this study both were measured by the same instrument.

### **Summary**

The aim of this study was to determine if the Appreciative Inquiry intervention will significantly increase instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy, as measured by the *Non-verbal Immediacy Scale Observer Report* (Richmond et al, 2003).

Wayne State University (WSU) Communication courses were non-randomly selected to ensure at least a minimal level of opportunities to express Nonverbal Immediacy factors. The study included an experimental group (with Appreciative Inquiry) for one-half of the instructors. All instructors were observed three times. Upon completion of the study, instructors were offered an opportunity to be debriefed and provided with aggregate study scores.

Based on the G\*Power (ver 3.1.9.4), with an average of 25 students per class and four classes per group, this sampling scheme allowed for a reasonable 71% participation rate for each group. Analysis would have been both univariate and multivariate using SPSS.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of Appreciative Inquiry on the level of Nonverbal Immediacy of undergraduate instructors who teach in the traditional classroom, as measured by the adapted *Nonverbal Immediacy Scale Observer Report* (NIS-O), a checklist developed by Richmond, et al. (2003). It employed a quantitative, prospective pretest-posttest treatment vs. comparison experimental design, in which students twice assessed their instructor using the checklist: after a four-week period of instruction and again following the 14<sup>th</sup> week of instruction. Three Appreciative Inquiry interviews were conducted by this researcher with half of the instructors randomly assigned into the treatment (Appreciative Inquiry) group.

### Descriptive Statistics

Of the 288 student participants, 157 (50.1%) were women and 113 (32.4%) were men; 61 (17.5%) did not declare their sex. They were taught by seven (70%) women and three (30%) men. Of these instructors, three women and two men were a part of the Appreciative Inquiry group; the comparison teacher group consisted of four women and one man.

### Reliability

Of the initial 288 participants, the reliability analysis reflected those who had completed the survey ( $n=283$ ). Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency reliability, was  $r = .813$ , indicating an adequate level of instrument reliability. The item statistics and item-total statistics are compiled in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. As noted in Table 3, no items were candidates for deletion because doing so would decrease the magnitude of reliability. Overall, the scale mean ( $SD$ ) for the seven items is 28.77 (4.3).

**Table 2***Pretest Item Statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Gestures	4.19	.768	283
Relaxed	4.20	.795	283
Proximity	3.70	1.055	283
Vocal Variety	3.93	.982	283
Animated	3.75	1.115	283
Eye Contact	4.58	.644	283
Smiles	4.41	.813	283

**Table 3***Pretest NVI Item-Total Statistics*

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Gestures	24.58	14.770	.535	.792
Relaxed	24.57	14.530	.554	.788
Proximity	25.07	13.055	.571	.786
Vocal Variety	24.84	13.073	.631	.773
Animated	25.02	12.422	.617	.778
Eye Contact	24.19	15.600	.493	.800
Smiles	24.36	14.757	.497	.797

Due to a change in study protocols that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic, which prevented face-to-face classroom settings, the posttest was administered after the course was

transferred into an online-only format. Therefore, item number 3, moving around the classroom, was made moot and removed from all further analyses. Cronbach's alpha for the remaining six items was .827. The related descriptive statistics are compiled in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4***Posttest NVI Item Statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Gestures	4.41	.661	157
Relaxed	4.36	.817	157
Vocal Variety	4.30	.812	157
Animated	4.21	.840	157
Eye Contact	4.68	.546	157
Smiles	4.27	.894	157

**Table 5***Posttest NVI Item-Total Statistics*

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Gestures	21.81	8.976	.523	.814
Relaxed	21.87	8.065	.593	.801
Vocal Variety	21.92	7.699	.693	.778
Animated	22.01	7.949	.597	.800
Eye Contact	21.55	9.416	.528	.816
Smiles	21.96	7.389	.677	.782

### Internal Structure Validity

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on both the pre- and posttests, again, with item number 3 eliminated. The pretest was shown to be unidimensional, with all seven items loading on a single component, as indicated by the matrix compiled in Table 6. All loadings are high, based on retaining weights  $\geq |.4|$ . Because the solution was unidimensional, it was not possible to consider extraction and rotation methods as planned. The eigenvalue for the single component was 3.34 and explained 47.8% of the variance.

**Table 6**

*NVI Pretest Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>*

	Component
	1
Vocal Variety	.746
Animated	.740
Proximity	.703
Relaxed	.702
Gestures	.666
Eye Contact	.638
Smiles	.635

a. 1 component extracted.

As noted in Table 7, the posttest also was unidimensional, with a single component, and again, all the factor loadings were acceptable. The eigenvalue for the single component was 3.25 and explained 54.1% of the variance.

**Table 7**

*NVI Posttest Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>*

	Component
	1
Vocal Variety	.805
Smiles	.794
Relaxed	.742
Animated	.724

Eye Contact	.669
Gestures	.669

Extraction Method: Principal.

a. 1 components extracted.

### Research Hypothesis

The first research hypothesis was the group receiving the Appreciative Inquiry intervention would score higher on the modified Nonverbal Immediacy Scale when compared with the group not receiving this treatment. The plan was to analyze each nonverbal construct individually, which would require a multivariate approach (MANCOVA). However, because the revised scale resulted in a single item per construct, the analysis was changed to a univariate approach.

**Table 8**

#### *Tests of Between-Subjects- Genders Effects*

Dependent Variable: post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	425.058 <sup>a</sup>	4	106.265	16.586	.000	.401
Intercept	248.063	1	248.063	38.718	.000	.281
PreTest	287.860	1	287.860	44.929	.000	.312
GRP	2.014	1	2.014	.314	.576	.003
SEX	1.369	1	1.369	.214	.645	.002
GRP * SEX	13.918	1	13.918	2.172	.144	.021
Error	634.288	99	6.407			
Total	72512.000	104				
Corrected Total	1059.346	103				

a. R Squared = .401 (Adjusted R Squared = .377)

Because sex of the student was also recorded, the analysis conducted was a  $2 \times 2$  (Group by Gender) ANCOVA on posttest scores, with pretest scores as the covariate. Levene's test of the underlying assumption of homoscedasticity was statistically significant ( $F = 3.42$ ,  $df = 3, 100$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), meaning this assumption was violated and the results to follow for this analysis must be

interpreted with caution. The pretest result was found to be statistically significant as a covariate ( $F = 44.9$ ,  $df = 1, 104$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), meaning there was a difference in means prior to the administration of the intervention. However, none of the tests of effects was statistically significant, as indicated in Table 8 below. As noted in the table, there was no interaction (Group by Sex), nor Group or Sex main effects.

A breakdown analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences in rating teachers based only on student gender. Regarding the pretest, Levene's test of homoscedasticity was violated ( $F = 4.92$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ). Therefore, the Welch-Aspin (W-A) test with Satterthwaite's correction to the degrees of freedom was used instead of the usual independent samples t-test. The result was not statistically significant ( $t = 1.71$ ,  $df = 191.83$ ,  $p = 0.089$ ). In terms of the mean ( $SD$ ) responses, female participants = 25.38 (3.2) and male participants = 24.59 (4.1). Homoscedasticity also was violated in the posttest (Levene's  $F = 4.48$ ,  $p = 0.037$ ), and the W-A was not statistically significant ( $t = .26$ ,  $df = 50.44$ ,  $p = .80$ ), with the mean ( $SD$ ) for female participants = 26.31 (2.9) and male participants = 26.11 (3.9).

### **Analyses Based on Teacher Gender**

A further breakdown analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences in students' rating of teachers, based on the gender of the teacher. This analysis involved 194 female students and 89 male students. At the pretest stage, Levene's test was not significant ( $F = 2.97$ ,  $p = 0.086$ ). Therefore, the traditional t-test was conducted, which was statistically significant ( $t = 3.76$ ,  $df = 281$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $ES = 0.48$ ). According to Sawilowsky (2009), this means there was a medium effect size difference for female teachers (mean = 25.61,  $SD = 3.2$ ) receiving a higher NVI score than male teachers (mean = 23.91,  $SD = 4.10$ ).

Although the difference was not as large at the posttest stage, the same pattern emerged. This analysis involved 88 female students and 66 male students. Levene's test was not significant ( $F = 0.000, p = .988$ ),  $t = 2.67, df = 152, p = 0.008$ , effect size = .43), which also was defined by Sawilowsky (2009) as a medium effect size for female teachers (mean = 26.82,  $SD = 3.3$ ) over male teachers (mean = 25.35,  $SD = 3.4$ ).

### Analyses Based on Student Gender

An ANCOVA on posttest by sex of student with pretest as the covariate for female teachers was not statistically significant ( $F = .04, df = 1, 49, p = .844$ ). Similarly, a posttest only t-test based on sex of student for female teachers was not statistically significant (Levene's  $F = .287, p = .60; t = .78, df = 47, p = .438$ ). The mean ( $SD$ ) rating of female teachers by the 35 female student participants was 25.4 (3.1). The mean ( $SD$ ) rating of female teacher participants by the 14 male students was 24.6 (4.3).

An ANCOVA on posttest by sex of student with pretest as the covariate for female teachers was not statistically significant ( $F = .76, df = 1, 54, p = .389$ ). Similarly, a posttest only Welch-Aspin test with Satterthwaite adjustment to the degrees of freedom based on student sex for female teachers was not statistically significant (Levene's  $F = 4.55, p = .037; t = -.04, df = 29.37, p = .965$ ). The mean ( $SD$ ) rating of male teachers by the 36 female student participants was 27.17 (2.3). The mean ( $SD$ ) rating of male teachers by the 20 male student participants was 27.2 (3.3).

### Summary

Both adapted instruments demonstrated an adequate level of instrument reliability. The Pretest Cronbach Alpha = .813, with  $n = 283$ . The Posttest Cronbach Alpha = .827, with  $n = 154$ . Due to a change in study protocols that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic and which prevented face-to-face classroom settings, the posttest was administered after the course was

transferred into an online-only format. Therefore, item number 3, moving around the classroom, was made moot and removed from all further analyses. The primary statistically significant result was students found their female teachers used the NVI more often than their male teachers.

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the impact of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) on university instructors' Nonverbal Immediacy (NVI). The aim was to determine if AI and NVI, two tightly related constructs, could work together to enhance instructor's classroom engagement. As an intervention, AI breeds a level of confidence, change, and ingenuity for instructors. In the classroom, NVI creates greater classroom engagement.

The data collection change impacted the research question, which could not be answered explicitly due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). A beneficial outcome was the emergence of face-to-face and online instruments for the field of Learning Design and Technology, and related fields, requiring interpersonal communication review and/or improvement. Both the pretest and posttest instruments, modified from Gorham's et al. (2003) instrument (see Appendix K) demonstrated an adequate level of instrument reliability.

### Study Modifications

At the beginning of the semester, the class dynamic was changed from a traditional face-to-face class to a hybrid format. The 32 enrollment student classes were split into two individual sessions, approximately 16 enrolled students per class. Each week the students would attend one session in the classroom and a second class online.

The communication department liaison provided a master list of the semester's instructors. All 19 instructors were sent an invitational email to participate. Ten instructor participants were procured, seven females and three males, eight of whom are Ph.D. candidates required to teach communication as part of their academic curriculum. Two instructors, one male and one female, are veteran instructors. Three women and two men were selected to be part of the Appreciative

Inquiry experimental group and one male and four females for the comparison group. Both the students and instructors were advised that the research focused on instructor teaching methods and that their participation was voluntary.

### **Pretest Instrument**

During week four of the semester, the pretest survey was administered to the students during the last 20 minutes of each instructor's class. The intention was to ask the students to stay after class, but after discussion with each of the instructors, it was determined students should not be requested to stay beyond the allotted class time. Therefore, the survey was administered toward the end of class, for a duration of no more than 10 minutes. The average administration was seven minutes in duration, which included giving an overview of the survey rationale, handing out the instrument, completing the survey, and collecting the survey.

I introduced myself to the students, explaining that I was a graduate student in the College of Education, and was studying teachers' instructional strategies, partly based on students' opinions about their instructors' teaching strategies. Students were informed the survey was voluntary and confidential and that participants who completed both surveys would be eligible to be entered in a lottery for an Amazon gift card (two per class).

These instructions were verbalized, and displayed on a large poster board secured on the class podium for visibility during the entire survey, with an example of how to fill out their ID for control purposes. The student ID consisted of the first and last initials and their birthdate. For example, Alex Smith with a birthdate of March 4, 2000 would be coded as "AS030400." Additional data requested was "F" for female and "M: for male, and student's major area of study.

Most students followed the directions correctly. Students who partially filled out the form were coded with the data they provided. For example, some students provided their access ID number or a partial birthdate. Participation was 100 %, yielding 283 completed surveys. The 100% response may have been because of the face-to-face dynamic, gift cards, both, or other factors. The Pretest Cronbach Alpha = .813,  $n = 283$ , indicating it is a reliable instrument useful for future research when the context is online. Students reported their female teachers use the NVI more often than their male teachers, a finding that was similar to previous research (Gordon, 2014; Richmond et al., 2003).

The pre-test and post-test were both unidimensional. As measured in the Pretest, all seven items for the pre-test and subsequently six items for the post-test loaded on a single construct pertaining to NVI. The literature review indicated these are all key components, and the psychometric evidence indicates the seven measured items combined to one component. This is strong evidence of internal structure factor validity of NVI.

### **Posttest Instrument**

The second survey, using the same data as the first survey to allow for measuring the impact of Appreciative Inquiry on Nonverbal Immediacy, originally was scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> week of class. Due to COVID-19, the university postponed class by one week, therefore delaying the planned survey timing. After the university moved all classes online for the rest of the semester, the second survey was administered online through the Qualtrics platform during weeks 14 – 16 of the adjusted semester. Because the students no longer met in a physical space with the teacher, the question referencing the teacher moving around the classroom was removed because it was no longer germane to the online learning experience (Appendix H). Instructors were contacted by

phone/text and/or and email to discuss arrangements to allow students to complete the study online. All of the instructors concurred with the new plan and were amenable to the change.

The survey link was sent to the instructor with details specifying a ten-day timeframe for their students to respond (Appendix H). The responses were sporadic. Due to the low response, follow up contact was conducted by phone/text/email and or email with a friendly reminder to ask their students to fill out the survey, and extended the time frame by an additional week. Students from eight of the 10 instructors responded, yielding 154 completed responses. There were additional responses, but they either were incomplete, or the control ID did not match the original survey, making the response inadmissible. Posttest Cronbach Alpha = .827, n = 154. Once again, students reported that female teachers use the NVI more often than male teachers, which is similar to survey findings from Gordon (2014) and Richmond, et al. (2003).

### **Discussion of Nonverbal Immediacy Findings**

Findings in response to the original research question were inconclusive due to modifications necessitated by COVID-19. Although the modified post-test online instrument delivers a reliable tool for future research, the current research cannot support Mehrabain's (1971) nonverbal immediacy behaviors of smiling, gestures, eye contact, relaxed body position and tone of voice (Dixon, Greenwell, Rogers-Stacy, Weister, and Lauer, 2017; Ghandi, 2017; Tawil, 2019). Rather, the recent research describes nonverbal immediacy via emojis, timing, length, color, wikis, chats, and videos. Whereas the aforementioned impersonal computer driven instructional methods appear to remove student/instructor interactions, videos, such as those accessed on YouTube and Ted Talks, do employ Mehrabian's (1971) constructs. Perhaps the

instructors used computer-driven technology vicariously as replacement for their interaction with the students.

As Tawil (2019) stated, “it is commonly believed that the nonverbal element of communication is totally absent from the asynchronous, text based online learning environment because body language and paralinguistic cues are neither conveyed nor perceived through written language” (p. 156). Regarding the relationship between nonverbal relations and instructor engagement, Dixson et al. (2017) discussed past instructional research in relationship to virtual classroom behaviors. Without referencing Mehrabian’s (1971) seminal nonverbal immediacy work, they contended nonverbal behavior was “absent or negligible in online courses” (p. 37). “Just as instructors cannot not communicate; they cannot not set a tone” (p. 39). Also, without referencing Mehrabian’s (1971) work, Ghamdi (2017) argued “Research on communication behaviors in fostering effective learning outcomes has become important, particularly in the distance education setting, where there is no face-to-face communication” (p. 35).

Apparently, research on nonverbal immediacy is moving from face-to-face interactions to text-words, symbols, colors, and timing as a means of meaningful communication. The potential limitation is denying ignoring the role of nonverbal immediacy eye-contact, physical gestures, body position, smiling, and vocal expressiveness. It also sends a message to instructors that they can instruct by proxy, rather than by utilizing their voice, gaze, and body moments to tell learners “I’m here for you, not just sending you pre-recorded announcements and discussion boards.” This removes teachers from direct accountability, with dark boxes on a screen in which their name appears as their sole representation. These are variables worthy of further research.

### **Appreciative Inquiry Interviews**

The experimental group instructors were scheduled for three face-to-face interviews during weeks five, eight, and 11 of the semester. The first two interviews, during weeks five and eight, took place face-to-face with each instructor individually. The meetings took place the university in a private room with couches and chairs. During COVID-19, the week 11 interviews took place online through ZOOM, phone and/or Skype. Four Appreciative Inquiry experimental group members participated. Despite two attempts to schedule, the fifth instructor and was not able to meet.

The interviews were used for the purpose of exploring the impact of AI on university instructors' NVI, common themes emerged throughout the interviews. All instructors expressed comfort with being in an urban university with a diverse population. These instructors in their 20's are interested in social justice. The AI interviews brought out good and hidden talents. For example, how they acquired successful ways of learning, primarily from their parents, how to communicate with people from varying walks of life and wanting to pay it forward with genuine desire to help their students to tap into their strengths, and present themselves well in their respective environments. Because the instructors are engaged in a communication study as their primary interest, it is plausible they already exhibit high levels of nonverbal immediacy in the classroom, which was depicted on the first survey-pretest results and through conversations with the instructors. And, with the COVID19 upheaval, it is hard to discern what role the pandemic contributed to the results.

The emerging theme during the Appreciative Inquiry interviews was how and why instructors manage their instructional strategy expectations in efficient, effective and meaningful

ways. All instructors, to an extent, demonstrated self-determination behaviors, such as competence, relatedness, and autonomy, which are inherent in both Nonverbal Immediacy and AI. The interviewing process seemed motivating, and each instructor was eager to freely share their thoughts. This observation highlighted the value of human's evolved inner resources for personality growth and regulating behaviors (Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997). Notably, the results of the interviews suggested that participants' best attributes of communication skills and diversity interest have served them well and they know how to keep the momentum going for future classroom engagement. Participants acknowledged their expectations for themselves and their expectations for the students that they serve. Their internal expectations were identified as their own cultural backgrounds and their external expectations involved managing the nuances of a diverse group of on-campus and commuter students. Albeit, both internal and external expectations were influenced by their experiences with such factors as gender, international culture and language, and social change. In some cases, these factors intertwined and were overlapping. While these factors were not addressed in the literature review, the following sections include AI context and recent research relevant to AI, NVI and the participants' pedagogical strategies.

### **Gender and Appreciative Inquiry**

During the interviews, gender was a theme that invited vim and vigor with the female instructors as they described their decisions for their instructional strategies. All of the female teachers referenced their gender as a factor that influences their method for maintaining authority while still being likeable, approachable, and caring. They indicated this was by no means a detriment, but rather a force to be reckoned with. Following, are the instructors' words on gender:

A1: I might have more problems gaining authority because I'm young and female. It's a hard balance too because I want my students...to feel like I'm someone they can trust and care about. I'm someone that they can feel safe with, and feel like I am someone they can trust, and someone they can talk to, while also maintaining professional boundary lines, which are tricky at universities .... I prop myself up through teaching. I know I'm good at this. It's a way to show how good I am, and to have authority and have control.... I want my students to teach me too, and it to be mutual.

F1: I tried to maintain a serious – especially as a woman. Sometimes, they want to say things like, "Oh, you're cute," or stuff like that. I don't take that lightly. So, I try to be as serious as possible, so that – even though I apply the same thing with my students...Yeah. So, male students and female students communicate very differently sometimes, right?" In the classroom, I grew up in a Catholic school where the class monitor, the leader of the class, would always be a boy...but the assistant would be a girl. So, I didn't like that. So, I decided to –I didn't really care about becoming monitor, but I wanted to prove that a girl could be *the monitor*, and a guy could be *the assistant*.... *So, it started then, with that feeling...*

C1: Oh, another student, this was actually a problematic student, very entitled, which I'm not surprised, like, I was told in my training ... being a female... of course students will try to challenge you... So, we had a conversation with him, and I told him - I was just firm on my boundary in terms of like, this is what I would not accept in this class, and this is what you can do and blah, blah, blah...then the next day he showed up with actually changed mind, like, he was more respectful, more - like there was just a change in attitudes. So, I guess I should have communicated my boundaries to him at the beginning, but now he clearly knows who is the instructor and who is the student.

The instructors' opinions, instructional strategies, and research pointed strongly to gender as influential within the educational context particularly with the females. The females opined they had to work harder and smarter because of their gender. The male instructors did not reference their gender as a determinant factor to instruction whatsoever. Perhaps, without being female and obviously not something to consider, the male instructors focus on what is relevant to concern themselves with while teaching. Notwithstanding, AI current research is relevant to what the participants expressed as influencing their instructional strategies (Chauke, Van Der Wal, & Botha, 2015; Kuehn, 2016, and Mchunu and Steyn, 2017).

### **Appreciative Inquiry and Gender Research**

The participants discussed how they would present assignments as either interactive or as a lecture format. Kuehn (2016) noted when it comes to decision making for presentations, females are more likely than males to employ a collaborative and participative style for seeking agreement. Females state their ideas and offer alternatives as well as hearing the views of and new ideas from others before offering a conclusion and the males tend to inform by narrowing down alternatives and then conclude when reaching a solution.

Also, the participants were keen to assess their own performance and how to further develop their instructional strategies. In line with their ideas, Mchunu and Steyn (2017) recommended AI as a potential guide for schools that may consider examining the effect of the tool in relationship to gender for furthering accountability and educational improvement. They also suggested the need for longitudinal studies (Mchunu and Steyn, 2017). It is possible further investigation could deliver richer data by reading and citing the original AI method (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

### **Social Change and Appreciative Inquiry Interviews**

Appreciative Inquiry has been used to teach how to use best methods of communication to reach the masses about the value of social change (Cavalcante, Riberas, & Rosa, G. 2016; Evans & Lange, 2019; Van Deventer, Van der Westhuizen, & Potgieter, 2015). While speaking with instructors, it became evident that social change needs a platform. For example, when instructors spoke about what made them feel full of life, all had a social change story that they were proud of and wanted to share. Here are snapshots of their stories in their own words:

C1: My interest is in like social justice and social movements... specifically focusing on the time when Amazon acquired Wholefoods... like what does change mean? So, also we're looking at how that like accessibility – I didn't really think that was an issue in terms of people being able to access health, nutritious food. Things like is it even fresh food? Do you get it at the right time? Transportation .... So, for instance, I didn't know this but apparently, the prices are based on the location. So, for instance, a store in Detroit versus a store in Manhattan, the prices are different. They tend to price it depending on what other stores in the area charge for their food. I mean, it wouldn't be the same as food in Walmart; maybe like \$1 or \$2 higher. But it's definitely what they charge in Detroit and what they charge in Manhattan is not exactly the same.

F1: In Kuwait, we had our textbooks imported from America, but other universities, institutions that followed the American curriculum would have the same book for, let's say, \$12, that we had to pay about \$260 for, the same book... we talked about the tuition increase, and how they did not give us a heads up... I started with lots of hope, lots of anger, and I sent out a group – like, broadcast message on social media. So, social media definitely helped, on WhatsApp, and it actually got around so much..."Okay, there are going to be people who are going to show up." And then, I talked to the student government, and we kind of started talking together, we met the office, we started printing out petitions and we told people to gather there, and we went through the handbook to see what would violate the rules so that they couldn't have anything to kind of hold us accountable to, so we could get our message across with no disruptions...and they actually brought in, like, people to talk – to listen to us, and they ended up coming up with a solution of financial aid, which is not something that you find in for-profit schools.... I think I tried to make logical appeals. Logical and emotional appeals, but I also was very serious... Yes, actually, we bombarded the administration and the board with complaints, because we had it, ...we protested peacefully on campus. And after, like, a long session of talking and listening to us, they kind of just came up with, "Well, we heard you guys," and the president sent a big notice telling us that, "We are going to do this...."

F1: One student .... he was missing stuff...he didn't do a lot of the other stuff that required the book and required being in the system. So the publishing system, in other words, paying the access code and having the book...And he said "it's kind of expensive and I can't afford it... I get some extra access codes are free, but I don't have any. I mean, I've given them all out." And so what I did was I went to the director who I met, and I said, you know what? Something's gotta be done about this, who's attached to Macmillan?... I explained the situation. I said, can you give me an access code? Okay. Uh, because, um, he's doing the work and, um, quite frankly, are a major company you can afford. To keep a few free, and he's doing the work and he's coming regularly...He called up and gave me the access code and I gave it to the guy...he had about a D plus...He got a B minus in the class.

A1: Yeah, but I mean, obviously, I connect things to justice stuff when I can if it's inherent in the text. We talk about respect, and human dignity, and mutual understanding and respect. First of all, making sure it's something they care about, and they want to learn. I developed my lesson plans, and everything based on what they cared about and what they wanted to learn about. I would suggest things like, "Hey, would knowing what to say to a cop when they pulled you over, would that be helpful?" They'd be like, "Yeah," and then we'd go with that. It wasn't for me. I wasn't

doing this for me at all. I wasn't teaching them things I wanted them to learn. It was 100% what was helpful to them and what they could use.

**S1:** but I was thinking about different things like climate change denialism... and things like that. But I need to start from somewhere...I am focusing on storm water contamination, get contaminated with pharmaceuticals, domestic cleaning chemicals, and cosmetic items. People dump those into water, and they get contaminated. And maybe oil. I'm framing these messages to communicate people what we shouldn't do and what we should do to prevent contamination...how we should frame this message in order to achieve... their behavior in a way that they don't contaminate water...Okay, this is happening in your backyard and you need to focus on this because it's happening at your household level," versus something's happening in the northern peninsula. So, how people respond to this distance, spatial distance. Like, "Okay. If it is happening in my house," they would be more concerned. And that's what I'm expecting. Or is this happening somewhere in the northern peninsula, so people, "Oh, I don't need to care because it's far away." So, I'm bringing that spatial distance as a variable to check whether how people respond to different messages...

### **Social Change and Appreciative Inquiry Research**

The instructors spoke about social change from their personal vantage point which meshes with Van Deventer, et al's (2015) and the original AI body of work, Cooperrider and Srivastva's (1987) "socio-rationalist" perspective, that one's own reality can in create an environment where trust-building, knowledge-sharing can lead to increased social justice. The participants passionately wanted to build trust as a pedagogy. The instructors discussed the imperative of building trust and engaging the local community masses and mega communities in real-time, which, according to Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013), is a standard bearer of (organizational) success. Evans and Lange (2019), corroborated AI as a collaborative critical lens strategy discussed amongst student affairs' educators, administrators, and the greater educational community can use to support and honor the efforts of student activists. Cavalcante et al. (2016) stipulated the AI method is a tool for "promoting social change in the institutions or communities they will be working with; a 'learning by doing' experience, and constitutes an additional skill incorporated..." (Cavalcante et al. 2016, p. 1). Another reason AI can be a valuable instructional strategy is because people remember 90% of what they do according to Dale (1969). By doing

social change exercises in the classroom is good practice, and it 90% more likely to transfer to outside the classroom behavior.

### **The Culture of Language and Appreciative Inquiry Interviews**

During the Appreciative Inquiry interviews, being aware of language differences manifested as a critical component of educational culture. Every time there is communication there is a certain language used depending on who are the partners in communication. This may change based on family, colleagues, and so forth. The common thread is the instructors wanted to apply their life experiences and share them as a language with their students, while also engaging with sensitivity to the students' language. This is the instructor's constant balancing act, because synthesizing language is a societal issue. Goffman's (1959) seminal work on self-presentation contended both instructor and students are actors and each scene dictates different roles. The instructors were passionate that their self-presentation, their self-language, manifests so they can be excellent instructors.

Their definition of language today was described in a range of ways: from the subject one is learning; speaking in the mother tongue language; out of bounds of the curriculum; helping students feel more at ease; placement of accent on words; and listening and feedback. Some language perceptions overlapped, whereas others were exclusive to the instructor. For instance, many instructors spoke about trying to teach in a common language as a way of showing a level of sensitivity to the needs of students with diverse backgrounds. Although they felt it was imperative to find common ground with their students' cultural norms, trying to do so was a balancing act in such a diverse university. One example is voice inflection. A speaker could say "I'm having a wonderful time" in a sarcastic tone. In such a case, the nonverbal inflection would

supersede the words (Knapp & Hall, 2010). In the following examples, the instructor's words demonstrate their ideas about the culture of language through the Appreciative Inquiry method.

A1: racial justice work, community work, so it was just a natural thing that you would care about this other language that is spoken, and see it as legitimate, and see it as worth learning and knowing... English language learners as adults in a different country. Obviously, it's survival. How I thought of it is survival. It's survival English. It's survival. That's that very practical aspect. How to make student learning student driven, student centric.

C1: Yeah, I meant that as an expression, like a luxury like you don't even have that opportunity. Like when you're in a collective environment, like on a farm when you're working together, it's not about "How much corn have I grown?" It's about "How much corn have we all grown?" kind of a thing.

F1: I believe in giving credit where credit is due and kind of making being invested in the student. So, if a student is giving a speech, and English is not their first language, then I keep that in mind while grading.

SI... like student feedback sessions... I give them like oral class feedback to the group, like, I'm not talking about individuals; I'm just talking about the class as a general group. So, I just think comment about all these features in general and give them a kind of constructive comments... Verbal comments are well-received because they have to look at me, you know, they are watching, they are listening. So it is taken... I mean there's a lot of things that they need to focus on like eye contacts, voice projection, visual aids, usage of visual aids and things like that. And also, like voice moderation and gestures, postures. So, I pay attention to each and everything... I'm like very watchful about their voice, body moments, eye contact, like, how they handled the podium, and things... I guess, like since sometimes I just like perform them that okay, this is how you should project your voice, and this is how you should like moderate your voice. I just perform and show them this is how you should do that, like, say for example, like I just like do certain things, like, okay, "I am from Sri Lanka," "I am from Sri Lanka," "from Sri Lanka," like, certain things like that. I just like help them to understand by performing where they need to put their emphasis, and - yeah.

Interestingly, while the instructors softened their stance on their voice to educate and engage their students, they also strongly encouraged their students to be sensible with their known language as they engage with others. This would make sense, because the instructors are teaching communication with the intent to help their students appreciate the value of listening and being listened to as well.

### **The Culture of Language and Appreciative Inquiry Research**

Appreciative Inquiry is a social construction of language (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). Schlombs, Howard, DeLong, and Lieberman (2015) argued using the appropriate language can have a “ripple effect” (p. 120). It could allow the instructors pedagogical efforts to become change agents who can support and encourage momentum for improving both instructor and student competencies. Fickel, Henderson, and Price (2017) used AI as one of a group of frameworks for identifying competencies for improving both instructor and student learning. The frameworks focused on reflection on one’s language, culture, and identity. This grouping appeared in the interviews in this study as a holistic synergy, particularly when it came to reflection. For example, language is learned through culture and identity, identity is created through language and culture, and culture is created as a result of language and identity. According to Fickel et al. (2017), awareness of language, culture, and identity leads to both individual and team empowerment, matriculating into student achievement.

While the interview questions were focused on instructional strategies, the participants voluntarily referred to the word language specifically. Their description of language was described as the feedback, listening, and nonverbal cues they used when engaging with their students. They feel listened to when their students look at them when they teach, give feedback, and receive feedback. Moreover, the instructors teach their students how to use nonverbal (and verbal) cues so the students likewise will be listened to as well. Perceptions of listening, or not, are decided in part by the nonverbal cues displayed. Kluger (2015) explained listening can be taught and that students who feel they are listened to by their superiors earn better grades. In subsequent research on the implications of listening for success, Itzchakov and Kluger’s (2017) argued:

High quality listening is more than merely hearing words and nodding your head. Much of the communication in the conversation passes through the non-verbal channel...A manager should pay attention to the verbal and non-verbal cues, which are conveyed by the employee. (p. 221)

Nonverbal communication seems plausible to transfer to any field that requires instructional strategies. The irony is that the constructs of listening and nonverbal communication typically are not referenced as important variables that enhance Appreciative Inquiry (and Nonverbal immediacy). It is possible that listening could be one of the newer constructs of the nonverbal immediacy behaviors.

### **Implications for Learning Design and Technology**

It was found that Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy as individual constructs have deep footprints in the field of higher education worldwide. They both serve as tools for change management, group development, and cultural awareness. Nevertheless, neither of these constructs individually or together are readily recognized and taught as mainstream instructional strategies. Both concepts are accompanied by a great deal of their own research, which merit implementation in the higher education setting. One such practical body of AI work by Bloom, Hutson, He, and Robinson (2011) was offered as a step-by-step guide for teaching future instructors how to create, develop, and deliver “curricular content that celebrates the unique strengths, experiences, and knowledge that students bring to the classroom” (p. 2). Cockell and McArthur-Blair’s (2012) shared successful Appreciative Inquiry stories, theories, and concepts for the betterment of higher education. Perhaps, more resources like these are an instructional strategy needed to prepare future faculty.

When participant instructors were asked about specific instructional strategies, they demonstrated some knowledge of nonverbal behavior because communication is the subject matter they are teaching. However, none were exposed to Appreciative Inquiry or to the interview process

by any other name. Notably, the male instructors were more aware of the value of nonverbal communication and noted using it to teach their students. All of the graduate student participants were required to take a pedagogical class as part of their studies.

Colleges and universities offer pedagogical classes for those seeking higher degrees in education. It is not clear what level of Nonverbal Immediacy and Appreciative Inquiry (or similar) instructional training, if any, is part of the curriculum. Presumably, with over a century of nonverbal research this would be discussed as an instructional strategy. The irony is the constructs of listening and nonverbal communication typically are not referenced as important variables that enhance Appreciative Inquiry, yet nonverbal communication comprises 93% of how we communicate and transmit our messages (Knapp & Hall, 2010). Although nonverbal classes are available within higher education, they typically are offered as electives. Even then, nonverbal behavior rarely is discussed as a variable by Appreciative Inquiry researchers or educators.

All instructors were pleased to talk about their strengths and societal contributions as well as how these attributes influence their instructional strategies. During the interviews, I regularly would repeat back to them the attributes they had used to describe themselves. They self-described as problem solvers, as advocates for the underdogs, as people with excellent planning skills, as those who think about others more than they think about themselves, and as people who practice diplomacy. In response, they literally shared that they never thought of themselves in the terms they had used, however.

Nonverbal Immediacy still moves the needle for undergraduates, because they are aware of their teachers' nonverbal communication styles, both face-to-face and online. A review of the available online research did not uncover consideration of Mehrabian (1971) and Richmond et al's (2003) classical gestures, smiles, and eye contact. Instead, the research on Nonverbal Immediacy

seems to have taken a different interpersonal turn toward behavior like emoji use, timing, and visual aids (see Table 9). Although they are valuable, it remains to be seen how much students value and learn from online methods rather than engaging with their professors.

**Table 9**

*Comparison of Conventional Face-to-face Online Nonverbal Immediacy*

Conventional Nonverbal Immediacy	Online Nonverbal Immediacy
Smiling	Visual aids
Body movement	Online instruction – delivered by the instructor or third party
Animated	Emoji's
Monotone voice	Timing
Gestures	Feedback
Eye Contact	Listening
Relaxed body position	Visual aids
	Font size and style

Note: Conventional Nonverbal Immediacy has interpersonal components, whereas Online Nonverbal Immediacy includes third party components.

### Significance

The results of this study may motivate the inclusion of Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention to increase Nonverbal Immediacy and hence re-energize classroom instructors. It also has the potential to supplement, extend, and provide context for considering Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy as joint constructs. It may have far-reaching benefits to stakeholders at educational institutions as well as to the families and communities that teachers serve.

### Limitations

Although the use of random assignment was handled for any threat to internal validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1963), external validity (i.e., the ability to generalize) was limited due to the restriction to undergraduate instructors, which was a design choice based on time, expense, and

availability. In addition, the initial research question was not explicitly answered due to design changes required by the Coronavirus pandemic. First, the planned two identical in-person surveys were not able to be administered due to the government's social distancing standards for coronavirus. Another limitation was that the first face-to-face survey produced nearly twice the amount of data as the second, an online survey. Also, it is conceivable that a full two-week in-person class, rather than the hybrid, could have produced more meaningful data because the students would have had more frequent exposure to their instructor's nonverbal behavior. With more time in the classroom, the students' comfort level may have shifted, and their recall of instructor behavior may likewise have been different.

As far as the interviews, perhaps a limitation is that I never was officially trained to be an Appreciative Inquiry interviewer. Rather, I depended on my life's experience and formal education to guide me in an Appreciative Inquiry-style meaningful dialogue. The presentation style, usage of nonverbal behavior, age, and female gender invite one set of answers, whereas another researcher may receive and interpret different information. I have attempted to remain open about research strategies, even though there will be an inherent level of bias, particularly when engaging in conversations with a prescribed set of questions. Having discussed the importance of face-to-face conversation, the third interview was conducted via Skype, Zoom and/or by phone due to Coronavirus. This shifted the relationship and level of trust previously built with the participants. The online dynamic was clearly different from the first two interviews that took place in a comfortable room with only a coffee table as a barrier. With the virtual interviews, there was initial anxiousness; it took some recalibrating before interviewing with the part three questions. Coronavirus was discussed, which was not viewed as positive, so it took some maneuvering conversation to bring the instructors back to the good place we left off after our second interview.

One of the participants never returned calls, texts, or emails, making a small sample size even smaller. Had campus access been available, the participant could have been sought out on campus to inquire if everything was OK.

### **Future Research**

Despite changes in the research design motivated by Coronavirus, this research initiative could be continued with a new set of instructors and their students with a full face-to-face semester, rather than a hybrid. After listening to the transcripts, it was determined that more questions should ask about the instructors' specialized area of teaching. After the research is complete, a recommendation would be interviewing the same instructors one semester later to see if the original Appreciative interview had longevity. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile researching Appreciative Inquiry recipients before and after the interviewees had a workshop and/or course on listening and nonverbal behavioral skills. Next, Mehrabian's (1971) original definition of immediacy promotes likeability, motivates positive emotional responses, and brings people together: "people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer" (p.1). Fifty years later, this definition still holds true and has served numerous fields of research well.

An instrument created by Gorham et al., (2003) using Mehrabian's (1971) work was the primary tool to investigate Nonverbal Immediacy. Gordon's (2014) found societal concerns required touch to be removed from the survey, because it had become a moot point. Importantly, based on the influx of online instruction, it is recommended to investigate students' perceptions and/or preferences of their instructors' current online Nonverbal Immediacy dubbed signs, emojis, timing, visuals, and/ or Mehrabian (1971) Gorham (2003), and the Nonverbal Immediacy results from this study.

As online teaching became more prevalent during this study, the definition of Nonverbal Immediacy had to be shifted to accommodate the online environment. Although these terms are valid on their own and are in sync with today's society, Mehrabian's (1971) interpersonal attributes and Gorham's (2003) work remain valuable. This recommendation has the potential to create a viable online instrument for Nonverbal Immediacy. And/ or, synthesize and validate the current instruments along with the online attributes currently under investigation. Therefore, rather than replacing their work, it may be beneficial to explore their continuing validity by employing a new online Nonverbal Immediacy tool, a universal tool called VINI-Virtual Interpersonal Nonverbal Immediacy. VINI includes factors that are currently being researched, such as emojis, timing, colors, online instructional videos, feedback, listening, and asks the learner to indicate what gives them positive emotional responses about learning (see Appendix J). Although the current instruments would remain in use for face-to-face communication, VINI might offer a new instrument for today's learner and instructor.

### **Conclusion**

Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy are two constructs which have been shown to benefit instructional strategies. Appreciative Inquiry has a built-in mechanism for bringing out one's best attributes when properly applied. The current literature does not reveal what kind of training, if any, is required to set forth the process. Nonverbal immediacy is a construct heavily researched and potent in the instructor/student relationship. However, there is very little discussion of instructional design in Nonverbal Immediacy training in Appreciative Inquiry for academia and/or business. Also, based on the reliable instruments and recent use of online nonverbal immediacy deemed through this research, it would be worthwhile to explore the validity of the online nonverbal immediacy factors. After the Coronavirus pandemic ends, these two constructs

could be researched and synthesized together as another strong tool in the instructional design toolbox.

## APPENDIX A

Abbreviated NIS-O

Pretest: \_\_\_\_\_ Posttest: \_\_\_\_\_

Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Reflect on your experiences with the Instructor in this class since the beginning of the semester. Rate the Instructor on the following items, using the scale 1 = Never to 5 = Very Often, by placing a mark in the appropriate column. For example:

The Instructor:	Rating				
	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Often	5 Very Often
1. uses hands and arms to gesture while teaching.				X	

## Instructor Survey

The Instructor:	Rating				
	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Often	5 Very Often
1. uses hands and arms to gesture while teaching.					
2. has a relaxed body position					
3. moves around the class					
4. uses a variety of vocal expressions					
5. is animated					
6. maintains eye contact					
7. smiles					

## APPENDIX B

### Consent Research at Wayne State Communications Dept

**Katheryn Maguire**

to Anita, me ▾

Mon, Mar 18, 11:26 AM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hello Aviva and Anita,

Thanks for your message Aviva. Dr. Mixon, meet Aviva Gordon, a doctoral candidate in education and an MA graduate from our department. See her request below as she searches for possible classrooms for her dissertation project.

Aviva, Dr. Mixon will be the one to grant you access to COM 1010 instructors so you can solicit volunteers for your dissertation.

Note that Dr. Mixon may need 48-hours to reply to the message.

Best

...

Katheryn

Katheryn C. Maguire, Ph.D.  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Communication  
Wayne State University  
906 W. Warren Avenue  
585 Manoogian Hall  
Detroit, Michigan 48201

**Anita Mixon** <gj1184@wayne.edu>  
to me, Katheryn ▾

Mar 18, 2019, 1:09 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Dear Aviva,

Thank you for your interest in our course! It should be no problem getting you the number of instructors that you need. If you can email me what your project is about (with respect to the instructor participation) and how we can help, that would be great.

Warmly,

Anita

...

## APPENDIX C

### Research Informed Consent (Instructor)

Title of Study: *Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on University Instructors Nonverbal Immediacy*

Principal Investigator (PI): Aviva Gordon  
College of Education- Learning Design and Technology  
248 -821-3103

### Purpose

You are being asked to be in a research study of COM1103 pedagogy systems because you are an instructor in an undergraduate university. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University. The estimated number of study participants to be enrolled at Wayne State University is about 10. **Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.**

In this research study, I am studying pedagogical communication systems of teachers and their students. People have different pedagogical approaches to teaching. I am interested in how teachers and students communicate in the classroom.

### Study Procedures

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will allow two surveys administered to your students who have agreed to participate immediately following your class for approximately 10 – 15 minutes. The surveys will take place during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. Week four, in person, and week 14 through Qualtrics. The link will be provided to you to forward to the students. You may be randomly selected to participate in three 30-minute private interviews at the Wayne State University campus. If you are randomly selected for the interviews, you will be notified by the first week of the semester. Interviews will take place during weeks 5, 8 ( in person) and 11 ( via ZOOM). of one semester. The on-campus interview location may be decided by you, the instructor, as long as it is a private area.

1. Each interview will last up to 30 minutes. During Each interview notes will be taken. After the research all notes will be held in a private lock box, owned by me the researcher.
2. General communication pedagogical questions will be asked and answered. You have the option to not answer the questions for whatever reason.
3. Your participation will remain anonymous.
4. An aggregate report and debrief will be available for you at the conclusion of the study.

### **Benefits**

The possible benefits to you for taking part in this research study are knowledge of additional Communication pedagogical strategies for you and other instructors in the field of Communication.

### **Risks**

There is the slight risk of a breach in confidentiality, however steps will be taken to minimize this risk. Information that identifies you personally will be securely stored in a locked office on campus that is only available to the Principal Investigator.

### **Study Costs**

- Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

### **Compensation**

For taking part in this research study, whether randomly selected, or not, you will be paid for your time and inconvenience with a \$20.00 Amazon gift card.

### **Confidentiality**

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, may review your records. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

### **Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, you can later change your mind and withdraw from the study. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates, or other services you are entitled to receive.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Aviva Gordon, or one of her research team members at the following phone number 313-577-1620. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining consent Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person obtaining consent

## APPENDIX D

### Research Information Sheet Part One

Title of Study: *Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on University Instructor's Nonverbal Immediacy*

Week 4 Survey

Principal Investigator (PI): *Aviva Gordon*  
Learning Design and Technology  
248-821-3103

#### Purpose:

You are being asked to be in a research study of your professor's communication style(s)] because you are a student in a Communication class learning about the fundamentals of communication. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University.

#### Study Procedures

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to:

- Remain after class to complete a survey for 15 minutes during week 4 (part one) and week 14 (part two) of the semester to fill out a Qualtrics survey emailed to you from your instructor.
- Fill out a survey based on your professor's communication style(s).
- Provide your gender and major.
- Be assigned a generic code for tracking purposes

#### Benefits

- As a participant in this research study, there be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

#### Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

**Costs** There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

#### Compensation

- For taking part in this research study, you will be paid for your time and inconvenience, you will be eligible to enter a lottery to win one of three \$10.00 Starbuck's gift cards. lottery to win one of three \$10.00 Starbuck's gift cards. The gift cards will be selected immediately following the survey during Week 14 and will be emailed to you direct from Amazon.

**Confidentiality:** You will be identified in the research records by a code name – number know and held only by me as the researcher.

#### Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study, or if you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study.] You are free

to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Aviva Gordon or one of her research team members at the following phone number 313-577-1592. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

### **Participation**

By completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Participation in this research is for residents of the United States over the age of 18; if you are not a resident of the United States and/or under the age of 18, please do not complete this survey.

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Questions for Experimental Group

Additional instructor directions in Italics\*

#### Interview # 1

Addressing the participant with the following statement: "I am sure that you have had both negative and positive experiences while teaching. Today, I would like to focus only on the positive aspects of your experiences."

1. Could you please tell me a story about an experience while teaching which you felt at your best, full of life and in flow?
2. Would you be happy to experience a similar process again? *If yes, continue to the next question. If no, ask for another story the instructor would like to experience again.*
3. What was the peak moment of this story? What did you think of at that moment?
4. How did you feel at that moment? *Reflect the emotions back to the instructor, if there are not positive responses return to question # 1.*
5. What were the conditions in you, such as the things you did, your capabilities and your strengths that made this story possible?
6. What did others do that helped your success here?
7. What were the conditions facilitated by Wayne State that contribute to your success story?
8. If you had three wishes to make your teaching experiences discussed even more meaningful, what would they be?

Interviewer Say: *The conditions you have just described seem to be your personal code for reaching \_\_\_\_\_ (repeat what the instructor said and validate their accomplishments).*

#### Interview # 2

1. Looking at your teaching experience over the last few weeks, which teaching strategy made you feel the greatest pride of your teaching experience?
2. What made it an exciting experience?
3. Who else was involved?

*Paraphrase what you just heard back to the instructor*

4. Describe the event in detail.
5. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a Communications instructor?
6. What is it about Wayne State that you value most?
7. What is the single most important thing that Wayne State has contributed to your life, besides possibly a paycheck?

What is the single most important thing the Wayne State Communications department has contributed to your life?

8. If you had three wishes to strengthen Wayne State's Communication dept, what would they be?

9.

10. Interview # 3

1. Please tell me about a recent specific incident since we last spoke where you felt especially good about attaining a goal? If participant is reticent add: No matter how bad the past year was that you may have experienced, everyone has had one or more positive experiences.

*Add: the story you have just talked sound like your wonderful own personal code for reaching\_\_\_ ( add the participant's achievement).*

2. What can you do this coming year to create conditions/circumstances that will enable you to think feel, and behave on an on-going basis the way you did in the story you described?

3. Based on this story, think of your current successes, prioritize and plan for the very near future, to what extent can these conditions be incorporated?

4. Think about the best times that you have had working with one or more students, especially when working with students who are really engaged. Tell me a story about these students.

5. How did you contribute to the process?

6. What did the student do?

7. Who else was involved?

8. What made it successful and rewarding?

9. If you had three wishes for even greater student engagement, what would they be?

Source: Budworth, Latham, & Manroop, (2015); Bloom, Hutson, He, & Konkle, E. (2013); Cockell and McArthur- Blair (2012); Kluger & Nir (2010).

**APPENDIX F**

## Consent to Adapt the NIS (O) Instrument

**Johnson, Aaron D**

12:25 PM (5 hours ago) ☆ ↩

to me ▾

Hi Aviva,

Apologies for the delayed response. Feel free to use the NIS. I would recommend you use the entire instrument otherwise reliability and then validity issues may arise. If you do adjust it, I would encourage you to run an extra analysis to ensure it h not lost anything. However, if your advisers accept an adjusted version then run with it.

Dr. Richmond is now at the University of Alabama - Birmingham. I believe you could reach her with the following email address:

[drvpr1@uab.edu](mailto:drvpr1@uab.edu)

Best of luck with your research!

Sincerely,

Aaron

**Matthew Martin** <Matt.Martin@mail.wvu.edu>

Tue, Apr 2, 9:41 AM (1 day ago) ☆ ↩

to me ▾

Good morning,

Dr. Richmond is at the University of Alabama – Birmingham in the Communication Studies Department. She was married to Dr. James McCroskey (she is not the mother of Dr. Lynda McCroskey).

Below is a link to Dr. James McCroskey's webpage where he has many of his research resources, including information about his articles and scales. As long as you are using his measures research (i.e., not for profit), he granted permission to use/modify his measures.

Have a good day – Matt Martin

<http://www.jamesmccroskey.com/>

## APPENDIX G

### Research Information Sheet Part Two

Title of Study: *Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on University Instructor's Nonverbal Immediacy*

Week 14 Survey

Principal Investigator (PI): *Aviva Gordon*  
Learning Design and Technology  
248-821-3103

#### Purpose:

You are being asked to be in a research study of your professor's communication style(s)] because you are a student in a Communication class learning about the fundamentals of communication. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University.

#### Study Procedures

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to:

- Remain after class to complete a survey for 15 minutes during week 4 (part one) and week 14 (part two) of the semester to fill out a Qualtrics survey emailed to you from your instructor.
- Fill out a survey based on your professor's communication style(s).
- Provide your gender and major.
- Be assigned a generic code for tracking purposes

#### Benefits

- As a participant in this research study, there be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

#### Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

**Costs** There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

#### Compensation

- For taking part in this research study, you will be paid for your time and inconvenience, you will be eligible to enter a lottery to win one of three \$10.00 Starbuck's gift cards. The gift cards will be selected immediately following the survey during Week 14 and will be emailed to you direct from Amazon.

**Confidentiality:** You will be identified in the research records by a code name – number know and held only by me as the researcher.

#### Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study, or if you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study.] You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

**Questions**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Aviva Gordon or one of her research team members at the following phone number 313-577-1592. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

**Participation**

By completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Participation in this research is for residents of the United States over the age of 18; if you are not a resident of the United States and/or under the age of 18, please do not complete this survey.

## APPENDIX H

## Part Two Online Survey During COVID19



Enter your initials, first and last name and birthdate in six digits

For example: John Smith, October 14, 2001 would be coded as JS/11/10/01

Your Instructor's name:

Reflect on your experience with the instructor in the class since the beginning of the semester. Rate the instructor on the following items, using the scale 1=never, to 5=very often, by selecting the appropriate column.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
	1	2	3	4	5
While teaching, the instructor uses hand/arm gestures.	<input type="radio"/>				
While teaching, the instructor has a relaxed body position.	<input type="radio"/>				
While teaching, the instructor uses a variety of vocal expressions.	<input type="radio"/>				
While teaching, the instructor is animated.	<input type="radio"/>				
While teaching, the instructor maintains eye contact.	<input type="radio"/>				
While teaching, the instructor smiles.	<input type="radio"/>				

**APPENDIX I**

## Recruitment Email During COVID19

This email is distributed to the instructors currently participating in this research. The instructors are asked to send the following email to their students:

Hi everyone, I hope you are doing well. You may remember earlier in the semester we had a researcher come to class to survey you all about my teaching style. Below is the link for the part two of the survey for Aviva Gordon. Please fill in the brief survey at your earliest convenience. Thank you very much for your participation in this important work.

[https://waynestate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9Hy0ZvWxEfgP53f](https://waynestate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Hy0ZvWxEfgP53f)

## APPENDIX J

## VINI Instrument

VINI Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Reflect on your experiences with the Instructor in this class since the beginning of the semester. Rate the Instructor on the following items, using the scale 1 = Never to 5 = Very Often, 6 = Not applicable, by placing a mark in the appropriate column. For example:

The Instructor:	Rating				
	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Often	5 Very Often
1. uses emojis to promote quality learning				X	

## Instructor Survey

The Instructor:	Rating				
	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Often	5 Very Often
1. Uses emojis to promote quality learning					
2. returns my emails in a timely manner					
3. gives constructive feedback in a timely manner					
4. uses pre-recorded instruction of themselves to promote an interest in learning					
5. Uses other meaningful videos/clips					
6. Is adaptive with new technologies					
7. Uses inspiring colors					
8. Uses Wiki's relevant to our subject matter					
In real-time the instructor:					
9. is animated					
10. maintains eye contact					
11. smiles					
12. Gestures					

13. Uses a variety of vocal tones					
14. Listens					
15. Gives Feedback					
In pre-recorded announcements the instructor:					
16. is animated					
17. maintains eye contact					
18. smiles					
19. Gestures					
20. Uses a variety of vocal tones					

## APPENDIX K

*Nonverbal Immediacy Reliability*

Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviors Instrument, (Richmond et al, 2003)	Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviors Instrument, Adapted, for this research Richmond et al. (2003)	
Face-to-Face Estimated Reliability .90 or above	Face-to-Face Reliability .81	Online * Reliability .83

	<b>The Instructor:</b>
I Use Hands and Arms while talking to People I use gestures while talking to people. I avoid gesturing while I am talking to people.	uses hands and arms to gesture while teaching.
I have a tense body position while talking to people I have a relaxed body position when talking to people I am stiff when I talk to people. I lean away from people when I talk with them.	has a relaxed body position
I sit close or stand close to people while talking with them. I move closer to people when talking to them. I lean toward people when I talk to them. I try not to sit or stand close to people when I talk to them.	moves around the class while teaching *
My voice is monotone or dull voice while talking to people. I use a variety of vocal expressions while talking with people. I have a lot of vocal variety when I talk to people.	uses a variety of vocal expressions while teaching
I am animated when I talk to people	is animated when talking with students
I look over or away from others while talking to them. I avoid eye contact while talking to people. I look directly at people while talking to them. I maintain eye contact with people when I talk to them.	maintains eye contact while talking with student
I frown while talking to people. I have a bland facial expression when talking to people. I smile when I talk to people.	smiles while talking to students
I move away from others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them. I move away from others when they touch me while we are talking. I avoid touching people when I talk to them.	

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**ABSTRACT****APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IMPACT ON UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR'S  
NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY**

by

**AVIVA GORDON****August 2020****Advisor:** Dr. Monica W. Tracey**Major:** Learning Design and Technology**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

This research explored the impact of Appreciative Inquiry on university instructor's Nonverbal Immediacy. Nonverbal Immediacy has been investigated extensively through the perception of students and rarely used as an instructional strategy or to enhance Appreciative Inquiry. Self-determination Theory informed this research with core constructs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy inherent in both Nonverbal Immediacy and Appreciative Inquiry. An adapted instrument was created to collect data from students in Communication courses, twice during one semester. The Coronavirus interrupted research, so the second survey was modified for an online environment. The research question could not be answered conclusively. However, both instruments were found reliable, valid and applicable to future research. The recent online nonverbal immediacy research (physiological) shifted to emojis, visual aids, Wiki's, timing, and feedback (logistical), negating Mehrabian (1971) and Gorham's (2003) specific constructs. This study suggests rather than replacing their work, utilize the online Nonverbal Immediacy tool, a VINI-Virtual Interpersonal Nonverbal Immediacy as an online instructional strategy. Three in-person Appreciative Inquiry interviews were scheduled with instructors. Due to Coronavirus, the third interview was conducted virtually. The themes emerged

were how instructors passionately manage their instructional strategies efficiently and meaningfully and keep the momentum going for future classroom engagement. The instructors' expectations for managing diverse student groups were identified through their own cultural backgrounds. Factors such as gender, international culture, language, and social change shape their instructional strategies. Appreciative Inquiry and Nonverbal Immediacy could be synthesized as a strong tool in the instructional design toolbox.

### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

2020 Ph.D. College of Education: Instructional Design and Technology, Wayne State University

2018 M.A. College of Education: Instructional Design and Technology, Wayne State University

2015 Graduate Certificate. College and University Teaching, Wayne State University

2013 M.A. Communication - Wayne State University

2010 B.S. Human Resource Development - *Magna Cum Laude*, Oakland University.

As my retirement from a 30-year AT&T tenure was approaching, I began pursuing my B.A. I conducted a project on nonverbal behavior, found this my calling, and have been enthralled with nonverbal behavior ever since. What started out as a corporate training interest evolved serendipitously into a love of nonverbal education for others as well as myself. Almost every assignment I have done throughout my higher education has comprised of nonverbal immediacy. With the help of the Almighty, supportive instructors and advisors, and friends and family, my dissertation is the culmination of over a decade's research. In 2016, Dr. Avi Kluger introduced me to Appreciative Inquiry, and it was then I decided that, perhaps, these two valuable constructs could be synthesized. I currently teach College Composition at Lawrence Technological University and have recently taught Speech and Communication at Oakland Community College. I enjoy helping freshman college students learn how to critically think, read, and write, especially since they are our future leaders. My non-academic life is filled with family, friends and fun, through the tenants of Orthodox Judaism. I volunteer at Providence Hospital and visit with incarcerated women in the Oakland County and Ferguson Center Jails. I enjoy power walking, yoga, knitting and needlepoint. It has been an honor to be part of the LDT program at Wayne State, and I am profoundly grateful to the WSU College of Education team for this extraordinary opportunity.