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Vulnerability in the classroom: how undergraduate business instructors' ability to build trust impacts the student's learning experience

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VULNERABILITY IN THE CLASSROOM: HOW UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS

INSTRUCTORS' ABILITY TO BUILD TRUST IMPACTS THE STUDENT'S

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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by

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ABSTRACT

Vulnerability is the ability to risk emotional exposure, chance making a mistake, or disclose personal information because the outcome is viewed as favorable. Vulnerability is a highly effective way to build trust with others. Trust is a valued leadership trait within corporate business because it encourages employees to take risks, share information, and ultimately become more effective and productive (Robbins & Judge, 2013). This paper explores the practicing of vulnerability in college-level business classrooms to appropriately prepare business students to become leaders who are able to build trust within the workplace.

To further understand vulnerability in the classroom and develop a preliminary operational definition of the complex construct of vulnerability, a mixed methods research study was conducted at Sierra Nevada College that included a two-stage factor analysis followed by short interviews with instructors to gain further insight into the data collected. First, students from four randomly selected business classrooms were asked to participate in a study by completing a survey with 18 variables that describe vulnerable, productive teaching techniques. Then, the same survey was distributed to the five classrooms of instructors who were nominated for the 2014 or 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal award or Teacher of the Year award. The four Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal award candidates and the Teacher of the Year were interviewed for 30-minutes to provide insight and commentary on the findings from the first round of surveys. The goal of this study is to create a preliminary operational definition of the construct of "vulnerable teaching techniques" and to have an assessment tool to further understand vulnerability in a classroom setting.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Emotional vulnerability and undergraduate business courses are two concepts not typically associated with each other. In the traditional classroom, Power Point presentations can detract from eye-contact, the podium creates a physical distance between the students and instructor, and lesson plans crowd out classroom time for students and instructors to have meaningful and spontaneous dialogue. Yet, one of the most effective ways to build trust is through displaying emotional vulnerability and through human to human connection (Brown, 2010b; Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir, 2007). In fact, in the workplace, trust is important because it encourages employees to take risks, share information, and ultimately become more effective and productive (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Since trust-building is valued within the workplace, one could argue that college instructors should model and utilize techniques to build trust within the classroom to prepare students to emulate this behavior when they are in the workforce.

Vulnerability literally means to be "open to criticism or attack" (Cloud, 1992, p. 95). Emotional vulnerability is allowing one's true self to be known, including perceived imperfections, weaknesses, and shortcomings. It is through mutual sharing and emotional vulnerability that a deeper level of bonding can occur between two people (Cloud, 1992). This trust develops when one person discloses something that could be criticized, and the listener chooses to accept, rather than judge the other and provide warmth and affection (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Zand, 1972). In a world filled with high expectations, tight deadlines and continual pressures to "fit the mold", people crave interpersonal connection (Warrell, 2013). In fact, people function at their best when they can be themselves, and feel like they belong (Brown, 2012).

Displaying an appropriate level of vulnerability may also be a way for instructors to connect with their students and students to connect with their instructors. Students appreciate faculty members who are approachable and demonstrate humility (Belcheir, 1999), traits which contribute to a sense of emotional vulnerability. According to Yair (2008), when professors consciously demonstrate emotional vulnerability in the classroom and create a culture of trust, students are more receptive and better able to retain course information and develop skills essential for life after college. "When students have opportunities to connect with adults who approach these relationships with a spirit of caring, empathy, generosity, respect, reciprocity and a genuine desire to know students personally" (Dunleavy & Milton, 2008, p. 5) students respond with increased levels of confidence, resiliency and autonomy.

Not all displays of emotional vulnerability are beneficial to the audience. For example, it might be inappropriate for an instructor to cry in front of their students and tell a story about misplacing their car keys before coming to work that day. In this case, student learning may actually decrease as students become disengaged in the learning process or distracted by the display of emotional vulnerability. This paper's goal is to further understand "productive" and "effective" displays of emotional vulnerability that leads to increased levels of student learning. Throughout the remaining sections of this paper, each time emotional vulnerability is mentioned, it is referring to these positive and "productive" displays of emotional vulnerability that lead to an increase and positive result.

This research explores college instructors' display of emotional vulnerability within classrooms and how they can model trust-building techniques as leaders within the classroom. The investigation analyzes the students' perspective as they are the captive audience observing these displays of vulnerability and are active participants within the culture. Students are a key,

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if not the best, source of information, to determine if the instructor's emotional builds trust and how this vulnerability impacts their perceived learning.

Background

Vulnerability can be readily understood in relation to phenomena of nature. Something is vulnerable when it is susceptible to injury or risk, such as when a natural disaster is looming or a group of people have been exposed to an infectious disease (Misztal, 2011). In both cases, there is a higher risk of danger or harm to those involved. For this paper, vulnerability is operationalized as the ability to risk emotional exposure, chance making a mistake, or disclose personal information because the outcome is viewed as favorable. By being vulnerable, a person trusts that their confidence will not be exploited, and hence, vulnerability is linked directly to trust.

Emotional vulnerability is expressed when a person chooses to be open and take the risk in order to connect with another person. According to Brown (2015) by showing the "weaker" or less than ideal parts of self or being willing to ask for help is truly what it means to live a wholehearted life because the a person's strengths and weaknesses are integrated into a whole, thus allowing a person to live authentically and form deep connections with others. It takes courage to ask for help, admit faults, and become vulnerable to rejection, but it is in this space that true learning and connection takes place (Brown, 2015).

Although emotional vulnerability is a concept that has been overlooked in higher education thus far, a pragmatic teaching technique that incorporates some vulnerable practices has come to the forefront of conversation. This technique is called learner-focused teaching, which incorporates teaching methodologies that are effective for adult learners. Examples of learner focused teaching techniques include narrative pedagogy, story-telling, and active-

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learning techniques such as role-playing, simulations and debates (Barrett, Bower, & Donovan, 2007). The reason these techniques work so well with adult learners is that adults prefer self-directed learning where they can explore topics that apply to their current or past life experiences. Adult learners learn most effectively in a classroom environment that is based on mutual respect and caring. In this type of environment the instructor is able to adapt the learning experience to meet the student's interests and needs because they are known and shared (Knowles, 1980). Since each adult has different preferences about how they learn best, such as alone as opposed to within a group, or in a dynamic discussion compared to a linear module, it takes a nimble instructor to adapt and facilitate a learning environment where most adult learners in the group are engaged in the coursework (Honigsfeld & Dunn, 2006). Adding vulnerability to teaching would take learner-focused teaching to a deeper level to focus on interpersonal connections with students so that they feel safe to learn course topics and connect with other students.

Vulnerability in business. A large part of business success is the ability to work well with people and to build trust in others. Trust inspires loyalty and commitment in the workplace, and is oftentimes referred to as the glue that holds people together (Le Pla, 2012a). No amount of education, credentials or business acumen can compensate for a lack of trust (Le Pla, 2012b). Lencioni (2012) describes companies that are good in strategy, finance, marketing and technology as "smart" companies, and these competencies are a minimum threshold to sustain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. He commends organizations that are "smart" and "healthy". "Healthy" companies are those where employees "learn from one another, identify critical issues, and recover quickly from mistakes" (Lencioni, 2012, p. 9). The first step to creating a healthy, high-achieving organization is through "vulnerability-based trust," which is

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described as "being transparent, honest, and naked with one another, where they say and genuinely mean things like 'I screw up,' 'I need help,' 'your idea is better than mine,' 'I wish I could learn to do that as well as you do' and even 'I'm sorry'" (p. 27). This type of vulnerability creates a bond between team members of trust, commitment, and high-achievement (Lencioni, 2012). Top business leaders are successful because they have developed trust among their colleagues, employees, suppliers and customers alike. And, one of the fastest ways to build this rapport is through being vulnerable (Brown, 2010a).

Lencioni (2012) further explains that conflict avoidance is the outcome of a company that chooses not to be vulnerable. When employees feel that they must hide their mistakes or they cannot speak up to voice their opinion, the cohesiveness of a team erodes and resent forms within members. Oftentimes, this leads to disingenuous communication and superficial agreement, resulting in groupthink and limiting innovation and the ability for a company to recover from errors.

Stephen M. R. Covey and Rebecca Merrill (2007) states that the root of a leader's ability to influence others lies in the ability to build trust. Leaders build trust through speaking openly and honestly, providing constructive feedback, and holding themselves and others accountable. Being vulnerable makes people better leaders because they do not waste time with impression management or trying to prove their worth ("Vulnerability as a Business Tool," 2011; Warrell, 2013). Instead they can focus their time on developing the people in their domain of influence. People connect when leaders expose their humanness (Hayes & Comer, 2011; Warrell, 2013) and vulnerability is one of the fastest ways to develop this type of connection (Brown, 2010b).

This transparency also builds trust and genuine communication that is conducive to team cohesion, and even likeability (Cashman, 2009; Le Pla, 2012b). President Bill Clinton actually

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launched a vulnerability campaign in 1992 when his approval ratings were at an all-time low at 33%. Instead of trying to impress the public with his suave personality, he related to his audience and vulnerably talked about his past mistakes, which increased his approval rating to 77% in one month's time (Cabane, 2012). People want to be led by a vulnerable leader as it increases trust, and when leaders model vulnerability, it sets the stage for others to follow in this pursuit (Ferrazzi, 2005). What damages credibility severely is when leaders refuse to apologize or admit to a mistake (Covey & Merrill, 2007).

Undergraduate business degree. The main objective of a business undergraduate degree is for students to become knowledgeable in business practices so that they are adequately prepared for the workforce after graduation (Abraham & Karns, 2009). Although it is important to have knowledge competencies, such as accounting, economics, and marketing skills, these are oftentimes threshold talents that determine if a person is capable of doing a job. It is the "softer" people skills that set someone apart as a great leader. So, it is the challenge that today's business schools face to integrate both analytical and relational skills into the curriculum so that students are holistically prepared for their first job (Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002).

A recent National Association of Colleges and Employers (2014) study showcased the top competencies employers are looking for in college recruits. It noted that most employers use data such as grade point average and appropriate major as screening devices, but what they value most is the job candidate's ability to communicate, work on teams, take initiative and demonstrate work ethic. Another study conducted by Abraham and Karns (2009) confirms these results, where 200 randomly selected American businesses were surveyed and reported that the top four competencies businesses desire in job candidates are communication skills, problem solving ability, results-oriented mind set, and interpersonal skills. Corporate recruiters routinely

identify "soft skills" such as leadership, communication and interpersonal skills as most highly sought after characteristics (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009). Even incumbent managers say that the most important skill used on the job is managing interpersonal relationships. This is why trust is so important – all of these sought after skills are dependent on it (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Problem Statement

Trust is valued in the workplace and as a trait in business leaders (Covey & Merrill, 2007). Since the purpose of college is to prepare students for the workplace so they are able to effectively contribute within that environment, trust should be a topic that is practiced within that environment. Displays of vulnerability are an efficient way to build trust within a work culture (Brown, 2012), yet vulnerability within the undergraduate business classroom has not been a focal point of research studies in the past, which also means there are no assessment tools to measure instructional vulnerability within a college classroom.

Although active learning has become a contemporary topic discussed in higher education, vulnerability and trust-building techniques have not been central to the conversation. Because learning incorporates more than a cognitive process, it is important to understand how emotions, connections and bonding modeled by the instructor impacts the learning environment.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to create clarity to the complex construct of instructional vulnerability by creating a preliminary assessment tool to measure effective instructional vulnerability in an undergraduate college classroom. Students will be queried to further determine how instructors are modeling trust-building within the business undergraduate classroom and how students perceive their ability to learn course content is impacted by the instructor's displays of vulnerability. The purpose of this dissertation is to further understand

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which trust-building techniques are most effective to teaching students course concepts while also building a culture of trust within the classroom environment so that students can apply these trust-building skills to their business profession once they graduate.

By further understanding how vulnerability-building and trust-building teaching techniques impact the learner's ability to apply course concepts as well as form connections with their classmates college instructors will have another resource to impact deep learning.

Facts about Vulnerability in the Classroom

Although people skills are important in corporate business, there is a lack of relational-focused coursework in business schools today. In fact, across 373 MBA programs studied by Rubin and Dierdorff (2009), most schools only have one required course that emphasizes interpersonal skills. Most business classes pertain to technology, analytical skills, and task management, rather than relational skills. Harvard Business School now looks for competencies such as empathy, teamwork, rapport, and perseverance for admittance to the MBA program (Goleman, 2006).

Students attending college are older now with considerably more life and work experience. In fact, 45% of all undergraduate and graduate students are over the age of 25 (Miglietti & Strange, 1998). Adults learn differently than children do. Adults learn by doing and being involved in the conversation, rather than being "told" information (Knowles, 1977).

Additionally, 30% of adult students have a history of developmental challenges or abuse experienced in the classroom that greatly inhibits their ability to learn (Perry, 2006). This poses an additional challenge for a teacher to provide a learning environment that helps these students overcome their anxieties so they can be fully present in the classroom. Students function best when they can explore new ideas using creativity and test ideas through trial and error. Learners

are inhibited in practicing these learning methods when fear and anxiety (which can be traced to a lack of trust) are integral aspects of the course experience.

Research Questions

For this study, the research questions probe how vulnerability is displayed in the classroom and how it impacts students:

1. What trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques do college instructors use that students identify as highly effective?
2. Do students self-report learning and applying more classroom content from college instructors who demonstrate high levels of vulnerability than from those who do not?
3. Do students self-report trusting their classmates and instructor more in a classroom environment that uses frequent trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques?
4. Which trust-building and vulnerability-building factors should be included in developing an operational definition and assessment tool to further understand the construct of vulnerability in the college classroom?

Significance of Topic

In an undergraduate class, the instructor is responsible for teaching course content and modeling skills necessary for students to be successful in their later careers (Ferrazzi, 2005; Fitzsimmons & Lanphar, 2011; Gomes & Knowles, 2000). If trust is valued as one of the top traits of a leader, it may be important for instructors to model emotional vulnerability within the classroom. Yet, emotional vulnerability is a complex construct that needs further clarity on how its application in the undergraduate classroom is most effective. Currently, there are no instruments or assessment tools the researcher could find that measures vulnerability in the classroom. This study could add beneficial insight into which displays of vulnerability are currently used in the classroom and how effective they are from a student's perspective. Additionally, a preliminary assessment tool that provides an outline of factors that constitute effective teaching techniques could be very helpful for institutions worldwide so that instructors

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can emulate these practices to become more effective teachers and connect with their students. This information could also be used in educating new instructors or for faculty development trainings for seasoned professionals.

Key Definitions and Operational Terms

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has constructed the following operational definition of vulnerability: Vulnerability is the willingness to risk emotional exposure, chance making a mistake, or to disclose personal information because the outcome is viewed as valuable.

Trust is operationalized as a healthy environment where members feel the freedom to be transparent, honest, admit mistakes and compliment others on their achievements. Trust is typified by team cohesion.

Therefore, vulnerability is the risk people take in the attempt to build trust with others.

Learner-focused teaching techniques include active learning techniques such as narrative pedagogy, story-telling, and active-learning techniques such as role-playing, simulations and debates.

Teaching styles that incorporate "productive" vulnerability utilize learner-focused teaching techniques with the intent to build trust with their students so that whole-hearted connections, truly friendships, form in the classroom.

Key Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations within this study. First, the data collected is based on a random sampling from the researcher's "backyard," namely, Sierra Nevada College. This inherently limits the inferences that are possible about other college or university settings. Second, there are no current tools to measure emotional vulnerability of instructors, so this

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research will be the first in the field to uncover latent variables surrounding the construct of emotional vulnerability in order to develop a definition and measurement tool. Although grounded in research studies about the benefits of vulnerability in the workplace or the classroom, this is the first time a measurement tool has been developed to further understand how vulnerability is practiced and what is effective. Lastly, to gain further understanding about this emotional vulnerability, short interviews will be conducted with the last four instructors. The insight these instructors provide will be used as a sounding board to round out the data and bring additional meaning to the data that could be further explored in a subsequent study.

Summary

Vulnerability builds trust, and trust is important in both the classroom and in the business context. As communication and interpersonal skills are top competencies desired by business employers, it is important that relational skills are interwoven in business school's curriculum. This way, students can learn through modeled behavior how to build a cohesive and trust-centered culture. As students enter the workforce in their specified field, which includes human resources, finance, economics, technology, operations, accounting and technology, they need to be knowledgeable in both their functional area as well as how to interact on a team and work with people to accomplish their work.

Since interpersonal skills are highly valued in business, it is suggested that more research be conducted on how vulnerability can be incorporated in college-level business courses. Vulnerability tactics such as storytelling, open-ended discussion and encouraging students to take academic risks seems to encourage student engagement, while also teaching them how to actively participate and contribute to a trusting environment. This dissertation will provide critical information, definition and assessment tools to educators and educational institutions on

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teaching techniques that are helpful to help students learn important business concepts while also learning how to contribute and build trust in a work environment. Vulnerability may be the key to unlocking additional potential in the business leaders of tomorrow.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review introduces the concept of vulnerability and how it is conducive to building trust in the college classroom as well as in the business work environments. The literature review explores effective undergraduate teaching strategies and the tactics students find most effective. This literature review covers a variety of topics to showcase how several concepts are interrelated. There are four main sections. The first section describes how vulnerability and trust are linked in the literature based on Brené Brown, Patrick Lencioni, and Stephen Covey's research. The second section reviews teaching techniques commonly used in the undergraduate level and which ones are most effective. The third section reviews the teaching techniques students find most effective. The fourth and final section, reviews how trust is valued in the business workplace. This systematic sequence is used because there are many interconnected parts to higher education that must be studied to understand what teaching strategies work most effectively when teaching adult learners. Instructors' effectiveness in the classroom is highly dependent on students retaining course concepts and perception of the learning experience. Students participate in the undergraduate learning experience to prepare themselves for life outside of college; therefore, it is imperative to understand what business practices are most effective in the work world to truly gain an understanding of the best approach in creating an effective learning environment.

The literature review uses a variety of sources to understand the concept of vulnerability and its impact, from business magazine articles, peer-reviewed scholarly studies, and business textbooks. However, due to the emerging research surrounding the concept of vulnerability, several books written by business leaders and leading social scientists are used to gain further insight into emotional vulnerability and its impact on team cohesion.

Effective Trust-Building Techniques

Trust is built through interpersonal connection and communication. In 1995, Lewicki and Bunker described trust as the expectation and confidence in another person's intentions and motivations in situations that involve risk (as cited in McAllister, Lewicki, & Chaturvedi, 2006). In this view, trust can only be established over time by being vulnerable or sharing a risky or challenging situation and watching the other person respond with integrity or a trust-evoking manner (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). McAllister et al. (2006) also identified three main facets of trust, which are *calculus-based*, which is trust based on rewards for honoring the relationship and punishments for disregard of the relationship; *knowledge-based*, based on predictability and dependability of someone's behavior; and *identification-based*, based on understanding of the other person's desires and motivations. Displays of vulnerability transcend all three types of trust-building facets and allow people to connect.

There is risk involved in being vulnerable. People may criticize, reject or not understand why the strategy is being used (Spence, 1995). It takes courage to be brave and admit raw feelings when the outcome is unknown, yet it is the quickest, most guaranteed method of building credibility and trust with an audience (Spence, 1995).

Brené Brown's research on vulnerability. The topic of vulnerability has gained national attention through Brene Brown's 2010 TED talk on vulnerability and how adults should learn to accept themselves as they really are. It is now one of the top viewed TED talks of all time and has over 10 million views. Brown is a professor at University of Houston in the field of social work, and conducted 1,280 formal interviews with people to study shame and how it originates. In coding the collected data, she found that when relationships and interpersonal trust

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suffers, hurt and fears begin to seep into one's psyche of unworthiness, shame, and abandonment (Flintoff, 2013).

In speaking with hundreds of people, Brown noticed two strong patterns within the data about how people relate with their outside world. One pattern was shame-based and consisted of hiding mechanisms. The other she described as people who love with their whole heart. These people were more creative and had a profound sense of hopefulness. Both groups experienced struggle, but they responded differently to it. The "whole-hearted" group was vulnerable when they experienced shame, and were courageous to reach out to people and connect with them to share their fears, rather than hiding and withdrawing from people.

Brown identifies emotional vulnerability as a great paradox because in relationships, it is what people look for in order to connect, but it is the last thing they want to show to others in fear that it may be abused or exploited. In response to this fear, according to Brown's model, people often build emotional walls to protect themselves and shut down rather than connecting through their vulnerabilities (Tippett, 2013). Yet, when people rise above their fears and choose to be vulnerable, they enjoy a deeper connection with others, are more resilient, and report to be more comfortable "in their own skin." Part of love and connecting with others is opening the heart to the possibility of pain due to possible loss of relationship. It is a risk many do not dare to take. Yet, when people let down their guard, they are opening themselves up to opportunities to connect and grow that are impossible without taking this risk (Devita-Raeburn, 2014).

In 2010, Brown continued her research and interviewed 50 CEOs from Silicon Valley to inquire about innovation and idea creation. The biggest barrier was identified as fear of failure and being ridiculed for an outside-of-the-box idea. The solution to overcoming this fear is to cultivate a culture that embraces humanness and vulnerability, yet this mindset can be rather

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disruptive in a society that has been ingrained with fear-based strategies, such as blame, gossip, harassment, favoritism and bullying (Brown, 2011). When a culture becomes saturated in fear-based tactics, employees begin to disengage in productive work behaviors and instead, they stop caring, and are more prone to steal, lie and retaliate. Managers are responsible for setting the tone and workplace norm of acceptable behavior. Through modeling respect and holding workers accountable, they can set a positive workplace culture where employees are able to share ideas openly without fear of reproach (Brown, 2011; Devita-Raeburn, 2014).

In Brown's most recent book, Rising Strong, she defines vulnerability as the "willingness to show up and be seen with no guarantee of outcome" (Brown, 2015, p. xvii) and she also claims this is the only path to experiencing love, belonging and joy. When a person chooses to live vulnerably, they are choosing to be open. Exhibiting healthy emotional vulnerability resides in the tension between allowing others to completely define a person's self-worth and shutting out people entirely and hence not caring at all what others think. Being vulnerable is not about being a doormat or an impenetrable force. It is about living in the emotional space in between. This is why vulnerability is a risk. There is a risk of experiencing pain, rejection, and hurt if the other person chooses to reject or abuse the emotional attempt to connect and care, but there is also the potential for high reward if accepted, and a connection is formed between the two people.

It is through this "rumbling" process of presenting to others an integrated, authentic whole self when transforming relationships happen. An integrated self includes sharing the strong points and the weaker, more vulnerable points. Being vulnerable allows the "whole truth" of a person's strengths and weaknesses, performance, fears, shortcomings, dreams and desires come to light without fearing judgement or having to self-protect.

Being vulnerable takes courage because at the same time as a person shares a less-than-perfect side of themselves, they are also taking ownership of a weakness or problem, rather than blaming someone else or avoiding the issue altogether. Alternatively, if a person chooses to only showcase their positive qualities, it eventually distorts how they interact with others because both parties only feel comfortable showcasing what they think will be "acceptable." This creates a space where criticism, shame, perfectionism, control, blame and resentment thrive. People who are able to be appropriately vulnerable and lead an integrated life are able to ask for help when needed, set proper boundaries, and evaluate others or projects with a balanced mindset.

When people feel that they can let both the positive and negative about themselves be seen, they have more fortitude and resilience because they do not fear being misunderstood, shamed or rejected. This safe, trusting environment allows people to relax and make strides toward growth and achievement because they do not fear failure or making a mistake. They live courageously and typically in an environment where they feel safe to be themselves. This culture also allows people to say "I disagree" or "I think you are wrong" without others feeling they will be cast out from the group. In fact, it is a trust-building act to ask for help and it allows for people to depend on each other by meeting each other's needs. There is freedom and a complete transformation that happens when a group of people, a team, decided to live vulnerably and accept one another fully – for the positive and not-so-positive things (Brown, 2015).

Patrick Lencioni's research on building trust within a business context. Patrick Lencioni is a known business leader and acclaimed author with his most notable book titles *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *Death by Meeting*. He has twenty years of practical business experience that he references within his books. He also started his own consulting company, The Table Group, where he works with leading Fortune 500 companies to help them with actionable

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advice for business growth. Lencioni (2012) states that the biggest competitive advantage any company can achieve is organizational health. Many companies try to compete based on talent, knowledge, or innovation, and find that these inputs lead to incremental progress. Based on his first-hand experience of working with medium-to-large-sized companies, he notes that organizational health is what leads to substantial success. In a healthy organization, workers learn from one another, they can identify critical issues, and they can recover from mistakes quickly (Lencioni, 2012).

Lencioni (2012) developed a leadership model for organizations to implement that will lead them to become "healthy," resulting in high achieving organizational success. The model is in the shape of a pyramid with five important steps. At the bottom appears the first step, the foundation of Trust. Lencioni asserts that this type of trust is not "predictive trust" where people trust that a person will display a certain behavior based on a circumstance, but rather, the trust he is referring to is "vulnerability-based" trust that can only happen when people are transparent with one another. He further states that when people are willing to admit mistakes and weaknesses and stop pretending to be someone they are not, it creates a bond between people. This bond happens because people are no longer afraid of one another or that they have to maintain a pretense. It frees people to be able to respect and understand one another outside of their job title, age or experience. To induce this type of vulnerability-based trust, he encourages organizations to tell their personal stories to one another, take a Myers-Briggs test to understand how people are wired differently, and share one of their most fundamental weaknesses with their team to begin practicing vulnerability as a group. It is only when a group has established this foundation of trust that the organization is able to proceed to the remaining four steps of organizational health (Lencioni, 2012).

The next step toward health is Conflict. Many companies fear that conflict is a sign of dysfunction, but Lencioni persists that conflict is actually a sign that people are willing to speak up and address issues, rather than avoiding them. It is a sign of maturity, and if the conflict is handled constructively, it leads to team cohesion. Lencioni further explains that conflict avoidance is the outcome of a company that chooses not to be vulnerable. When employees feel that they must hide their mistakes or they cannot speak up to voice their opinion, the cohesiveness of a team erodes and resent forms within members. Oftentimes, this leads to disingenuous communication and superficial agreement, resulting in groupthink and limiting innovation and the ability for a company to recover from errors (Lencioni, 2012).

The third step in Lencioni's model is Commitment. With the freedom to speak their mind and voice their opinions in the Conflict stage, employees are able to truly commit to the decision the team decides upon. The fourth step is Accountability, where employees embrace the agreements they have made in the previous steps and will productively and effectively move forward to achieve the agreed upon goals. If there is a conflict that arises in this step, workers are able to hold each other accountable. The fifth, and final step is Results. When a team is healthy, they are able to achieve measureable results (Lencioni, 2012).

Stephen Covey's research on the speed of trust. Stephen Covey and Merrill (2007) is another business theorist who specializes is researching trust. He postulates that company results stem from strategy and execution multiplied by trust. He believes people must first develop credibility, what he refers to as self-trust, before they can work on developing relational trust. At the core of self-trust are four key traits:

1. Integrity - living congruently with espoused values and beliefs
2. Intent – having an agenda that is based on mutual benefit
3. Capabilities – showcasing skills and talents that are relevant

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4. Results – delivering results based on the other three aspects of credibility

When it comes to building trust with others, Covey asserts that it is all linked to behaviors that showcase people's true selves. There are thirteen behaviors he points to that help build or destroy trust based on if they are implemented or not. These behaviors consist of the following:

1. Telling the truth
2. Respecting others in word and deed
3. Creating transparency by being open and authentic
4. Apologizing when wrong
5. Showing loyalty and giving others credit
6. Owning failures and mistakes
7. Listening to feedback and working on self-improvement
8. Providing constructive feedback to others
9. Clarifying expectations
10. Keeping self and others accountable
11. Asking questions to gain clarity before making assumptions
12. Following through on commitments
13. Extending trust to others who deserve it

Covey claims that these behaviors are important to live out in personal and workplace settings because the result is huge dividends when relating with other people. In an environment where there is trust, there are also increases in innovation, growth, collaboration and results. When trust is lacking, organizations suffer because it produces more politics, disengagement, redundancy, and turnover (Covey & Merrill, 2007).

Effective Undergraduate Teaching Techniques

Teaching college students is different from teaching younger children because the audience consists of traditional undergraduates (ages 18-22) and untraditional (22 +) students, who have substantially more life and/or work experience. In fact, 45% of all undergraduate and graduate students are over the age of 25 (Miglietti & Strange, 1998). A huge benefit of older students is most student have more life experience and can apply the skills and concepts learned in class directly to their current or past work challenges (Merrill, 2001). Adult learners are also comfortable using reasoning in everyday decision making, they are able to use context to guide thinking, and they can segregate ideas as well as think in contradictions (Goddu, 2012). This maturity of adult students and complexity of thinking also challenges instructors to adapt how they facilitate the learning process.

There are three main differences of how adults learn differently than a child: adults are self-directed, what they learn leads to personal, applied self-development, and adults utilize critical self-reflection. Adults are not blank slates when they come to the classroom. They have past experiences that drive them to learn about particular concepts. Adults are self-motivated and typically have specific goals they want to accomplish, hence why they elect to attend college. Instead of being told what they should be learning, adults already have motivation and know what they want to achieve by attending college. This leads to the second difference of adult learning, which is personal development. This transformation happens by the learner grappling with new material or familiar concepts and taking them to a deeper level. With transformational learning, the instructor will often serve as the guide to introduce an uncomfortable or even psychologically "painful" or challenging topic. This could lead to confusion, anxiety, conflict or confusion for the learner for a period of time, but this must happen

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for longstanding believes to be challenged and for the student to truly grow. The third difference is critical reflection, which is described as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief." It is through this reflection time that past assumptions are challenged and adult learners uncover possible past prejudices or false "truths" that need to be reconciled to a new understanding (Chen, 2014).

In higher education there has been a recent shift from teacher-focused instruction to learner-focused learning. One way to incorporate learner-focused learning is through the flipped classroom. The concept of a flipped classroom is that activities that are typically happen during class time, such as watching a video or listening to a lecture are assigned as homework, and during class students are able to participate in interactive activities and practice what they were taught outside of the class structure (Velegol, Zappe, & Mahoney, 2015). In a teacher-focused style, the instructor transmits knowledge to the learners, largely relying on lecture-based techniques. This type of information transmission typically results in surface learning with limited understanding (Velegol et al., 2015). The learner-focused model focuses on the student and the instructor and student are both responsible for learning outcomes. Learner-focused instructing adds a new layer to the teaching-process so that the instructor helps the learner recognize the opportunity to learn and become involved in the learning process (Paige, 2010). This means the instructor becomes the model of how to learn by making their own thinking and learning process visible to the students (Paige, 2010). Learning is thus transformative and leads to the student's personal development (Chen, 2014).

In a recent community college study of 292 instructors, a study was conducted to learn how many college instructors actually use learner-centered teaching techniques compared to learner-centered techniques (Barrett et al., 2007). The Principles of Adult Learning Scale

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instrument measures the degree to which instructor's use teacher-centered over learner-centered approach in the classroom by analyzing the teaching delivery, assessment, curriculum development, classroom management, values and outside-of-class interaction with students using a 44-query questionnaire. In this study, the PALS score was a 127, which is a lower level teacher-centered teaching style. PALS scores range from 0 to 205, with scores of 0-145 as teacher-centered and scores of 146 to 205 as learner-centered teaching styles (Barrett et al., 2007). Even with the increased focus in higher education on learner-centered learning, colleges continue to rely on the classic models of teaching, such as a didactic lecture-based classroom session, followed by textbook reading assignments (Karagiannapoulou, 2011).

Knowles adult learning theory. Malcolm Knowles (1977) was one of the first academic who studied how adults and children approach learning differently. Pedagogy is the term used for instruction based on the teacher-directed approach and focuses on how children learn best and andragogy is the term used for adult-based learning, which focuses on self-directed learning. The adult learner is able to apply concepts discussed in class to life tasks or problems and apply them immediately. Adults prefer to participate in the learning process and are motivated by their own curiosity (Knowles, 1977).

When an elementary school teacher sits down to plan a lesson, there are four things they consider:

1. What content needs to be acquired.

2. How can that content be grouped into manageable units.

3. How can those units be placed in a logical sequence.

4. How can these units can be transmitted in an efficient and effective manner.

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In this model, the learner is dependent on the teacher to transmit the knowledge in a subject-centered manner. The teacher has the authority and provides awards or sanctions for completing assignments.

The andragogy teaching philosophy is different. Although the pedagogical approach may incorporate self-directed learning, the adragogical approach relies heavily upon self-directed learning. Knowles proposes that the most important element of adult learning is that is must be established in a climate characterized by trust. He defines this environment by using the descriptors of "mutual respect," "warmth," "caring" "openness" and "informality." He juxtaposes those descriptors with the opposite culture that sadly exists in many child-focused and adult-focused classrooms, such as "discipline," "coldness," "aloofness," and "authority." It is in a culture of trust that the learner is motivated to engage and diagnose their own learning needs (Knowles, 1977).

Based on the difference between how children and adults learn, instructors must have different characteristics to teach these different audiences. In adult education, according to Knowles (1980) instructors need the following six characteristics:

1. Instructors must have knowledge in their particular field as well as practice that skill or subject.
2. Instructors must exhibit enthusiasm in their subject.
3. Instructors should be understanding, friendly, and demonstrate humor and humility to engage their audience.
4. Instructors must be creative in teaching techniques and willing to change techniques to cater to their audience's needs and interests. Teaching should be focuses on the growth process over the presentation of facts.
5. The instructor's status in the community or teaching experience should only be considered after the other four areas are met.

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6. The instructor should understand that teaching adults and children is different and instructors should be enthusiastic about teaching adults.

Dunn and Dunn learning-style model. The Dunn and Dunn Model was developed to provide further insight as to why the exact same class session is effective for some students and is not effective for others. This model utilizes 21 elements in five stimulus strands: Environmental preferences (sound, light, temperature and seating), Emotional characteristics (motivation, persistence, responsibility, and need for structure), Sociological determinants (learning alone, in a pair, with peers, as a team with an authoritarian or collegial adult) and Physiological traits (perceptual strength, time-of-day energy level, diet, and need for mobility) and Psychological style (global vs. analytic and reflective vs. impulsive). Studies that have used this model to understand learning styles have shown that adult learners have varied learning preferences. Some adult learners prefer to study alone in a brightly lit room and are highly motivated to persist through a task, while others prefer to learn in a group in a poorly-lit room over pizza while discussing a topic periodically (Honigsfeld & Dunn, 2006).

Teaching techniques. To accommodate the adult learner, many instructors have experimented with different teaching styles to engage students in the learning process. One innovative approach nursing instructors have tried is narrative pedagogy where students tell stories about their practical experience in doctor offices or hospitals and students and instructors engage in curricular dialogue questioning concepts presented in the textbook using "real life" data. This approach allows the students to co-create with their instructors and peers within the learning environment (Story & Butts, 2010). In addition to story-telling, other techniques instructors use to foster a dynamic learning environment are: comedy, such as telling jokes or bringing in humorous cartoons; creative class activities, such as role-playing, debates and challenging competitions (Story & Butts, 2010). Group projects and reflection exercises are two

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other techniques instructors use to adjust to how adults learn best (Dickie & Jay, 2010; Zelman, 2002). Beyond instructional techniques, adult students identify that they appreciate an instructor's style to exemplify the following characteristics: flexibility in lesson plans, assessing student needs and adapting, relating to student experiences, and encouraging student participation (Miglietti & Strange, 1998). There are practices instructors engage in outside of the classroom that also enhance the learning experience as well, such as open-door policies, and celebrating student accomplishments (Story & Butts, 2010).

Learning is complex and because each adult seems to learn differently, it is difficult to cater to each adult learner within the classroom. Yang (2004) submits that a holistic approach is one way to synthesize and create an environment that casts a wide net to increase the likelihood of more students being "reached" and truly engaged in the classroom. Examples of holistic learning practices include self-directed learning where the student is encouraged to teach a class on a course-related topic they find interesting; situated learning such as role- playing or participating in simulations; and narrative learning where students are encouraged to reflect on their life stories and share them with the other students (Goddu, 2012).

Affective pedagogy. Engaging emotions is what makes a classroom learning experience different from rote memorization or conformity and obedience (Patience, 2008). Technical and practical knowledge can be learned from a book, but a rich pedagogical approach where the instructor and student fully engages and uses emotions to understand and apply the material is when deep learning occurs (Patience, 2008). Emotions are a catalyst that signals to the learner that an idea should be explored or evaluated further. Dramatic friendship is a term used by Oakeshott (1991) to describe a teacher-student relationship where two people relate wholeheartedly and by doing so they engage the imagination, provoke contemplative thought,

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and elicit emotions of sympathy, delight and loyalty. This dramatic friendship is similar to how an ideal family relates with unconditional loyalty in response to a variety of emotional states and unpredictable life situations. In the classroom, this necessitates that the instructor displays emotional vulnerability. Affective pedagogy requires instructors who are willing to intimately engage with students intellectually and emotionally, much like a close friend or family member so that the student can in turn fully engage.

By taking this close stance and setting the stage for the student to relate in a mutually valuing relationship, the instructor can empathize with the student and begin to see the world from their viewpoint, despite cultural, religious, life experience or gender differences.   It is from this posture that the instructor can best provide insight and walk with the student in their educational journey. Human experience has many complexities, and it is through grappling with these varied perspectives and life experiences that a student can exponentially grow. When an instructor can profoundly relate to the students through a dramatic friendship, an instructor can significantly help the student flourish in the learning process. Learning is not linear or predictable, much like the business profession, which involves dynamic people, fluctuating emotions and unpredictable situations. Therefore, affective teaching prepares students for their professional lives as well as how to holistically approach life (Patience, 2008).

Students are more likely to remember course concepts and ruminate on them when they are engaging with an instructor they admire (Zajonc, 2006). Contemplative inquiry begins with the epistemology of intimacy and relationship. It is through the cultivation of healthy human relationships rather than fragmentation or self-interest that society flourishes. Knowledge that is respectful of others allows for each individual to speak their truth without projecting or correcting. True knowledge is intertwined with vulnerability because to learn something new, a

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learner must face uncertainty and the idea of not knowing something to be open to taking in a new perspective or new information. Unyielding confidence in self does not allow the learner to take in new information, and truly learn. Transformation by its definition means that the learner is radically different from when they began, and this can only happen if they are open to their outside world and incorporate necessary adjustments. Insight is a product of seeing, beholding or perceiving something in a new light and this is more likely to happen in a safe and friendly environment set by the instructor. Learning is the journey from blindness to seeing, and a friendship is the best guide to exploring unchartered territory (Zajonc, 2006).

Trust and teaching techniques. Trust is important in the classroom because it is causally related to increases in creativity, idea formation, emotional stability, and inversely related to defensiveness (Zand, 1972). Vulnerability helps people recognize that they are truly interdependent. When everyone in the classroom is honest and open about their deficiencies and what they think are abnormalities, they can begin to "re-story" one's life as one that has value and meaning. And from this place of self-honesty, awareness of limitations and imperfections, and courage, it transforms the dynamic to one that is concerned not only about self-growth but about the transformation of the group. The classroom is more than collection of faceless names or consumers, but empowered, complex individuals who can be creative and adaptive (Jemsek, 2008).

One way that instructors can build trust by being vulnerable involves sharing real life examples or anecdotes from their past work experience that coincide with class concepts. Sharing personal stories is a demonstration of vulnerability that allows students to connect with the instructor as well as understand the course material and how it can be applied in the workforce (Vaughn & Baker, 2004).   Students also appreciate when they can connect with a

teacher who shows enthusiasm, humor and a passion for learning (Meyer & Turner, 2006), which often comes across in storytelling. Another example of how instructors have created avenues for connection with students is by arranging a monthly dinner with students so they can have an informal space to converse.

To truly be vulnerable, instructors must let down their guard and allow students to see that the instructor also has struggles and shortcomings, and hence must continue in the growth and learning process. Many instructors fear that if they let this "weaker" side known to their students that it will diminish their credibility and students will begin to verbally attack the instructor. It is challenging and a bit scary for instructors to allow students to see the truth – that they are human too. Yet, presenting an idealistic and close-to-perfect persona perpetuates student's fears that they need to be perfect, too. Instead, students should learn that they are worthy to attempt and try new things, and to fail sometimes. It is through preparation, hard work and practice that students can achieve at high levels, which is exactly the same ingredient it takes for instructors to achieve success. So, by modeling vulnerability and showing shortcomings, instructors actually provide students an accurate view of reality (Crappell, 2013).

Link between trust-building and learning. John Dewey was a staunch believer that a student could not be divided into separate intellectual and emotional parts, but these two aspects worked in conjunction with each other to reflect, question and learn (Camfield, 2009). This is confirmed by a study conducted by Lowman that studied 500 nomination letters for outstanding teachers. "Interpersonal rapport" was the common link across teachers who were defined as distinctive (Vaughn & Baker, 2004). The teachers who were defined as "worst" were less likely to demonstrate mutual respect, empathy, personal interest or attentive listening. Learning occurs best when it takes place within the context of empathy and when students feel connected to

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others (Camfield, 2009; Kolb & Kolb, 2014; Vaughn & Baker, 2004). Students have an innate need to feel cared for in the learning environment and when the instructor sets the tone for a caring environment, students are more likely to extend trust to their classmates as well (Story & Butts, 2010).

Bonding occurs when two people are able to relate to each other at a deep level because of the personal information they have shared and knowing they will not be rejected because of it (Cloud, 1992).   Consistently, the quality of student's learning experience has been linked to the relationship they have with their instructors (Micari & Pazos, 2012). Brown (2010a) describes connection "as the energy that exists between two people when they feel seen, heard and valued, when they give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship" (p. 19). This genuine connection allows people to face their fears, be courageous and learn because they are not on the journey alone (Brown, 2010a). Students want their voices to be heard as they participate in the educational process (Dunleavy & Milton, 2008). When a trusting relationship has been established between the instructor and the student, the instructor can more effectively management the classroom when students are disruptive or are off-task. Students are able to reflect on the well of positive interactions and more quickly respond to an instructor's corrective remarks to refocus on the class topics (Jones, Bailey, & Jacob, 2014).

Knowledge is best developed through sharing experiences, feelings, thoughts and emotions, and relating them to others. This happens best in an educational environment that "emphasizes care, trust, and commitment" (Kolb & Kolb, 2014, p. 200). In fact, this is why progressive education emphasizes warmth, spontaneity, and the enthusiasm for learning (Connell, 1980). High quality instructor-student relationships are typified by warmth and a

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strong sense of respecting boundaries and both parties' autonomy (Jones et al., 2014). People

grow in an environment that has a blend of both challenge and support (Keagan 1994; Podsakoff,

MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996).

The self-authorship approach to teaching described by Hodge, Baxter Magolda, and

Haynes (2009) has three main principles. First, students are to be validated and encouraged as

capable learners. Once student's self-esteem is bolstered, then, secondly, teachers are to provide

students with opportunities to build upon their current knowledge base by hands-on learning

opportunities. This empowers them to discover new things within their comfort level and

interest areas. Third, instructors should come alongside and co-create and construct new

meaning together. So, the instructor acts more as a guide, mentor and aid while the student

directed the learning process (Hodge et al., 2009).

Studies show that student will more likely to engage in subjects that are viewed as "less

challenging" or that they have confidence that they can be successful in (Lynch, 2008). Yet, a

study conducted by Micari and Pazos (2012) found that even in a tough course, such as organic

chemistry that is typically viewed as a tough entrance class to medical school, a professor's

teaching style and ability to connect with students can mitigate their anxieties. Respect both

from the instructor and the student along with approachability were the main variables that led to

student's confidence and overall success in the classroom. Other practices that this study

encouraged are authenticity, demonstrating care, sharing about research interests and showing

interest in student's career goals and outside interests (Micari & Pazos, 2012).

Emotions of learning. It is generally accepted that there are three main mental processes

that occur during the learning process: cognitive, motivational and emotional. Yet most

instructors and research focus on solely cognitive and motivational, and ignore how emotions

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impact learning. Scientific study shows that emotions impact memory and the retrieval of information (cognition) and task performance (motivation). According to a study by Trigwell, Ellis and Han (2012) using the Academic Emotions Questionnaire, found that students who experience more positive emotions of enjoyment, pride, relief and hope while studying also reported a deeper level of learning and the students also performed at a higher level. Whereas, negative emotions, in particular anger and boredom, are associated with a lower, more surface level of learning and also lead to avoiding tasks. All negative emotions, including anxiety and shame hinder students from meaningfully engaging in the subject and connecting with subject matter. Shame also leads to withdrawal and loss of initiative. Shame stems from the fear of failure (Ellison & Partridge, 2012), which cripples academic pursuit and students reaching their full potential in the classroom (Johnson, 2012; Orenstein, 2000).

Emotions and the learning process are inextricably intertwined. When transformational learning takes place, it begins with recognition of pain, lack, discomfort or a prolonged unknown that can lead to students feeling lost, confused or anxious. When students are willing to take a risk by providing a non-expected answer that showcases their willingness to experiment and explore new concepts instead of simple blind compliance to what is being taught. It is the willingness to be wrong and take a step into the unknown where deep understanding occurs. This is the path to intellectual maturity. Fear of failure, insecurities and narcissism may be the main reason why some adults have an ambivalence toward learning (Karagiannopoulou, 2011).

Studies have shown that instructors have a significant impact on the emotions students experience during studying. The instructor's emotions also impact the way they teach. So, the more positive emotions teachers experience while teaching (confidence, satisfaction and pride) the more they focus on how the students are responding to the class lesson plans. Yet, when the

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instructor experiences negative emotions (anxiety, embarrassment and frustration) the more the focus shifts to transmittance of knowledge rather than the student's actually learning (Trigwell, Ellis, & Han, 2012).

When there is a proper order and shared expectations of classroom conduct, students can rely on this predictability and become more comfortable in the classroom (Gomes & Knowles, 2000; Meyer & Turner, 2006; Misztal, 2011). In fact, physiologically, the brain responds to this feeling of being safe which stimulates neural plasticity required for certain types of learning (Perry, 2006). The brain actually excretes dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine when the learner feels that they are in a supportive, encouraging, and nurturing environment. These hormones lubricate the surface of the brain, priming it for the learning process (Perry, 2006). Conversely, uncertainty leads to a higher state of arousal and a student's desire to escape. A trusting environment minimizes anxiety levels and the perceived risk, so students can choose to let down their guard, be vulnerable, and fully engage in the classroom (Gomes & Knowles, 2000). Positive emotions are important for groups to thrive. They have an affiliative nature that attracts people to begin a conversation or friendship. Smiling and laughing also play a role in sustaining long-term bonds and social connectivity (Mauss et. al., 2011).

Many adult learners have had traumatic experiences in the classroom that have resulted in students distancing themselves rather than engaging in the classroom. This is a self-protection technique students use when they had a past experience where they felt criticized, abandoned or even hated by an authority figure. These students emotionally withdrawal to reduce the risk of receiving a similar injury again (Cloud, 1992). "Negative emotions such as fear and anxiety can block learning, while positive feelings of attraction and interest may be essential for learning" (Kolb & Kolb, 2014, p. 208). When people are fearful of being rejected, they often disconnect

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from truly relating and connecting with others (Crabb, 2007). When people feel shame, they usually respond in one of three ways: they either withdraw and hide; people-please by trying to live up to perfect standards; or shame others to feel better about themselves (Brown, 2010b; Devita-Raeburn, 2014). Many students respond poorly when they are fearful of being judged. People who feel shame typically withdraw instead of seeking a safe place to be vulnerable (Brown, 2007).

   Shame. The Compass of Shame Model developed by Nathanson describes four maladaptive ways that people cope when they experience shame. The four quadrants are Attack Self, Withdrawal, Attack Other and Avoidance (Ellison & Partridge, 2012). These are labeled maladaptive means because they ignore, reduce or amplify shame rather than going to the root of what is causing the shame and responding appropriately. Some adaptive ways to handle shame are identifying working on personal weaknesses, lowering expectations, and forgiveness. Shame is a painful experience which oftentimes triggers a defense mechanism to lash out at others, turn anger inward or ignore the situation altogether (Ellison & Partridge, 2012). And because the student is focusing their attention to attempting to hide from the experience of shame, they are not able to devote energy to the learning process (Johnson, 2012).

   Shame disrupts community. Within a learning environment, community is important because it is the support system where members form to group norms, become engaged, encourage one another, and share ideas. When a member decides to withdrawal or retreat from the group due to feelings of shame and fear of failure, they dismiss all of these positive benefits of community and relationships (Johnson, 2012).

   Although relationships and community are antidotes to shame, some researchers believe it is impossible to completely avoid the experience of shame in the classroom. In fact, 50% of

students report feeling shame at some point within a course (Johnson, 2012). Shame can be helpful in students gaining realistic view of self, opposed to an inflated view of self. Shame also helps in socialization and realizing how self fits within the whole. But, when shame appears in its maladaptive forms, detracting from the learning environment, instructors need to be equipped with tactics to overcome the disengagement, withdrawal and negative self-talk. Typically these positive intercepting tactics revolve around connection, interpersonal sharing of feelings and community (Johnson, 2012). A healthy environment where members are accepted and not attacked helps students learn how to recover from the detriments of shame.

Some instructors in effort to minimize student's experience of shame, institute class policies such as decreasing rigor or not providing students accountability to complete assignments. Yet, these tactics can sometimes perpetuate shame because students feel that they are not being taken seriously (Johnson, 2012). Other instructors go to the other extreme and use shame in hopes to motivate students to attend to academic goals. A healthier way to motivate students is to focus on specific behaviors students can modify to achieve academic success (Turner & Husman, 2008).

Perfectionism. Perfectionism is linked to self-conscious emotions such as guilt, shame and embarrassment because it stems from self-evaluation and trying to overcome self-criticism (Tangney, 2002). Perfectionism is expressed in over-striving, constant planning and need for approval by others. Sometimes perfectionism, when used in an adaptive way can lead to high levels of motivation and excellence in the classroom (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2014), whereas perfectionism also has maladaptive forms where it is the catalyst behind blaming others, and not taking responsibly for errors and shortcomings (Ellison & Partridge, 2012). Most high achievers are actually quite insecure and use these feelings to propel them to achieve at high levels

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(Chamorro-Premuzic, 2014). It is a preventative means to avoid shame by diligently trying to live up other's expectations by avoiding mistakes or failure. Since most people prioritize the need to feel secure over the need to achieve, oftentimes people will default to preventative measures such as perfectionism to avoid shame and failure altogether (Lapidot et al., 2007).

Trusting peers and the leader. Most leadership models focus on transactional leadership where the leader engages with the followers to motivate them to do or think something that is instigated by the leader. Transformational leadership goes beyond influencing a specific action to focusing on transforming a person by taking into account their emotions, values, ethics and long-term goals. This is accomplished most often by engaging with the other person and creating a connection that raises their motivation to live to their fullest potential (Northouse, 2012). A leader gains credibility when followers identify with the leader (Jones, James, & Bruni, 1975). Connection is truly the base of transformational leadership because the leader empowers the follower through helping them develop necessary skills and motivating their self-concept. Followers become motivated to overcome self-interests because they are part of a team they identify with (Kark & Shamir, 2002). And the trust cycle continues when members are highly involved in their job or classroom experience because then they begin to trust the leader more, which propels them to be more committed to the purpose of the team (Jones et al., 1975; Lapidot et al., 2007).

Empowering others is a significant element of effective leadership, whether it is instructors empowering their students or managers empowering their employees. Bennis (1989) outlines the four tenets of empowering others, which are: making people feel important, valuing learning, building community, and providing a stimulating work environment. Connection and relationship are important to all four aspects of empowerment.

Connection and relationship plays a significant role in how people self-identify.   As much as higher education purports independent thinking, education and learning are truly about a meeting of the minds and being able to relate with others through sharing of information. Learning is not about feeling superior in comparison to others and greedily absorbing more information than others. This narcissistic attitude is truly a defensive response of the student fighting against their true helplessness. Instead, by being in touch with one's emotions, a student can experience deep learning and withstand the pressure and hardship that oftentimes accompanies the struggle of learning. Additionally, the heart of education, people have a need to feel recognized and valued, which can only come from interacting with others, whether that is peers or the instructor. Emotion and intellect seem to go in tandem as true learning is about integrating knowledge with the whole person (Karagiannopoulou, 2011).

In general, when someone identifies with a group or leader, it is because they recognize shared values already in place or because there is a desire to modify behaviors to "fit in" with the group. The group member's self-worth and self-esteem is then connected to portraying similar behavior as the group and demonstrating relational skills to stay connected with the group members. Some of these relational skills include expressing emotions, showing vulnerability, nurturing one another and having empathy toward other group members (Kark & Shamir, 2002). Compassion toward others is beneficial for the recipient of compassion as well as the contributor of compassion. People who respond with compassion are shown to have higher confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem (Catarino, Gilbert, McEwan, & Baião, 2014; Curtis, 2014).

An effective leader may choose to display these relational skills in order to prime the follower to reciprocate these same relational strategies, therefore creating connection and identification with the leader. So, in a classroom, a teacher may point out similarities of the

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group or share personal experiences to help forge the connection and group identity (Kark & Shamir, 2002). The important element is not necessarily that the instructor personally discloses information, but rather, that the students feel known by the instructor, similar to the tactics used by President Roosevelt Franklin in his fireside chats (Bennis, 2011). He made everyone who was listening feel like he was talking to them personally in their living room and looking out for their best interest. This leadership example highlights another point – that trust is not necessarily reciprocal. A leader can model vulnerability or utilize trust-building techniques, and the followers might not choose to trust the leader. Or, conversely, the followers may highly trust the leader, yet the leader may not trust the followers (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008).

Leaders can achieve great things because they utilize the power of maximizing relationships (Le Pla, 2012b). This requires establishing and maintaining these relationships (Scandure & Pellegrini, 2015). Leaders are able to motivate and help followers develop and grow by utilizing tactics such as modeling adaptive responses to negativity, helping followers become aware of shortcomings, offering encouragement, and explaining the costs of continuing on the current course of action (Ellison & Partridge, 2012). These are powerful change mechanisms.

The path-goal theory of leadership states that a leader should be able to adapt to most situations to provide what is missing or needed within the group. So, it is helpful for the leader to know the individual members and group dynamics to be able to identify and fill these gaps (Lapidot et al., 2007).

In addition to exercising the relational dynamics, a leader can utilize structure and organization of lesson plans to impact perceptions of effectiveness. The instructor can clarify instructions, share expectations and provide a timelines for students to gradually meet course

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outcomes. These class management strategies of planning, organizing and controlling classroom order also contributes to student's perception of consistency and trust. Yet, by using these strategies, the leader does not demonstrate emotional vulnerability. Structure is generally positively related to student performance and satisfaction (House, 1971).

Current instructional practices. Instruction within college classrooms has remained rather stagnant over the years as professors are asked to be subject matter experts rather than innovative teachers (Berrett, 2012). Conventional lecture-based instruction has been deemed boring an ineffective. Now that students have access to online learning opportunities, colleges and universities have been pushed to reconsider the teaching strategies used within the classroom (Berrett, 2012).

There is an increased focus on effectiveness in college instruction, specifically the fields of science, technology, engineering, math and science (STEM) classes with research sponsored by the National Science Foundation on how instructor's teaching techniques impact learning (Berrett, 2014). The Illinois Initiative on Transparency in Learning and Technology is another grassroots project exploring what practices lead to increased student learning. This study found that students find it helpful when instructors discuss the learning goals of assignments, assign peer-work to review class work and then debrief graded assignments according to class objectives (Winkelmes, 2013).

In 2007, the Association of American Colleges and Universities formulated a list of student outcomes that were important to learn during the college experience. These were: global and cultural knowledge, social responsibility, practical life skills and integrative learning (Hodge et al., 2009). The focus of these new outcomes were to change the paradigm of college from being institutes that "told" students what to think to helping them "learn" about the world by

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engaging in it. This way, students become involved and self-authors of the knowledge they attain (Hodge et al., 2009).

The Teaching Dimensions Observation Protocol developed by Hora and Ferrare tries to help instructors focus on what is happening in the classroom while they are teaching as a means to understand how much students are truly learning (Berrett, 2014). There are five observable categories that are then considered: method of teaching, pedagogical actions, student-instructor interactions, class environment, and perceived level of student critical thinking engagement. Yet, in observing instructors facilitating class, it was difficult to determine which tactics were most effective because each instructor has a different teaching style, and different subjects (such as math compared to English) call for different teaching techniques. Further, a single teaching technique can have a different impact on the audience, such as humor. While some students may laugh at a joke, others might not even understand the intended meaning or connect it with the subject matter (Berrett, 2014). Student activities or asking students to reflect on course concepts seemed to capture the audience and keep them focused, as did using more action-oriented words to describe class outcomes, such as "create" and "analyze" over "understand" and "describe" (Berrett, 2014).

A leader's impact on developing or eroding trust. A leader's behavior can contribute to the followers building trust in the relationship or eroding trust between them. Trust can be built when behaviors such as openness, consistency and honesty are displayed and erode when people act closed off, inconsistent or tell untruths. Incongruent behavior is another way to reduce trust, such as smiling when truly upset or appearing stoic when in fact, experiencing happiness. Inauthentic behavior signals untrustworthiness and spurs distrust in others (Mauss et. al., 2011). A study in 1998 by Mayer and Davis grouped trust building qualities into three categories:

integrity, ability and benevolence. Trust and distrust are asymmetrical, meaning it is far easier to break trust than it is to build it. Typically, people have an expectation of integrity and ability that others should operate in, so when that expectation is not met, trust erodes. Interestingly, people do not seem to have the same standard or expectation of benevolence, so when people act in an unfriendly manner, trust erodes at a much slower pace, or maybe not at all (Lapidot et al., 2007).

Followers are more likely to remember trust eroding behaviors and these events become more salient than trust-building behaviors. So, it is important for a leader to be aware how their attempts to connect and personally disclose personal information impacts their followers and limit trust-eroding behaviors. So although displays of emotional vulnerability provide an opportunity to connect, they also provide an opportunity for members of the group to make negative judgements that may result in loss of trust and relationship (Lapidot et al., 2007). Plus, people value a balance of emotional vulnerability that includes both honest feedback and empathy (Chamorroo-Premuzic, 2014).

Trust is complex and multifaceted. Followers may trust a leader in one aspect of trust, benevolence per say, but not in another, such as competence. Or, they may have positive and negative feelings toward the leader at the same time. Trust is complex because relationships are complex too. Each relationship has a different richness, maturity and interdependence that develop over time, much like trust. When a problem or struggle arises in a relationship, it may damage the relationship on many different levels, which directly impacts trust. Although research has oversimplified trust in the past, the many facets of relationships and trust should be recognized (Lewiscki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). Another interesting dynamic of trust is that differences of power within the relationship play a role. If the followers who have less power feel intimidated, weak or defenseless, they may decide to behave and feel more trust toward the

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authoritative leader due to the power differential and manipulative behaviors (Lapidot et al., 2007).

Trust can also develop around an untrustworthy leader. Followers base their trust on what they know or perceive, so they could end up following someone who actually is using vulnerability and trust-building behaviors only to manipulate their followers (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2014).

Trust or distrust may manifest between people for several reasons that may or may not have anything to do with the relationship at hand. The feelings of trust may truly stem from past relationship wounds, accurate or inaccurate reputation, personality differences, or social context (Lewicki et al., 1998).

Teaching awards for effective teaching. Many colleges have internal awards for professors who demonstrate effective teaching practices. In addition, there are a few national teaching awards that recognized outstanding teaching within higher education. The Carnegie Foundation sponsors the Council for Advancement and Support Education to select outstanding professors to be awarded with a certificate and media attention for demonstrated excellence in four areas: impact and involvement in undergraduate teaching, scholarly approach to teaching, contributions to undergraduate teaching within their institution, and support from colleagues and current and former students. In 2014, there were four national winners and 31 state winners ("U.S. Professors of the Year Awards Program"). The Higher Education Academy has also presented higher education instructors with teaching awards. Students from across the nation would submit nominations for instructors in one of three categories: outstanding teacher, innovative teacher or teaching in an international context. In 2011, over 11,000 teachers were nominated for this award ("Student-led Teaching Awards," 2014).

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At Sierra Nevada College, one way effective teaching is rewarded is through an end-of-the year award called the Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal Award. This award recognizes excellence and innovative teaching at the college. Each year over 100 students and alumni who are current or past student government representatives, valedictorians, department scholars, club presidents, student athletes or academic scholars are invited to nominate instructors for effective teaching ability. The top four or five names that are mentioned most frequently are invited to participate in this award vetting process by submitting their teaching philosophy and having their class evaluated by a nominating committee. The selection committee nominates two finalists and the winner is selected by the college president.

What Students Identify as Effective

Many students are first acquainted with adult learning techniques when they arrive at college. Transitioning from a didactic formal learning approach of high school to one that is more independent can take a bit of adjusting. At the University of Warwick, 30 students were interviewed on their experiences during this transition and their preferences on teaching styles. Many colleges rely on lectures and seminars for class time and students had mixed attitudes about both styles. At first, students had a difficult time acclimating to the advanced vocabulary of their professors. As the semester progressed, many students preferred lecture-style classes to introduce new topics, especially if the professor had a dynamic teaching style and it was well-structured. Some students prefer seminars because they are more interactive and students are able to participate more and have dynamic discussions. The identified "downside" to seminars is when the facilitator went on a tangent or talked about relevant material (Dickie & Jay, 2010). Learners also indicated that relationships with their instructors are a valuable part of the learning process (Vaughn & Baker, 2004).

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A student wants to trust that the instructor is credible (Nemanich, Banks, & Vera, 2007). One way that instructors can validate this need is by sharing real life examples or anecdotes from their past work experience that coincide with class concepts.

Students appreciate teaching styles that incorporate vulnerability, such as telling a personal story or saying "I don't know" when asked a question they don't know the answer to. When an instructor models vulnerable behavior students are given permission to follow in-kind and display vulnerable characteristics as well, such as asking questions in front of their peers, participating in group discussions, and sharing their own personal life experiences (Gomes & Knowles, 2000; Nemanich et al., 2007).

Being vulnerable creates more opportunities for interaction and human connection, which is conducive to learning. In fact, displays of emotion help students engage in the learning experience. Laughing at a teacher's joke, feeling pride at contributing to a class discussion, and becoming a bit tense in a debated topic are examples of this emotional connectedness that can happen when students and the instructor choose to be vulnerable. It demonstrates risk-taking and a chance at being "wrong", but it is in this willingness to make a mistake or be uncertain at times that students can overcome the anxiety-ridden, self-induced burden of having to perform. Learning isn't about being perfect, but rather about mastering material by being willing to take a chance (Meyer & Turner, 2006). By setting a tone of vulnerability in the classroom, students can fully express themselves, take risks, and engage in the learning process (Merrill, 2001).

Students also have a role in engaging in the classroom. Research suggests that students engage in one of two ways, either on the "surface" or using a "deep" approach. Students who operate on the surface tend to memorize and regurgitate facts, whereas students who approach learning at a deeper level construct meaning from the classroom experience by applying it to

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concepts they already know or have experienced. Interestingly, students who engage at a deeper level report that instruction from the teacher was clear and the workload of the class was manageable (Kanuka, 2010).

College, growth and development. During the traditional four years students attend college (age 18-22) students continue to develop physically, mentally and emotionally. Students must learn to manage their emotions, respect diverse ideas and viewpoints, and become autonomous, self-driven learners. Plus, they are establishing an identity, figuring out their purpose and discovering new ways to relate to members of the same sex and opposite sex (Keeling, Underhile, & Wall, 2007). As students undergo many developmental changes, they are evaluating their environment and interpersonal interactions to understand the world around them. Some researchers argue that instructors have a large responsibility to teach content while also equipping students with skills to navigate this developmental stage. For example, Bathina (2013) suggests that instructors should share their own life map with students that provides an accurate picture, highlighting both the successes and struggles. This way, students can relate and also learn that challenges are part of the journey. Bathina (2013) also encourages educators to have students ask questions and be curious about the subject as well as the instructor's approach to the material. This helps students gain well-rounded information that helps them to grow and develop.

Application to the business profession. Instructors are responsible for delivering course content and also modeling professional interpersonal relationships that occur in the workforce. For example, in the medical field, it is imperative that instructors showcase how to interact in the doctor-patient role because doctors who have good relationships with their patients have fewer

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appointment cancellations, fewer complaints and higher patient satisfaction (Vaughn & Baker, 2004).

Top business leaders are successful because they have developed trust amongst their colleagues, employees, suppliers and customers alike. And, one of the fastest ways to build this rapport is through being vulnerable (Brown, 2010a). In fact, in the 1998 *Academy of Management Review* defined trust within organizations as "willingness to be vulnerable" (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). Being vulnerable means taking off the "mask" of appearing perfect and allowing employees to witness mistakes and shortcomings (Devita-Raeburn, 2014).

Anderson (2004) describes vulnerability in a business context similar to Lencioni as one that is constructively open and honest.   It is a work culture where executives do not feel that they need to excessively protect their image, ego or interests of the company (Anderson, 2004). When leaders acknowledge failures, they empower their followers to follow suit and take risks as well (George, 2006). When employees see their superior admit faults, it allows followers to admit mistakes too, rather than hiding them, feeling judged and losing relationship with other people in fear that they are not "measuring up" (Robins & Boldero, 2003).

Across multiple studies, reliability and consistency are two main characteristics of effective leaders (Bennis, 1989; McAllister et al., 2006; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). When an audience is shown pictures of notable leaders and asked 1) how vulnerable these particular leaders are, and 2) which leader they would like to be led by, people want to be led by the leaders whom they identified as most vulnerable (Le Pla, 2012b). People are attracted to others who are authentic and allow an outward expression of their internal emotional condition (Mauss, et. al, 2011).

Bennis (2012) describes seven characteristics important for business leaders to possess: technical aptitude, people skills, conceptual competence, ability to track and evaluate results, ability to hire and develop effective teams, ability to make good, quick decisions, and solid character. Although all of these competencies seem like they can be performed without being vulnerable, followers determine effectiveness of a leader by how caring, empathetic and relational the leader is in all seven areas (Bennis, 2012). One example of this is NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani. After September 11, 2001, he connected with the American public by being honest about the pain he felt that stemmed from the attacks on World Trade Centers and the impact it had on the community and families. By first being vulnerable and connecting with his audience, he was able to lead people into a new vision to bolster resilience in the city (Anderson, 2004).

High quality relationships between a manager and their employee impact a wide range of outcomes, including retention, positive citizen behaviors, promotion, productivity, contribution and work satisfaction (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). High-quality relationships are founded as those that are typified by respect, mutual liking, trust and obligation (Lapidot et al., 2007). According to the leader-member exchange model (LMX) the manager-employee dyad begins to form typically by the supervisor making a request of their employee and watching how they respond. Personality and performance goes into the initial judgement. The next phase, the acquaintance phase occurs when personal and work information is shared within the dyad. Manager-employee relationships suffer that do not make it to this stage. The highest level of exchange happens when the dyad begins to share emotions and provide mutual support and understanding (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). When high levels of trust exist among both

parties, it will be expressed by words of encouragement, initiation of working on projects together and repair attempts if tension threatens the relationship (Lewicki et al., 1998).

Due to the globalization of the business world, use of virtual technologies and workplace turnover, there has been an increase in the demand for people to trust others upon initial encounter. In these situations, multiple factors come into play, such as reputation, personal disposition to trust, institutional backing, and stereotypes, since firsthand knowledge about the person is extremely limited. During the initial meeting of someone new, there is a heightened watchfulness to pick up clues that confirm or discredit trustworthiness, such as if the person laughs at a joke. Many of these initial judgements are inaccurate and based on pretenses rather than data collected over time (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998).

Low-quality workplace relationships result in disengaged workers. This is an issue that has significant financial ramifications for businesses. One report claims the United States loses $350 billion each year due to lost productivity from under-engaged workers (Forck, 2014). Typically, employees who feel valued and appreciated by management are engaged, and workers who have poor relationships with their superiors either quit or they stay on the job and contribute a lower quality of work (Forck, 2014).

Developing Trust in College and Transitioning to Business

College recruits. University of California Berkeley encourages their instructors to build credibility with their students by being vulnerable. They support this philosophy by stating that students will find the course material "most accessible and credible from someone they consider trustworthy, believable and engaging" ("Center for Teaching and Learning", 2015). Instructors can enhance their credibility by being confident in their delivery, sharing their research ideas and being open with students about their "experience, ideas and feelings." University of California,

Berkeley is a great example of a college that desires their faculty to be authentic and students to engage by asking questions and interacting with their instructors ("Center for Teaching and Learning", 2015).

Leaders of tomorrow. As Generation X and Y are aging and taking on more management and senior-level leadership roles, dynamic leaders in this age range are demanding change in the business environment. Many value collaboration, transparency and trustworthy connections, and quality of life, and will seek out work environments that espouse these same attributes (Le Pla, 2012a; Rigby, 2013). In fact, some workers will not fully commit to their job until they have developed a personal relationship with their manager and have experienced interpersonal openness with colleagues (George, 2006; Lapidot et al., 2007).

Trust is valued in the workplace and as a trait within leaders. Trust allows people to function at their best (Covey & Merrill, 2007). Since the purpose of college is to prepare students for the workplace so they are able to effectively contribute within that environment, trust should be a topic that is practiced within that environment. Displays of vulnerability are an efficient way to build trust within a work culture (Brown, 2012), yet vulnerability within the undergraduate business classroom has not been a focal point of research studies.

Companies that choose to not be vulnerable. The word "vulnerable" has garnered a poor reputation in the workplace – possibly because people focus on the risk involved, instead of the positive outcome that can result from being vulnerable. Other people are reluctant to be vulnerable because they associate it with being weak, and they rather project confidence and strength in social settings (Hayes & Comer, 2011; Lencioni, 2011). In doing so, interactions become more guarded and conversations more shallow. Business men and women sometimes hide behind an artificial veil of perfectionism which protects their weaknesses from exposure. In

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this environment, blame and finger-pointing become a rampant part of the culture as no one wants to take responsibility for mistakes. Sometimes, secrecy is confused with power in the workplace, so information is withheld from others because it makes people feel important (Cabane, 2012; Ferrazzi, 2005). It also prevents employees from listening and communicating effectively because instead, they are consumed with protecting and hiding from the truth, rather than being open-minded and honest.

Many business leaders score poorly in how they manage people. In fact, the worst attributes of a leader include not admitting mistakes or seeking feedback (Le Pla, 2012b). And when the lack of foundation of trust elicits defensive behavior (Zand, 1972).

Trust erosion in business. Distrust can be disastrous to any relationship or organization because if someone does not trust others, they will distort or hide information. Distrust is characterized by fear, skepticism, and vigilance (Lewicki et al., 1998). An employee who does not trust others will try to minimize the influence others have on him/her, yet at the same time desire their actions and behavior to have a strong influence on others, oftentimes manifesting in controlling and domineering behavior. These negative behaviors typically stimulate distrust in others, which escalates defensiveness and control in them as well. This cycle continues until the culture becomes a low-trust environment (Zand, 1972).

Inauthentic to vulnerable. A "mask" is a protective shield to hide from others internal conflicts. The mask projects a different feeling than what is truly going on in the inside due to fear of rejection, feeling inadequate or possibly that no one cares. Wearing a mask is referred to as being inauthentic. Masks can be helpful in the context of an unsafe or threatening environment, but oftentimes they prevent people from experiencing the very thing they are after – companionship, closeness and compassion (Fisher, 2006).

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In 1993, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) assisted several businesses overcome the trauma of downsizing. CCL found that many of the senior leaders developed masks or pleasant facades to help deal with the pain they felt in having to lay off people they enjoyed working with and the remaining feelings of failure with as business financials struggled while trying to ward off fatigue and cynicism. Many managers felt a pressure between expectations and internal turmoil. They reported trying to personify superhuman capabilities; acting upbeat and happy when inside they felt torn apart and disenchanted; ignoring their own time to heal from dramatic workplace transitions; and feeling burnout (Bunker, 1997).

To help managers recover, CCL first gave the managers permission to grieve and showcase vulnerabilities in a safe environment. This allowed them to reconnect with their authentic selves as they genuinely expressed their feelings. Next, they put them through a group exercise to allow them to function successfully as a group and share in a learning experience. The exercise also provided them with tools on communication and change management. A safe place to express vulnerability was the key for these managers to find a healthy life balance so they could appropriately showcase their emotions and then go back to the workplace as a strong leader without the internal turmoil (Bunker, 1997). So although vulnerability is sometimes viewed as "weakness," if it is appropriately expressed, it can be the key to unlocking workplace and personal frustration (Jemsek, 2008).

Effective communication and credibility. Leaders inspire through trust and credibility that can be won or lost through vulnerability (Lapidot et al., 2007). Gerry Spence, a lawyer who has won many important court cases, has provided insight into the tactics he has used to effectively communicate facts about a case with a room full of jurors. Spence (1995) argues that a lawyer must be authentic and argue "from their own authority" (p. 17) rather than try to

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duplicate or use tactics that work for another lawyer. They key to gaining credibility he purports is "abandoning trickery" and false pretenses, and instead tell the truth about who the presenter of the facts are first – the hurts, pains, insecurities, and fears. Jurors have an uncanny ability to detect the truth, so Spence first allows the jurors to let down their guard by being forthcoming about his shortcomings to gain credibility. He started his final argument to a landmark case by saying, "I wish I weren't so afraid…I wish after all these years in the courtroom I didn't feel this way. You'd think I would get over it…I'm afraid I won't be able to make the kind of argument to you that Randy Weaver deserves…" (p. 57). Spence (1995) has found that in being vulnerable about who he is, jurors are better able to connect with the truth he outlines in the case. In another case he won, the argument began by his notes being knocked off the podium and his following argument being replete with fragmented sentences, awkward pauses and grammatical errors spoken with raw emotion. Jurors connected with the heart and his "realness" over the logic presented in the court case (Spence, 1995).

Summary

   In an undergraduate class, the instructor is responsible for teaching course content and modeling skills necessary for students to be successful in their later careers (Ferrazzi, 2005; Fitzsimmons & Lanphar, 2011; Gomes and Knowles, 2000). If trust is valued as one of the top traits of a leader, it may be important for instructors to model emotional vulnerability within the classroom.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The researcher was unable to identify any published literature about vulnerability and the college classroom, so the purpose of this study was to further understand what is currently happening in selected classrooms and identify the effectiveness of vulnerable teaching techniques through a lens of initiator-responder. How does the instructor initiate or model vulnerability in the classroom and how do the students respond to these attempts? Does an instructor's displays of vulnerability impact how a student engages with course content and how they interact with their peers? It is through understanding the student's perception of the instructor's display of vulnerability in the classroom and through data about the student's performance that conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of teaching techniques that incorporate vulnerability.

This study focuses on exploring trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques used in undergraduate business courses through collecting data using student surveys and instructor interviews. Data was collected on trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques to further understand the impact vulnerable teaching techniques have on students applying course concepts and developing trust with other students and/or their instructor.

Additionally, context is provided to the complex phenomenon of vulnerable instructional strategies by reducing and grouping variables into meaningful, descriptive categories. If vulnerability within the classroom is a positive and worthwhile strategy that aids student learning, providing clarity through a preliminary operational definition would seem to be helpful. This way, instructors will have a framework of practical ways to demonstrate vulnerability through their teaching style. In addition to a definition, a model is created to measure and/or quantify displays of vulnerability and its effectiveness.

Restatement of Research Questions

For this study, the research questions analyzed to better understand how vulnerability is displayed in the classroom and how it impacts students are:

1. What trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques do college instructors use that students identify as highly effective?

2. Do students self-report learning and applying more classroom content from college instructors who demonstrate high levels of vulnerability than from those who do not?

3. Do students self-report trusting their classmates and instructor more in a classroom environment that uses frequent trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques?

4. Which trust-building and vulnerability-building factors should be included in developing an operational definition and assessment tool to further understand the construct of vulnerability in the college classroom?

Description of the Research Methodology

This dissertation study uses a mixed methods approach that relies heavily on a quantitative two-step factor analysis to collect data on what factors best describe effective vulnerable instructional techniques. After the surveys were distributed and the data analyzed, qualitative research was collected by conducting 30-minute interviews with the 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal Award candidates to gain further understanding of the results from the quantitative portion of the study.

Before the surveys were distributed and to ensure that a sufficient number of factors were listed on the survey that describe vulnerable teaching techniques, the survey was validated by asking 6 higher education instructors to review the first 18 questions of the survey. These content experts were asked for feedback on questions that should be added or deleted from the

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list. Once the survey was validated, four random business instructors were selected and students

enrolled in that instructor's class were asked to complete surveys to rate their perceptions of their

instructor's vulnerability and their own ability to learn and apply classroom concepts.

Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the variables that are most statistically

significant within this data set. Next, the survey was analyzed for variables that seem to "hang"

together based on the highest correlated variables of the original survey. Next, four additional

classrooms of students were surveyed to confirm the hypothesis that these variables best describe

vulnerable teaching techniques. During this second administration of surveys, the goal was to

survey the students of the four 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal

Award candidates as these instructors have already been vetted as effective instructors from a

pool of students in leadership positions. This two-step approach allowed the researcher to

determine, and then validate which teaching techniques students would describe as effective and

"vulnerable". The additional questions at the bottom of the survey allowed the researcher to

further understand the student's perceptions of the instructor's teaching style in an effective and

efficient manner as well as to self-reflect on how trusting they are of the instructor and other

students.

The survey included Likert-scale questions to determine which variables best described

effective vulnerable teaching techniques, followed by short answer questions and additional

multiple-choice questions to probe the student to reflect on their response to the instructor's

trust-building techniques and how effective it is in the learning process.

Once the data was collected and analyzed for themes and latent variables, 30-minute

interviews were conducted with the four 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching

Gold Medal Award nominees. The researcher shared the results of the first round of data

collected through student survey, and asked the instructor for their insights on the data. These interviews provided qualitative information and further clarity about the construct of emotional vulnerability from effective instructors.

Process for Selection of Data Sources

The unit of analysis are students attending Sierra Nevada College (SNC), a private, four-year liberal arts school located near Lake Tahoe in Nevada. The school was founded in 1969 and has grown to 1,000 students enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

The institution's IRB committee was first notified of the study and asked for approval to conduct this study at SNC. In addition, the researcher submitted an application for IRB approval from Pepperdine University (see Appendix C) to ensure the collection plan was in compliance with the institution's standards, and research was only conducted once that document was approved.

The first step of the research was to validate the survey. To ensure that a sufficient number of factors are listed on the student survey that describe vulnerable teaching techniques, the student survey was validated by asking 6 higher education instructors (content experts) to review the first 18 questions of the survey, and they were asked for feedback on questions that should be added or deleted from the list.

For the exploratory factor analysis portion of the study, four instructors who teach in the business department at SNC were randomly selected using a random selection generator in Excel. The names of all 12 SNC fulltime and adjunct instructors who teach in the business department during the spring 2016 semester were included on the list. Instructors were selected and invited to participate in the study via the below script e-mail communique:

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"Hello (name of randomly selected instructor). I am wondering if you would be willing to have students in one of your classes participate in a research study this semester? As you may know, I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. As part of fulfilling my degree requirements, I am conducting a study on effective teaching techniques within an undergraduate classroom.

Your classroom has been selected for the students enrolled in your class to participate in my study. Participation in the study is voluntary and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. Participation entails no longer than 15 minutes of class time to distribute a survey using Survey Monkey.

I would like to ask if you would be willing to have your students take a survey as part of this study. I thank you in advance for your help."

When the instructor responded in the affirmative, the time and date of the survey distribution was scheduled based on convenience of both the instructor and researcher. The students attending the classes of these four randomly selected instructors are the unit of analysis and were asked to participate in this study.

when instructors did not respond to the e-mail invitation within two days, a follow up phone call was made. If they respond positively, data collection time and place was arranged. Understandably, there were instructors who chose to not participate or did not respond to either request for participation. When this happened, additional randomly selected instructors were asked to participate based on the next name listed on the Excel random sample spreadsheet. This process continued until four instructors agreed to participate.

Because this research study's purpose is to evaluate effective college instructors, the four 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal Award nominees were asked to

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participate in the confirmatory factor analysis portion of this study as they had already been vetted for their effectiveness in the classroom by current students and alumni voting for them based on "classroom effectiveness." All four of these instructors were invited to participate in the study via an e-mail communique. If the instructor responded in the affirmative, the time and date of the class observation and interview was scheduled based on convenience of both the researcher and instructor. If one of these instructors declined participation in the study, a candidate from the 2014 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal Award nomination would be asked to participate in the study.

Students enrolled in these selected courses were asked to complete a survey at the end of the class period that took up to 15 minutes to complete. The survey asked them about their perceptions of vulnerability-building and trust-building techniques within the classroom as well as their ability to retain course concepts. Students who did not wish to participate in this exercise were encouraged to reconsider, and if they continued to decline participation, they were asked to leave the classroom while other students completed the survey.

There is an average of 15 students in each class, so with four surveys administered, there should be approximately 60 student responses total form the exploratory factor analysis stage and the confirmatory factor analysis stage of the research. Some students may have been surveyed twice if they are enrolled in a class of two or more of the instructors who were randomly selected or candidates for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Human Subjects Considerations

Instructors selected through random sampling were sent an e-mail asking if they would be interested in participating in this study and having their students complete a survey about their teaching techniques. Each instructor and student elected to participate. Instructors and students

were notified that their name would be kept confidential and all data collected would be stored in a locked cabinet or on a password-protected computer. The risks were minimal, and may have included instructors being uncomfortable by having a colleague or professional counterpart learn about their teaching methods through student survey and reported information. For the students, the risks may have included the perception that lack of participation may impact their class grade, although in reality, participation was voluntary and not grade-altering. The benefit of being part of this study was to further research on beneficial teaching methodology. There was no remuneration for participants. In addition, the 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal Award nominees were asked if they would be willing to participate in a 30-minute interview to review the findings of the study and provide comments.

The students are the main subjects of this study. When the researcher came to class during the last 15-minutes of the predetermined class period, students were provided an informed consent (see Appendix B) before completing the survey. Then students were asked to log into a specific web address using their laptop computers or smart phone. Consent was indicated by clicking an "I agree" button at the beginning of the survey that provided access to the additional survey questions. A student participant informed consent form can be found later in this chapter.

Definition of Data Gathering Instruments

The variable for this study is emotional vulnerability in the classroom displayed by undergraduate business instructors. The data source is student surveys analyzed by a two-step factor analysis methodology and interviews that was analyzed for themes.

All students in attendance of the randomly selected classrooms were asked to take a survey consisting of 27 Likert-scale, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank questions (questions listed below) using Survey Monkey. Each question was developed based on descriptions from

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the literature on how someone can demonstrate vulnerability. The initial question asks the student for consent. The next 18 questions focus on descriptors of the instructors displayed vulnerability. The first five questions pertain to an instructor providing a safe environment through acting in a personable way or using humor (Covey & Merrill, 2007; Knowles, 1977). Questions 6 and 7 address using real-life stories and clarifying expectations, which were identified in the literature as important for adult learners (Chen, 2014; Story & Butts, 2010). Questions 8-11 use descriptors from the literature that are specifically tied to affective pedagogy and vulnerable techniques such as displaying empathy, admitting mistakes and using humility (Goddu, 2012; Miglieti & Strange, 1998; Patience, 2008; Zajonc, 2006). Questions 12-18 of the survey are adaptations from the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) instrument that measures the degree to which instructors use teacher-centered over learner-centered approach in the classroom. The PALS instrument is a survey given to instructors to fill out about how they plan their lesson plans and manage the classroom, so questions were modified to relate to the student audience. PALS questions were selected based on their relationship to vulnerable teaching techniques. An example of a PALS' question that relates to a vulnerable teaching style is question 18: "my instructor relates class material to problems students face in everyday life." This question showcases that the instructor has knowledge of what situations or problems students are facing by using vulnerability and disclosing personal information, and the instructor is adapting course content to relate to those identified issues (learner-focused teaching). Each question was used as the variables in the factor analysis to help determine which descriptors best describe vulnerable teaching techniques. A Likert-type scale was used in which the respondent selected one of five options (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or

strongly agree) based on a series of questions about student's perceptions. These were later used used as the "factors" when conducting factor analysis.

Questions 5, 12, 13, and 16 are phrased in the negative, meaning these questions describe a non-vulnerable teaching technique. These are purposefully used so that students did not become comfortable or accustomed to marking only one side of the response section simply because they view their instructor as "favorable" or "unfavorable." Therefore, in scoring these specific questions, the responses were computed based on these questions as negatives.

Question 19 asks the student if they have applied course concepts to their life and to elaborate if they choose yes. This question provides insight from the student's perception if they are learning or applying classroom concepts from their instructor (research question 3). The response from this question was compared to the findings from first 18 questions of the student survey that identifies what level of vulnerability the instructor displays as well as the in class observation.

Student survey question 20 asks the student how effective the instructor is at teaching course concepts. This directly relates to research question 1 and can be compared to the results from course observations and the first 18 questions of the student survey to gain understanding on how trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques relate to effective instruction.

Student survey question 21 asks the student how much they have learned in class about the course topic. Students chose between five options to express how much they feel they have learned (not much, a little, some, a good amount or a lot). This question provided insight into how much students self-report learning in class (research question 3).

Student survey questions 22 and 23 asks the student about how much they trust or feel comfortable sharing personal information with their instructor (question 22) or classmates (question 23). This question relates to research question 4.

Lastly, in survey questions 24-27, students were asked demographic questions about what their gender is, what year they are in school (freshman, sophomore, junior or senior), what their current grade point average is in college and what their grade is in their current class. The grade point information was used to determine how students perceive learning course concepts from that instructor. If their grade in that class is higher than their grade point then it can be assumed that the student is self-reporting to be learning more in that specific class than others (research question 3). The survey questions are listed below in the appendix (see Appendix A).

Once the data was collected and analyzed for themes and latent variables, 30-minutes interviews were conducted with the four 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal Award nominees to gain further insight into the survey results. The researcher shared the results of the first round of student surveys and asked the instructor for their insights about the data. Those who elected to participate had an interview time set up between them and the researcher that was convenient for both. Each instructor was asked to provide consent verbally at the beginning of the interview. These interviews were audio recorded.

These interviews were conducted in an unstructured format that allowed the instructor the freedom to elaborate on the data in the way they saw fit. During these short sessions, each instructor was shown findings from the first survey that were first tabulated and aggregated to protect the identity of the students. The analyzed results (using SPSS software) were shown to each instructor on a printed document. Then, each instructor was asked: 1. "Based on the student survey that was given to (80-160) students, we found the following results_____.

Do you have any initial thoughts or insights about the data that was collected?" 2. "Do you find this to be accurate based on your experience in the classroom and why?" These conversations were recorded and transcribed so that themes could be found within the data. The transcripts from the instructor interviews were reviewed by the primary researcher and two additional researchers for themes or patterns among the four candidate's responses.

Validity and Reliability of Data Gathering Instrument

To increase reliability and validity, a pilot cognitive interview with two students was conducted to ensure that the students fully understood the questions asked, were able to make a decision about how the student perceives his/or her instructor, and able to select the corresponding answer on the Likert scale model. Students were instructed to talk aloud as they filled out the survey so the researcher could gain a richer understanding of the thought process behind how students are answering the questions (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). Based on the pilot study, questions were modified so that the survey is easy for students to understand and accurately measures student perceptions of their instructor's vulnerability and the climate of trust within the classroom. To ensure that a sufficient number of factors are listed on the student survey that describe vulnerable teaching techniques, the survey was validated by asking 6 higher education instructors (content experts) to review the first 18 questions of the survey and asked for feedback on questions that should be added or deleted from the list.

Since previous research has not focused on vulnerability in the classroom, this research study will act as a foundation and a starting place to define and create a basic assessment tool for vulnerability in the classroom. Therefore, validity for this study was established by a two-step factor analysis process, where the first administration of surveys collected data for exploratory factor analysis and the second administration of surveys acted as a confirmatory factor analysis

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to confirm the results and themes discovered in the initial administration of surveys. The data was further validated by the responses of instructors during the 30-minute interviews.

Data Gathering Procedures

Surveys were conducted at SNC during the 2016 spring semester (5-month period) and scheduled based on availability of the instructor. The surveys were distributed in March 2016, allowing students' time to learn the instructor's teaching style so they could accurately fill out the survey based their experience in the classroom.

Students were asked to participate in the surveys in person during the last 15 minutes of class. First, they were given an IRB-approved informed consent that was distributed in class. Then students were asked to log into a specific web address using their laptop computers or smart phone. Consent was indicated by clicking an "I agree" button at the beginning of the survey that provided access to the additional survey questions. Students were then instructed to think about the semester as a whole and provide well-thought out answers to each survey question. Students were asked if they have any questions, and then they were instructed that they had 15 minutes to complete the survey. Students submitted their survey on the Survey Monkey platform. The researcher left the room while students completed the survey.

Once all of the quantitative data was collected and analyzed, the four candidates of the 2015 Excellence in Teaching Award were asked via email communication if they would be willing to review the results of the survey data and provide their initial thoughts. A consent form was attached to this e-mail. These instructor interviews provided additional clarity and qualitative information about the construct of emotional vulnerability from instructors who have been previously identified as "effective." Those who elected to participate had an interview time set up between them and the researcher that was convenient for both. Each instructor was asked

to provide consent verbally at the beginning of the interview. These interviews were audio recorded.

During these short sessions, each instructor was shown findings from the first survey that were first tabulated and aggregated to protect the identity of the students. The analyzed results (using SPSS software) were shown to each instructor on a printed document. Then, each instructor was asked: 1. "Based on the student survey that was given to (80-160) students, we found the following results_____. Do you have any initial thoughts or insights about the data that was collected?" 2. "Do you find this to be accurate based on your experience in the classroom and why?"

Description of Proposed Data Analysis Processes

For the student surveys, SPSS software was used to complete factor analysis on the data collected. Maximum likelihood methodology was used to analyze the data to find the underlying patterns of variance of variables. After the second administration of surveys, data will was analyzed using SPSS software to confirm the results of the exploratory findings. Open-ended questions were analyzed for themes or categories that arose from responses. The information from both the factor analysis data and the open-ended questions were used to create a preliminary operational definition of effective vulnerable teaching techniques to be used in the undergraduate classroom.

The primary researcher transcribed the responses and the transcripts from the instructor interviews, and they were reviewed by the primary researcher and two additional researchers for themes or patterns among the four candidate's responses. The responses were viewed as a sounding board to provide additional clarity into the construct of emotional vulnerability.

Summary

In summation, a two-stage factor analysis was conducted followed by interviews with instructors in order to develop a preliminary operational definition of the construct "vulnerability in the classroom". Additionally, the data from the survey will be used to create a baseline assessment tool for other colleges and universities to explain effective instructional techniques to instructors.

Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analysis

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to determine how an instructor's displays of vulnerability-building and trust-building techniques are perceived by undergraduate students and how these teaching techniques impact a student's classroom learning experience. A 27-question survey was distributed to students in four randomly selected business classes and then again to four classrooms of instructors who were nominated for the 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal Award candidates or the Teacher of the Year Award to further explores what correlations exist between these classes.

Because vulnerability within the college educational setting has not been clearly defined yet, this study's purpose was to operationalize vulnerability within the college classroom through its findings. For this paper and in developing the survey questions, vulnerability is operationalized as the ability to risk emotional exposure, chance making a mistake, or disclose personal information because the outcome is viewed as favorable. The vulnerability-building and trust-building techniques of the instructor was the focus of this research study and how these displays of vulnerability impact the student's ability to learn and retain course concepts as well as reflect the instructor's displays of vulnerability and begin to build trust with their peers and the instructor.

The research questions that will be addressed in this chapter are:

1. What trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques do college instructors use that students identify as highly effective?

2. Do students self-report learning and applying more classroom content from college instructors who demonstrate high levels of vulnerability than from those who do not?

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3. Do students self-report trusting their classmates and instructor more in a classroom environment that uses frequent trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques?

4. Which trust-building and vulnerability-building factors should be included in developing an operational definition and assessment tool to further understand the construct of vulnerability in the college classroom?

Validating Survey Questions

Once IRB approval was obtained, two SNC students were asked to participate in a cognitive pilot interview where they each read the 27 survey questions aloud for clarity and understanding (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). One of the students suggested changing Question #12 that read "My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction" to "My instructor provides knowledge *in class, yet* is typically not available for outside of class instruction." This question was modified based on the student's recommendation. Now, the question acknowledges that instruction is given inside the classroom environment, but not outside of the classroom. The other student who read this survey did not have any constructive feedback, but they did comment how they appreciate the positive and negatively phrased questions so that a student who thinks highly of their instructor would not be tempted to select "strongly agree" for all of the Likert-style questions.

Next, to ensure a sufficient number of factors are listed on the survey describing vulnerability-building teaching techniques, the student survey was distributed to six higher education instructors (content experts) to review and provide feedback on questions that should be added or deleted from the list. Four of the six content experts commented on the positively and negatively phrased questions and how they may be confusing for students or seemed inconsistent. A change was not made to fix how questions were phrased as it was intentional to

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have some questions phrased in a "non-vulnerable" way so that students would take time to analyze each question before answering. Question 17 was rephrased based on a suggestion from one content expert who said that it might cause confusion for students to understand the growth process of "dependence to independence," so the word "dependence" was deleted so that students would focus on the positive growth. Once the survey was validated, it was uploaded on the Survey Monkey platform for distribution.

Profile of Research Respondents

For the first round of data collection, the names of the 12 business instructors teaching during the spring 2016 semester were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, and by using a random selection generator, four instructor's names were selected and these instructors were asked to participate in the research study. All four of these instructors agreed to participate. In total, there were 48 students who completed this survey. Students who participated in this study were 62.5% male and 37.5% female. They represented students in a lower division Microeconomics class, a lower division Foundations of Marketing class, an upper division International Affairs class, and an upper division Cross-Cultural Management class. Based on the maturation of students, typically students enrolled in upper division classes understand the learning process better and what constitutes as effective instruction. This population includes a variety of students from both lower and upper division courses, representing a range of student maturation. Class standing was as follows: 19.15% freshmen, 14.89% sophomores, 44.68% juniors and 21.28% seniors.
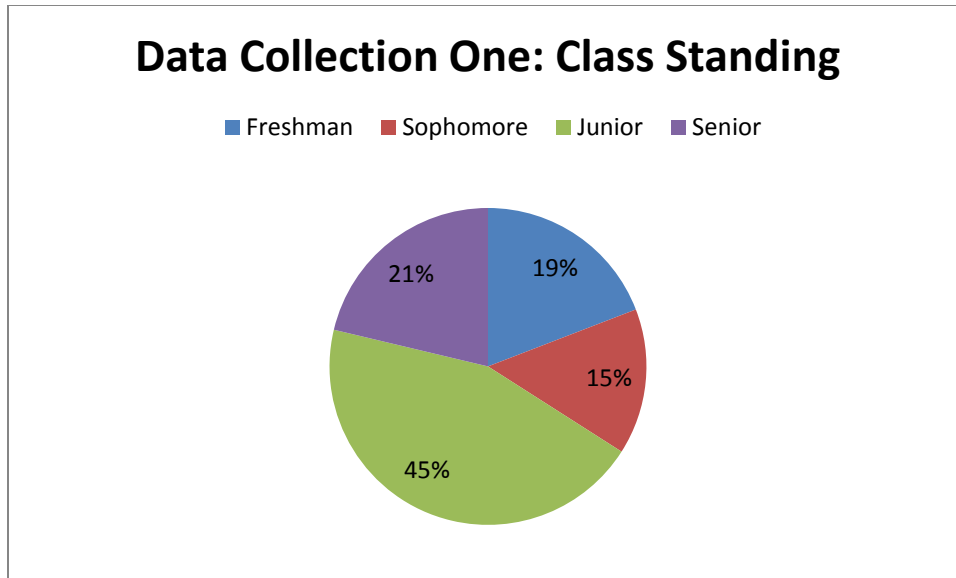
Figure 1. Data collection 1: Class standing.

For the second round of data collection, the four candidates of the 2015 Nazir and Mary

Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal Award were asked to participate. Three instructors

agreed to participate and one declined, so the winner of the 2014 award was asked to participate

in the study, who agreed to have their students take the survey. Of these four instructors, one is a

science instructor, one is an art instructor, and two are humanities instructors. SNC has four

departments, and the one department not represented in this sample is the business department.

More than half of the schools' student body is business students, so this did not seem to

accurately represent the school. In effort to collect data that showcased excellent teaching

practices that accurately represented instructional techniques across multiple disciplines, the two-

time winner of the Teacher of the Year award who is also a business instructor (and was not

randomly selected to participate in the first round of data) was asked to participate. Therefore,

five instructors were asked to participate in the second round of data collection. From the second

distribution of surveys, 34 students participated. Fifty percent of these students were male and

fifty percent were female. These students were enrolled in an upper division Capstone in

Entrepreneurship class, an upper division Advanced Ceramics, an upper division Service

Learning class, an upper division Microbiology class, and an upper division Professional

Practices class. All data from this second group was collected in upper division courses, which

implies an older population that has been in college longer and more are more familiar with the

college classroom. Question #28 on the survey confirms that an older group of students

participated in this study with 2.94% freshmen, 11.35% sophomores, 32.35% juniors, and

52.94% seniors.
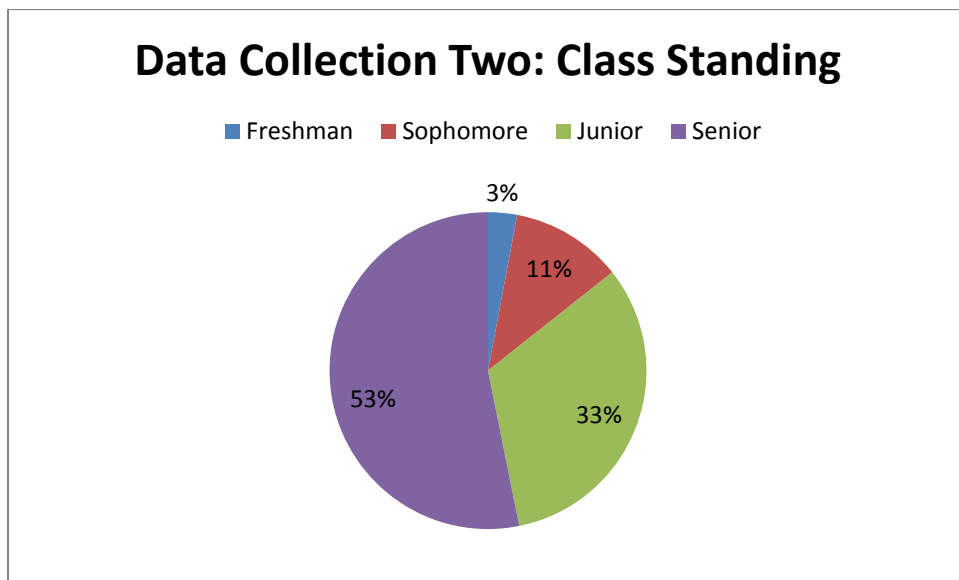
Figure 2. Data collection 2: Class standing.

The age difference between the two rounds of data collection may have impacted the

results of the surveys. In the first round of data, 64% of the students were upperclassmen

(juniors and seniors) whereas in the second round of data, 86% were upperclassmen.

Upperclassmen have more experience in the college classroom and have had more time to adapt

to the andrological instructional style and college classroom expectations, and therefore, they

may desire a different instructional approach compared to their freshmen and sophomore

counterparts. Upperclassmen may be less focused on understanding classroom norms such as

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boundaries and structure, and more focused on exploring and testing ideas. Over time, students mature, which may lead them to have different perceptions of what constitutes as effective instructional approaches as they become older. This may influence the data as students select answers based on their current maturity level and current classroom preferences.

All of who will be referred to as "excellent" instructors throughout the rest of this paper — the four 2014 or 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal Award and the Teacher of the Year — were asked if they would review data from the first round of data collection to provide their insights on the findings. These instructors would only be shown the tabulated and aggregated results of the first 18 responses. Three of the 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal Award agreed to participate in the interviews and both the 2014 winner and the Teacher of the Year agreed to participate. So, five interviews were conducted to gain further insight into the quantitative data.

Implicitly, instructors participating in this study exhibited vulnerability strictly in the fact that they volunteered to have a colleague come to their class and collect data on highly sensitive topics, such as "my instructor admits when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up" and my instructor is humble." All instructors were fully aware of the survey questions that would be asked to their students because the survey was attached to the e-mail asking them to participate in this study. The students were directly asked how effective their instructor is at teaching course concepts on a scale of ineffective to highly effective. If students rated their instructors poorly this could cause embarrassment or humiliation, yet almost all instructors agreed to participate in this study, which allowed the researcher to survey their students on this highly sensitive topics.

Overview of Data Collection

There were two rounds of quantitative data collected. The first round included students from four randomly selected business instructors. The second round included students from five instructors who have been vetted for their effectiveness in the classroom either from being nominated for the Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal Award or the Teacher of the Year Award. The multiple distributions of the survey were administered so that there could be two groups to compare – one group as a "random" group to understand what is happening in the classroom and the other group as an "excellent" group to understand if there are different teaching techniques occurring in these classrooms.

Caveats to data collected. This research study focuses on students' perceptions of what they see demonstrated in the classroom and what they find most effective. Students might base their responses on what they believe is "easy" or "enjoyable" rather than what is most effective for long-term growth or knowledge retention.

Additionally, each instructor's teaching techniques are unique and may work better or worse depending on that instructor's temperament, style and personality. Some instructors are naturally more introverted, expressive, fast-paced, or casual in nature. This study was not designed to explore which personality styles are more well-liked, but rather, which vulnerability-building and trust-building techniques are most effective for learning course content and developing trust among the class participants. The questions used in the survey were designed to focus on vulnerability-building characteristics, and yet students may answer some questions subjectively based on how much they "like" the personality of their particular instructor. Yet, student perceptions are the best way to understand which techniques students find most effective, and yet there is room for misinterpretations and bias within the student responses.

First round of data aggregated and tabulated- random instructors. The findings from

the first 18 questions of the survey were given numeric values based on the following criteria:

Strongly Disagree = -2
Disagree = -1
Neither Agree or Disagree = 0
Agree = 1
Strongly Agree = 2

For each question, the numeric value of all 48 student participants was added together to reflect a comprehensive perception of students for each question. So, the higher the number, the more students who agreed their instructor reflected the given description.

Table 1

Round One Data Collection: Random Business Instructors

Student Number   Question Number

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Student Respondent 1	2	1	1	2	-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student Respondent 2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	2
Student Respondent 3	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Student Respondent 4	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student Respondent 5	1	1	0	0	-1	1	-1	-1	1	0	1	-1	1	-1	0	-2	-1	1
Student Respondent 6	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	-1	1
Student Respondent 7	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	-1	2	2	2	-1	0	2	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 8	2	1	2	2	-1	2	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	2	2	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 9	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Student Respondent 10	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 11	2	0	1	2	-2	2		1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	0	1	2
Student Respondent 12	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 13	2	2	1	2	-1	1		1	2	1	1	0	-2	0	1	2	2	2
Student Respondent 14	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Student Respondent 15	-2	0	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
Student Respondent 16	2	1	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	1	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 17	2	2	1	1	-2	2	2	1	2	0	2	-1	1	1	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 18	2	1	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	1	0	2	-2	2	0
Student Respondent 19	2	0	2	2	-1	2	1	1	2	0	1	-2	1	1	1	-2	1	1
Student Respondent 20	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	-1	-1	1	1	-2	1	1
Student Respondent 21	1	-1	1	1	-2	2	1	0	1	0	2	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student Respondent 23	-2	0	-1	1	-2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	-2	0	-1	2	2
Student Respondent 24	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 25	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	-1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Student Respondent 26	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	1	2	-1	2	2	1	-1	2	2
Student Respondent 27	1	1	1	1	-1	2	2	1	1	2	1	-1	1	1	0	0	1	2
Student Respondent 28	2	2	2	2	-2	2	1	2	2	2	2	-2	2	0	1	1	2	2
Student Respondent 29	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	-1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Student Respondent 30	2	2	2	2	-2	2	1	1	2	2	1	-1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Student Respondent 31	2	2	1	1	-2	1	2	2	2	-1	1	1	1	2	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 32	1	-1	-1	1	-1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	0
Student Respondent 33	2	2	2	2	-2	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
Student Respondent 34	2	2	1	2	-2	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	-1	1	0
Student Respondent 35	1	0	-1	1	-1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	-1	0	1
Student Respondent 36	2	1	2	2	-2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	-1	2	1
Student Respondent 37	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 38	2	2	2	2	-2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 39	2	1	2	2	-2	2	2	1	2	2	2	-1	1	1	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 40	2	2	1	2	-2	2	2	0	2	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	1
Student Respondent 41	1	1	2	2	-2	2	1	2	2	0	2	1	1	2	1	-1	2	1
Student Respondent 42	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Student Respondent 43	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1
Student Respondent 44	-1	-1	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student Respondent 45	-2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	-1	2	2
Student Respondent 46	2	1	1	2	-2	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	1
Student Respondent 47	2	1	2	2	-2	2	1	1	2	2	2	-1	2	1	1	0	2	2
Student Respondent 48	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	2	2
Totals	59	46	53	73	-30	69	52	51	68	45	57	-5	47	51	55	-21	58	61

The following list displays the questions listed in order of those that received the highest

composite score to the lowest score based on the survey data:

- My instructor creates a safe environment. 73 points
- My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts. 69 points
- My instructor listens to me, and I have a voice in class. 68 points
- My instructor relates class material to problems students face in everyday life. 61 points
- My instructor is personable. 59 points
- My instructor uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence. 58 points
- I can be "me" in class. 57 points
- My instructor accepts errors as a natural part of the learning process. 55 points
- I feel that my ideas and contributions in class will be accepted rather than criticized. 53 points
- My instructor is good at clarifying expectations and providing constructive feedback to students. 52 points
- My instructor is humble. 51 points
- My instructor asks students to contribute stories from their life or work experience. 51 points
- My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them. 47 points
- My instructor uses humor in the classroom. 46 points
- My instructor admits when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up. 45 points
- My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction. -5 points
- My instructor avoids discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgements. -21 points
- I feel uncomfortable to talk to my instructor after class. -30 points

Second round of data aggregated and tabulated- excellent instructors. The second

round of data collected was tabulated similarly to the first round of data. The second round of

data included 31 student participants, so the point totals are a bit lower, reflecting the lower

number of participants contributing data.

Table 2

Round Two Data Collection: Excellent Instructors

Student Number   Question Number

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Student Respondent 1	2	2	1	1	-1	2	1	1	1	2	0	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	-1	1	-1	1	0	0	1
Student Respondent 3	1	2	1	1	-1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	-1	0	0
Student Respondent 4	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	0	1	2
Student Respondent 5	1	2	1	1	-1	2	2	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 6	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-1	2	1	1	0	1	2
Student Respondent 7	2	1	2	2	-1	2	2	2	2	2	2	-1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Student Respondent 8	1	2	1	1	-1	2	2	1	2	1	1	-1	2	1	2	0	1	0
Student Respondent 9	1	1	-1	0	-1	1	0	0	-1	-1	0	-1	-2	-1	-2	-2	-2	1
Student Respondent 10	1	2	1	0	-2	2	2	1	2	0	2	-1	1	2	-1	0	1	2
Student Respondent 11	1	2	0	2	-2	2	2	2	0	2	1	2	2	2	-1	-2	1	-1
Student Respondent 12	1	1	-1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	-1	2	-1	1	-1	2	1
Student Respondent 13	1	1	1	1	-1	1	0	1	1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 14	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	0	2	2
Student Respondent 15	2	2	2	2	-2	1	1	1	2	1	2	-1	1	2	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 16	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-1	2	2	2	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 17	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	1	2	2	0	2	2
Student Respondent 18	2	1	2	2	-2	1	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	-2	2	0
Student Respondent 19	2	1	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	1	0	2	1
Student Respondent 20	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	-1	1	2	2	0	2	2
Student Respondent 21	2	0	2	2	-2	2	1	1	2	0	2	-1	2	1	1	-1	2	0
Student Respondent 22	1	-1	1	2	-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-1	1	-1	-1	-1	2	2
Student Respondent 23	2	1	1	1	-2	1	0	2	2	2	2	-1	0	1	1	-2	1	0
Student Respondent 24	2	1	2	2	-2	2	1	2	2	2	2	-2	1	1	2	0	1	2
Student Respondent 25	1	0	-1	1	0	1	1	1	-1	1	-1	1	1	-1	1	1	1	0
Student Respondent 26	2	1	1	1	-1	1	0	0	1	0	0	-1	1	1		1	1	1
Student Respondent 27	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	-2	1	1	1	-1	1	1
Student Respondent 28	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-1	1	0	0	-2	2	2
Student Respondent 29	2	2	1	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-1	2	2	2	-1	2	2
Student Respondent 30	2	2	1	2	-1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	1
Student Respondent 31	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	0	1	1	2	-2	2	0	2	0	2	2
Student Respondent 32	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-1	2	1	2	-1	2	2
Student Respondent 33	2	2	2	2	-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	2
Student Respondent 34	1	1	2	1	-2	1	2	2	1	1	2	-2	1	1	1	0	2	2
	56	47	44	52	-38	55	48	46	48	44	50	-31	43	32	37	-22	44	42

The following list represents the round two data with the questions ranked in order from

the highest point totals to the lowest:

- My instructor is personable. 56 points
- My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts. 55 points
- My instructor creates a safe environment. 52 points
- I can be "me" in class. 50 points
- My instructor listens to me, and I have a voice in class. 48 points
- My instructor is good at clarifying expectations and providing constructive feedback to students. 48 points
- My instructor uses humor in the classroom. 47 points
- My instructor is humble. 46 points
- My instructor admits when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up. 44 points
- My instructor uses class activities that encourages student's growth to greater independence. 44 points
- I feel that my ideas and contributions in class will be accepted rather than criticized. 44 points

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- My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them. 43 points
- My instructor relates class material to problems students face in everyday life. 42 points
- My instructor accepts errors as a natural part of the learning process. 37 points
- My instructor asks students to contribute stories from their life or work experience. 32 points
- My instructor avoids discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgements. -22 points
- My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction. -31 points

- I feel uncomfortable to talk to my instructor after class. -38 points

Factor analysis on first round of data. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the first 18 questions of the first round of data. The survey questions represent independent variables, and through conducting exploratory factor analysis, four sets of questions were identified as "factors" that seem to hang together based on unobserved variables. Factor analysis can identify these latent constructs by identifying interdependencies between observed variables.

There were four factors identified by this statistical analysis which grouped several independent variables together. All four factors are used in this study because together they add up to 100% of the variance in questioning. The first factor is a combination of several questions on the student survey (Questions 3, 4, 11, 9, 7, 15, 17, 18, 13, 14, 10, 2, 8, and 1) and it also represented the factor with the highest eigenvalue (8.608806). This first factor is typified by students feeling safe and their contributions being welcomed in class. This factor will be described as "student voice."

The second factor identified is a combination of Question 12 (My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction) and Question 6 (My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts. This factor will be described as "instructor knowledge" as it requires a comprehensive knowledge of the subject area – both book knowledge and practical, workplace knowledge of the subject they are teaching.

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This factor had a rather low eigenvalue of .356873, but is considered in this study because as it represents an important construct, and an important piece of the study.

The third factor is one independent variable – namely, Question 1 "My instructor is personable." This factor will be referred to as "personable" as this question is about relatability of instructor and students. This factor, although representing one question, has a high eigenvalue of 5.473171.

The fourth and final factor identified in the exploratory factor analysis is a combination of Question 13 "My instructor sticks to course objective set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them" and Question 5 "I feel uncomfortable to talk to my instructor after class." Both of these questions highlight a rigidity of the instructor and will be referred to as "instructor's rigidity." This factor has a low eigenvalue of .549380 and was included in this study because together, these four factors account for 100% of the variance identified by the student survey.

Table 3

Results of round one factor analysis

Factor Structure Summary
Factors
Factor1
C3 I feel that my ideas and contributions in class will be accepted rather than criticized.
C4 My instructor creates a safe environment.
C11 I can be "me" in class.
C9 My instructor listens to me, and I have a voice in class.
C7 My instructor is good at clarifying expectations and providing constructive feedback to students.
C15 My instructor accepts errors as a natural part of the learning process.
C17 My instructor uses class activities that encourages student's growth to greater independence.
C18 My instructor relates class material to problems students face in everyday life.
C13 My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them.
C14 My instructor asks students to contribute stories from their life or work experience.

C10 My instructor admits when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up.
C2 My instructor uses humor in the classroom.
C8 My instructor is humble.
C1 My instructor is personable.
Factor2
C12 My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction.
C6 My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts.
Factor 3
C1 My instructor is personable.
Factor 4
C13 My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them.
C5 I feel uncomfortable to talk to my instructor after class.

Factor analysis on second round of data. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to understand which independent variables hang together in the data collected in the excellent instructor's classroom. There were three factors identified in this confirmatory analysis representing three latent constructs identified through factor analysis.

The first factor is a combination of 14 survey questions that hang together (Questions 3, 9, 4, 1, 8, 10, 14, 11, 7, 17, 15, 6, 13, and 18). This will be referred to as "student voice" where students feel like they are able to make a contribution to the learning environment. The only difference between the round one set of data and round two is that round two does *not* include Question 2 "my instructor uses humor in the classroom," yet it does include Question 6 "my instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts." Therefore, this grouping is very similar to the factor identified as "student voice" in the first round of data. It also represents the highest factor eigenvalue of 9.083257.

The second factor is a combination of 2 survey questions, namely Question 2 and Question 12 ("My instructor uses humor in the classroom" and "My instructor provides knowledge, yet is typically not available for outside of the class instruction."). This second factor combines levity and confidence, and will be referred to as "versatility". It is the ability of the instructor to switch from one persona to another based on the audience or student temperament. This factor has a total eigenvalue of 1.287520, which is significantly smaller than the first factor identified, yet significant for this study.

The third factor identified in the confirmatory factor analysis is solely Question 13, which is "My instructor sticks to course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them." This factor will be described as "focus on course objectives" to follow through with lesson plans. This factor had an extremely small eigenvalue at -.0115802. A popular cutoff for eigenvalues to be considered is 1.0. While substantially lower than the other two factors identified, this factor was included as it stood out from the other potential factor representatives.

Table 4

Results of round two factor analysis

Factors
Factor1
C3 I feel that my ideas and contributions in class will be accepted rather than criticized.
C9 My instructor listens to me, and I have a voice in class.
C4 My instructor creates a safe environment.
C1 My instructor is personable.
C8 My instructor is humble.
C10 My instructor admits when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up.
C14 My instructor asks students to contribute stories from their life or work experience.
C11 I can be "me" in class.
C7 My instructor is good at clarifying expectations and providing constructive feedback to students.
C17 My instructor uses class activities that encourages student's growth to greater independence.

C15 My instructor accepts errors as a natural part of the learning process.
C6 My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts.
C13 My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them.
C18 My instructor relates class material to problems students face in everyday life.
Factor 2
C2 My instructor uses humor in the classroom.
C12 My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction.
Factor 3
C13 My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them.

Informational Interviews with Excellent Instructors

Five interviews were conducted with the excellent instructors to gain further insight into the data. They were shown summaries of findings of the first 18 questions from the first round of data collection. Then, each instructor was asked two questions: "Do you have any initial thoughts or insights about the data that were collected?" and "Do you find this to be accurate based on your experience in the classroom and why?" The responses from each interview are below.

Interview with instructor 1. The first instructor commented that there are foundational principles to effective teaching that must be exhibited in the classroom to actually be considered "successful" in the higher educational environment. These principles are: using real life examples to explain course concepts; listening to students and allowing them to have a voice; relating material to everyday, practical life experiences; and clarifying expectations. This excellent instructor stated that without these four core techniques, one cannot be effective in the classroom. "Hopefully an instructor will bring more to the classroom than this, but these are foundational."

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The first instructor also commented on how important a safe environment is to learning. This instructor believes that students learn best when they feel safe. "You absolutely need to have it, otherwise the students cannot learn. It is required, but it is not directly related to learning outcomes."

This instructor made it clear that "being personable is not required."

This instructor believes it is important for students to engage with the class material first-hand instead of taking a passive role in listening to an instructor. "Self-teaching or students teaching students is the best way for students to learn. It is not helpful for the students to see me do it, but to see another student perform a task, then the students hear something in a different way, and the other student is able to role model."

"The two [factors] that are most connected to an instructor being vulnerable are discussing controversial topics and admitting mistakes. It is uncomfortable and the instructor feels tension when doing these things, but you know you are doing the right thing."

Interview with instructor 2. The second instructor began by talking about a safe environment and how students may define "safe" differently. Some may think "safe" is not doing anything that makes them uncomfortable, so a lecture would be a very safe environment according to this definition. Other students might not find this "safe" at all since the student wouldn't be engaged in the material within a lecture environment. The third highest rated question about students feeling like they have a voice may be more telling of what "safe" actually refers to since having a voice means students feel comfortable to share their true selves with others.

Sharing stories was a key element that this instructor says she uses in the classroom. "When instructors share real life examples they are often sharing when they made a mistake or

when something didn't go well, which is getting after that other question of admitting when he or she is wrong or showing humility. An instructor could talk about themselves and be bravado them whole time, but I haven't seen that be as effective."

Sharing stories is a way that this instructor helps students not only relate to her, but also to the other students. "I have an intellectual autobiography where students have to look at all the intellectual influences in their life and how they got to where they are and they have an opportunity to read a section to everyone in the class. What we try to do is create enough community and trust so that students want to read. This year several students shared really personal aspects their life. And one student shares and gets a strong response from the class, and then other students respond….I think that helps students know one another, and they think 'I have a voice, I should contribute in class.'"

This instructor pointed out that the instructional tactic used in a humanities classroom may not be as effective in a hard science classroom because in English and Service Learning courses, self-reflection is part of the learning journey, whereas that doesn't play as big of a role in other subject areas.

Interview with instructor 3. The third instructor shared that what she believes is most effective is clarifying how course assignments relate to the real world or why the assignment is being given and how it relates to course objectives. "I try to constantly for every assignment every day to remind them why we are doing things…Often when I give a writing assignment it is often one of the things students think is dumb. They are used to thinking about what will help me on my test. I have to remind them that SNC faculty have identified writing as the most important single skill for every single student no matter what and we have decided to include writing. Therefore, I am going to score you on writing, grammar, use of language as well as

content. Otherwise they feel it is irrelevant. The students who are really good at memorizing and regurgitating facts hate it when I ask them to apply information." This instructor mentioned that when students discover a fact themselves, rather than being told the information, they will retain the fact must longer.

Another important element this instructor spoke about is knowing how flexible to be with students. "I work with students with life challenges when they miss more than two days of class unlike other instructors who enforce class policy. There needs to be a balance between holding them accountable and allowing makeup work."

This instructor spoke on how important it is for students, even in science, to have a good rapport with other students. In order to do this, this instructor plans get-to-know-you class assignments early on in the semester. "I also give students time to get to know each other. I have them discuss their favorite book and favorite cuss word. If they know each other, they work more effectively. In science there is so much content and it helps if they work together."

Interview with the instructor 4. The first thing this instructor noticed was that humor was not rated as highly as he expected. "I am surprised humor wasn't higher….it is my principle tool. Sometimes I use humor at the expense of the student. Sometimes it is at my own personal expense. I do something stupid and I make fun of myself. Sometimes I just think of a funny story related to class concepts…as long as they are laughing I figure it is working. I like to have them laugh at least once or twice every class. I thought everybody did that."

This instructor also commented on humility and how that is not his strong suit. "I am not humble about the coursework I teach. I do know the coursework I teach. I will not apologize for that…I don't come off as humble. I know that about myself. I am not sure I want to come off as

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humble. I want to come off as somebody who knows there stuff, and I am not afraid to say it.
So, if that is not humble….guilty."

Lastly, this instructor commented on his students feeling comfortable in class and to
approach him after class. "I frankly don't care if they feel safe….safe from what? Being
uncomfortable and embarrassment….these are two tools I use to motivate them." He also
mentioned that it is ok for students to have uncertainty when they approach the instructor after
class in not knowing if he will respond with a firm "no" or will make an exception. He believes
it is good for students to be a little on edge.

Interview with instructor 5. This instructor mentioned that humor is the top tool he uses in
class. In art, the instructor and the students must critique other student's work, and if humor isn't
integrated in this process, students may have a hard time recovering from the constructive feedback. This
mentioned that being a higher education instructor is a lot like being a comedian where reading the
audience if extremely important. The instructor must use a dynamic approach that "includes humor,
critique, encouragement, being serious, and relating to the students."

Gender differences. During these interviews, both male instructors mentioned that
humor was the most important instructional tool they utilize in the classroom. Humor was the
technique these instructors depended on most heavily to relate to the students and help the
students identify with course material. Interestingly, no female instructor even mentioned using
humor or its importance in the classroom, yet in the second round of data, students rated both
their male and female instructors high in using humor in the classroom. Female instructors not
mentioning humor as an instructional technique may indicate that female instructors are not
intentional in using humor, even though in practice they integrate humor into the classroom
environment. Regardless of the reason, there was a recognizable gender gap in instructors
talking about the use of humor and its usefulness in the classroom.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques do college instructors use that students identify as highly effective? Based on ranking the first 18 questions of the student survey that received the highest score, the top identifying factor that students associate with "excellent" instructors is being personable. For randomly selected business instructors, being personable was the fifth ranked factor identified in their instructors.

It is interesting that all students rank a safe environment and an instructor using real life examples as two of the top three factors observed within their classroom. This may suggest a safe environment and using real life examples in the classroom are foundational to the higher education learning environment.

An instructor using humor dramatically increases from 14th place for the random business instructors to 7th place for the excellent instructors, suggesting that this is a factor is observed more frequently in instructors who are effective in the classroom.

One factor that decreases in ranking for excellent instructors is the instructor relating class material to problems students face in everyday life. Here, the ranking decreases from 4th place for the random instructors to 13th place for excellent instructors. This suggests that instructors do not need to make the connection of course concepts to everyday situations in order to be effective.

The double barrel question that combines my instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction remains near the bottom of the ranking order, but for excellent instructors it scored -31 points, while random instructors received -5 points for this question. This may be because there was a lack of clarity around the question, whether it is asking about knowledge, which may be considered a good quality, or about not

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being available outside of class, which may be considered a negative quality. Regardless, students within excellent instructor classrooms rated knowledge and instructor unavailability outside of class much more negatively than students did for random instructors.

The survey validated the premise that the second round of instructors was in fact highly effective at teaching course concepts. Not only were they selected for the 2014 or 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal award or Teacher of the Year award, but 85.29% of these students stated in the surveys that these instructors were highly effective at teaching course concepts. The first round of instructors who were randomly selected were rated as highly effective at teaching course concepts by 60.42% of survey participants.
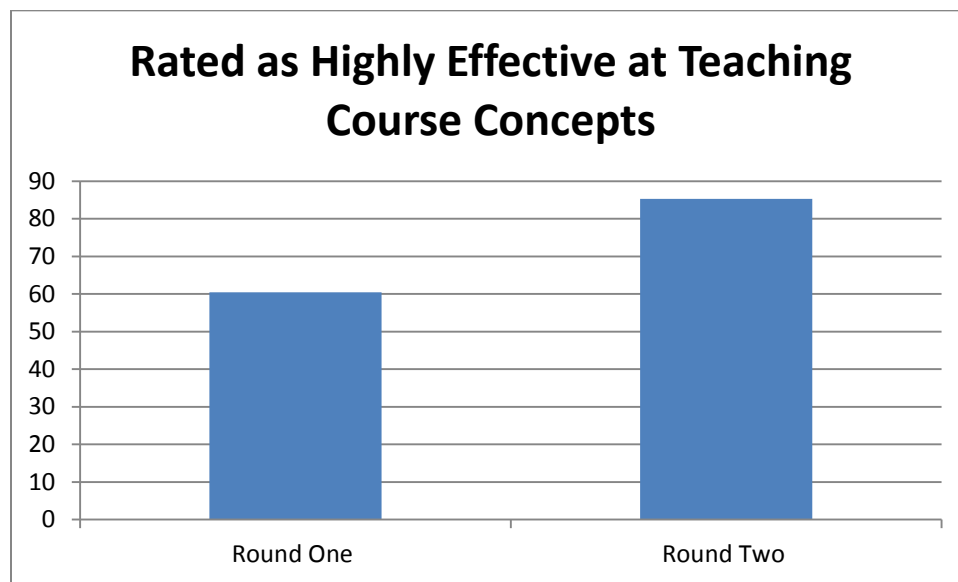

Figure 3. Rated as highly effective at teaching course concepts.

In the second round of data, there were two questions where 100% of the students who took the survey rated these excellent instructors as "strongly agree" or "agree". These questions are:

#1 My instructor is personable and

#6 My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts.

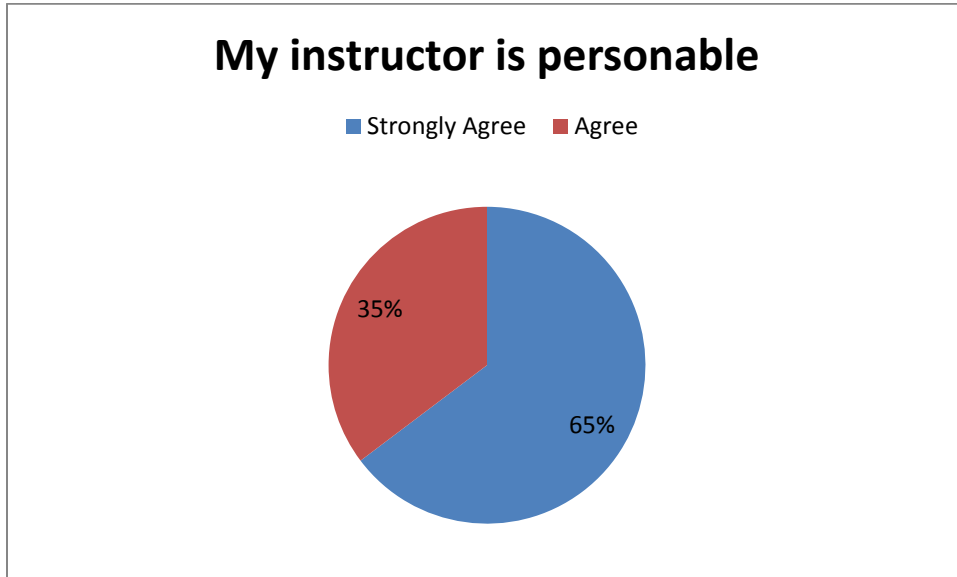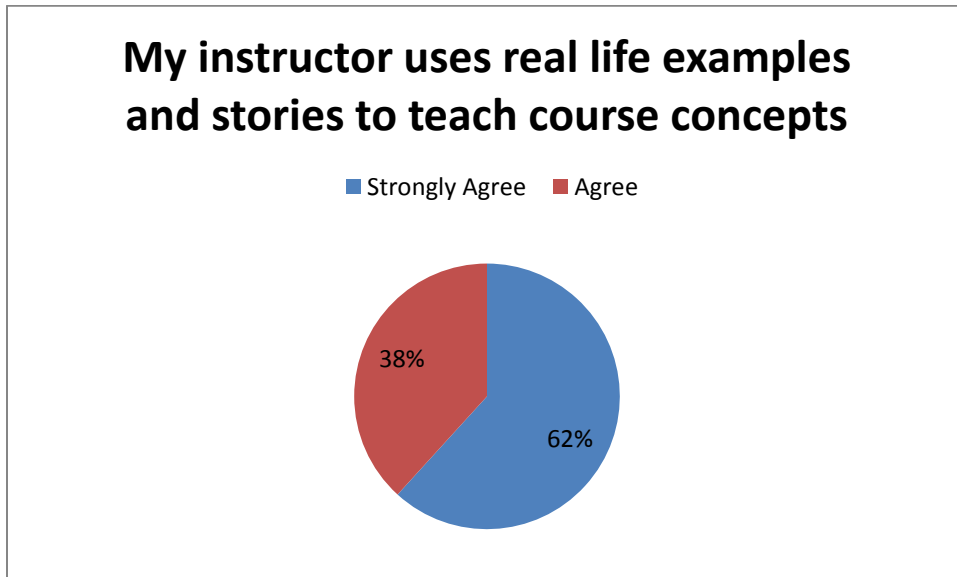*Figure 4.* My instructor is personable.

Figure 5. My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts.

Since there is a high correlation between these two questions and excellent instructors, these two factors, being personable and using real life examples, must be important to effective teaching strategies in the higher education classroom.

There were three questions that students rated as "strongly agree" or "agree" by 90% of or more of the respondents. These questions are:

#2 My instructor uses humor in the classroom.

#13 My instructor sticks to course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them and

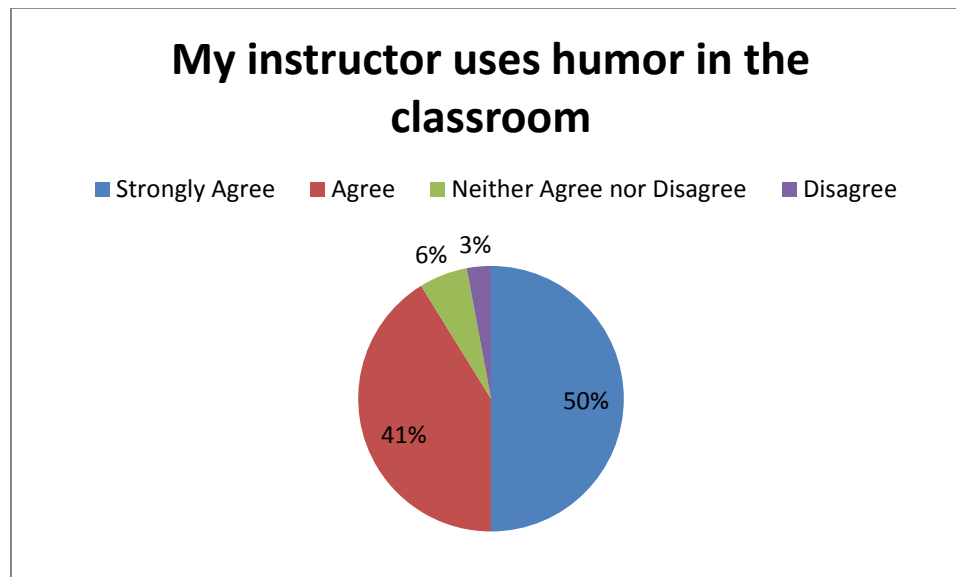#17 My instructor uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

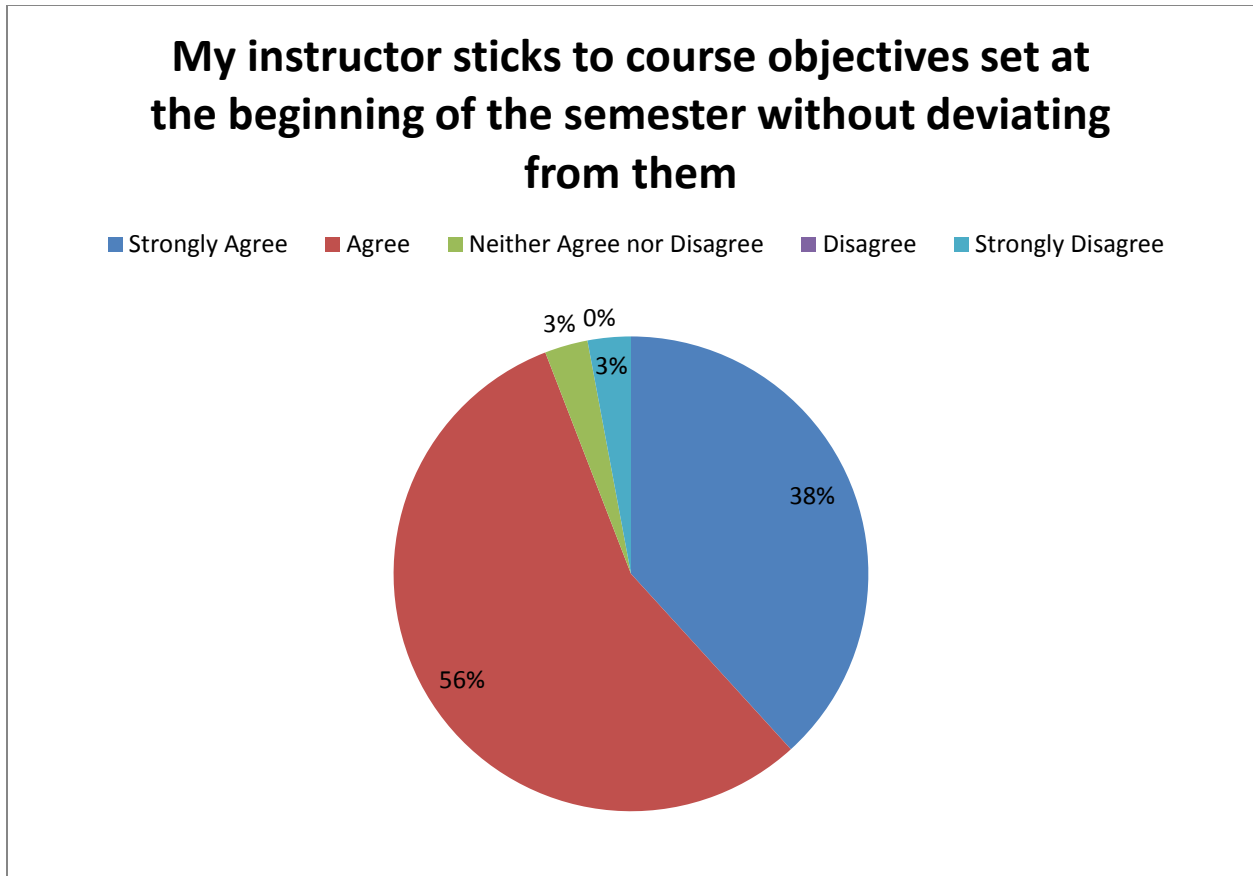*Figure 6.* My instructor uses humor in the classroom.

Figure 7. My instructor sticks to course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them.
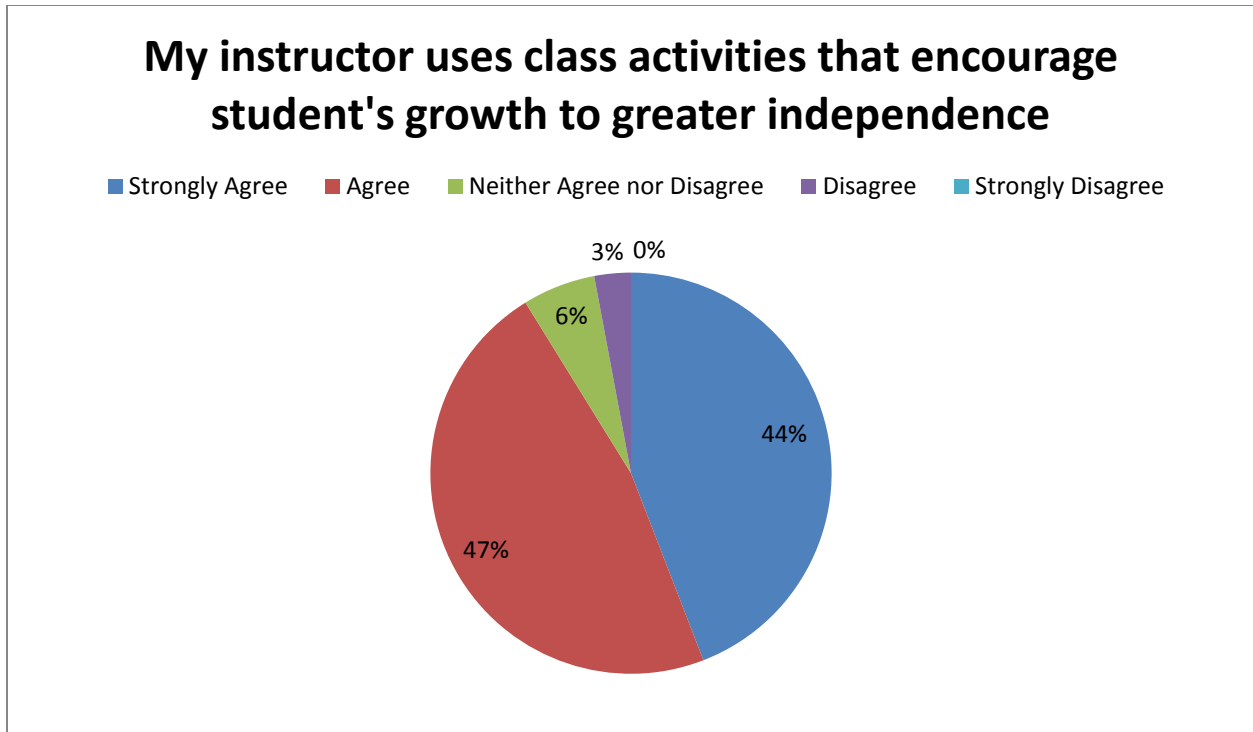
Figure 8. My instructor uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

Research Question 2: Do students self-report learning and applying more classroom content from college instructors who demonstrate high levels of vulnerability than from those who do not? In the randomly selected business courses, 29.17% of students reported learning a lot, 50% reported learning a good amount, 12.5% reported learning some, 6.25% reported learning a little and 2.08 reported not learning much in class. Students self-reported applying course concepts 60.42% of the time in a randomly selected instructor classroom. These student's comments are a bit generic about how they have applied course concepts. There comments include responses such as "the ideas can be used in many situations" and "I am now much more aware of what is happening in politics…" and "dealing with business associates."
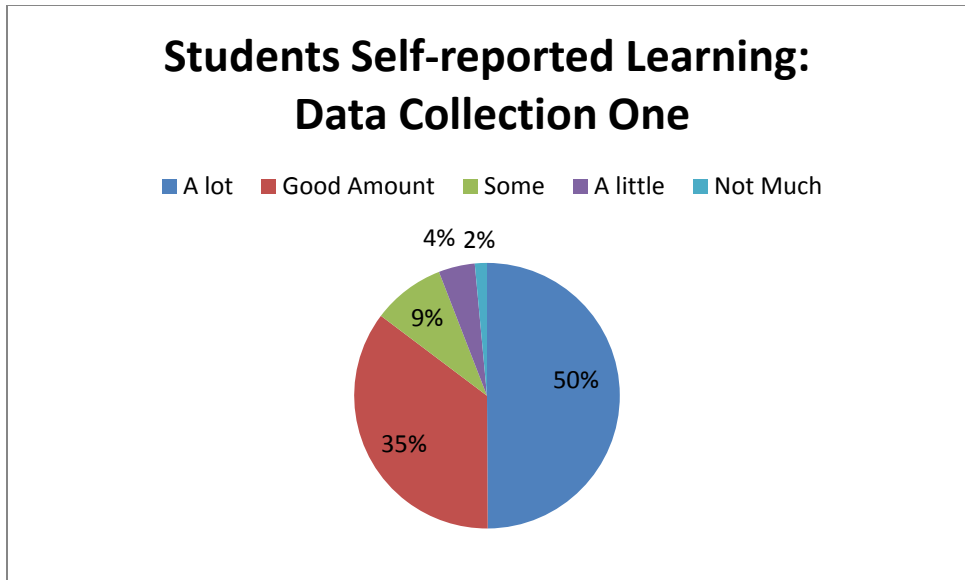
Figure 9. Students self-reported learning: Data collection 1.

Students in excellent instructor's classes self-report a higher level of learning in the classroom. In excellent instructor's courses, 70.59% of students report learning a lot, 20.59% report learning a good amount and 8.82% report learning some. Students self-report applying course concepts 88.24% of the time when learning from an excellent instructor.
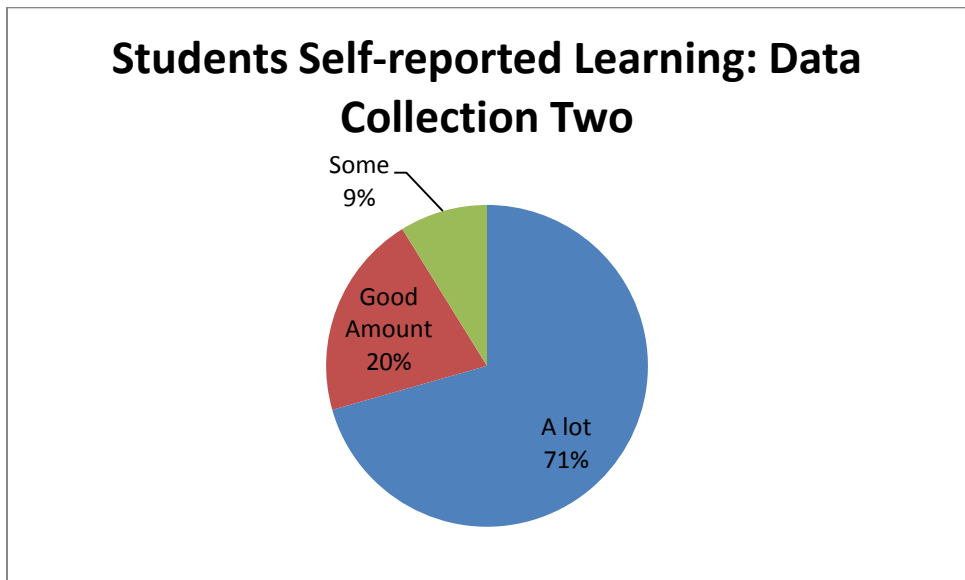

Figure 10. Students self-reported learning: Data collection 2.

The short answer response to how students are applying classroom concepts to their life seemed to fit into two main categories: real life situations and course content areas. Students described that they have applied course concepts outside of the classroom by using statements such as "The things I learn in class are not things that we will be tested on. It can be anything from techniques of creation or to daily interactions with people around me" or "life lessons in persistence" or "I am able to evaluate choices and situations better and understand more of who I am as a human being." Other students reported that they applied the course concept directly by stating "I use microbiology all the time when I am researching Crohn's Disease in attempt to help find myself relief" or "explaining concepts to others outside of class" or "I helped my brother register for a trademark using information I've learned in class."

Students enrolled in a random instructor's class report that 64.58% have a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and 72.34% report having a B or higher grade in that particular instructor's class. This would seem to imply that students perceive they are achieving at a higher level in their current course compared to other classes they are currently or were previously enrolled in.

Many students enrolled in an excellent instructor's class report that they have high overall gpa in college, with 82.36% having above a 3.0 gpa. Slightly more students, 85.3%, report having a B or higher grade in the excellent instructor's class.

The first 18 questions of the student survey are designed to understand the level of vulnerability an instructor displays in a classroom by asking questions that are all founded in the literature as vulnerable (Chen, 2014; Covey & Merrill, 2007; Knowles, 1977; Story & Butts, 2010). If each question on the student survey represented equal levels of vulnerability (which they do not as it could be argued that some questions such as "admitting when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up" require more vulnerability that others such as "clarifying

expectations and providing constructive feedback to students") then the level of vulnerability could be determined by adding all of the numeric values on each survey and dividing it by the number of students who responded to the survey and the number of questions.

Additionally, there were four questions (#5, #12, #13, and #16) that were framed in an un-vulnerable way so that students would not become lethargic when responding and select "strongly agree" across the board for an instructor which they admire over others. For these questions, the point value they received would be inverted. For example, question #5 "I feel uncomfortable to talk to my instructor after class" received -30 points on the first round of data collection. Forty-eight students took this survey, so on average, this questions had a score of -.625 points. This value would be inverted to .625 since the question was phrased originally as an un-vulnerable question. All of the question's point values are tallied and summed, the first round of data collection (the random business instructors) would have an average (mean) vulnerability score of 18.77. If this same process is used for the second round of data collection, it would receive a score of 20.38, demonstrating that the second set of instructors demonstrate higher levels of vulnerability.

Research Question 3: Do students self-report trusting their classmates and instructor more in a classroom environment that uses frequent trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques? Based on the mean average calculations in Research Question 2, instructors in the first round of data collection demonstrate fewer vulnerability-building techniques in the classroom compared to the second group of "excellent" instructors. Question 23 "How much do you trust or feel comfortable sharing personal information about yourself with your instructor?" directly relates to this research question. Students in the randomly selected business instructor's classes reported that 35.42% were highly comfortable,

35.42% were comfortable, 16.67% were indifferent, 8.33% were somewhat comfortable, and 4.17% were not comfortable. Students in the excellent instructor's classes reported that 44.12% were highly comfortable, 35.29% were comfortable, 8.82% were indifferent, 5.88% were somewhat comfortable, and 5.88% were not comfortable. Students seem to be slightly more trusting and comfortable sharing information with instructors who demonstrate higher levels of vulnerability in the classroom.
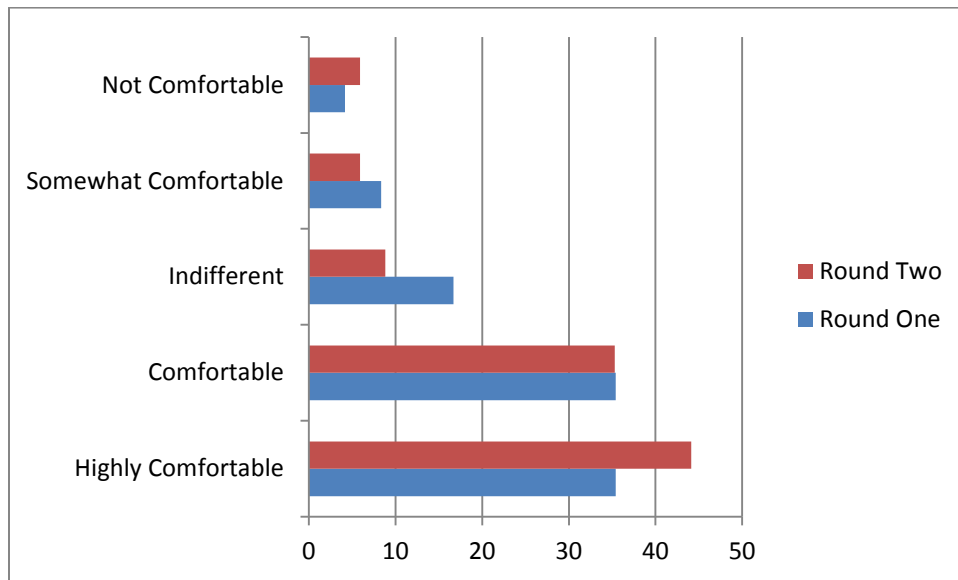
Figure 11. How much do you trust or feel comfortable sharing personal information about yourself with your instructor?

Question 22 "How much do you trust or feel comfortable sharing information about yourself with your classmates?" showcases how much vulnerability-building techniques demonstrated by the instructor impacts how students incorporate what is role modeled in class by their instructor and in turn, demonstrate to others. Students in the randomly selected business courses responded that 25% were highly comfortable, 43.75% were comfortable, 25% were indifferent, and 6.25% were somewhat comfortable, and 0% was not comfortable sharing

information with their classmates. Students in the excellent instructor's courses responded that

29.41% were highly comfortable, 44.12% were comfortable, 14.12% were indifferent, 2.94 were

somewhat comfortable and 8.82% were not comfortable. This data seems to state that displays

of vulnerability by the instructor can slightly increase the student's comfortableness of sharing

information with other students, and it may also decrease their likelihood as well. Less

vulnerability by the instructor correlates to more students feeling "indifferent" about peer trust

and sharing personal information.
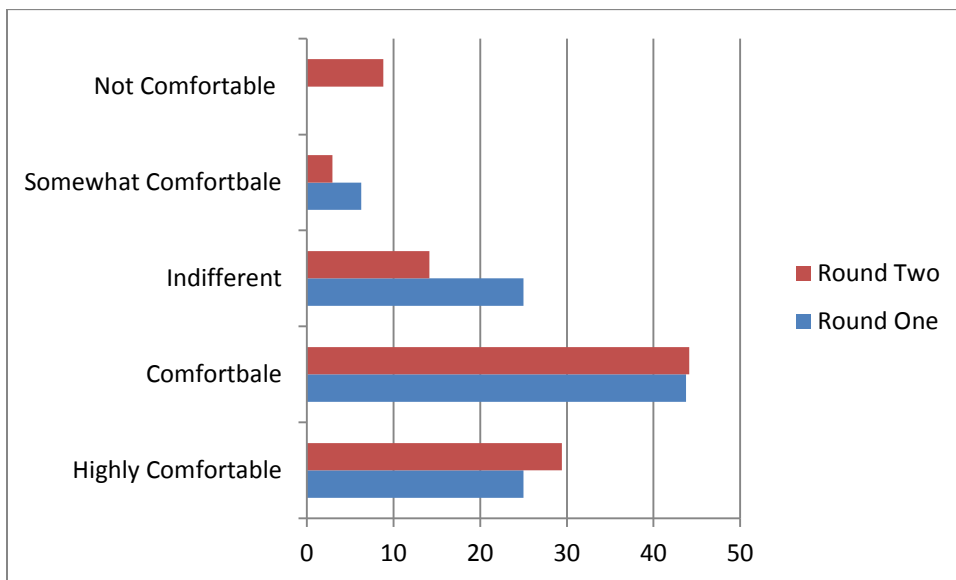
Figure 12. How much do you trust or feel comfortable sharing information about yourself with
your classmates?

Research Question 4: Which trust-building and vulnerability-building factors

should be included in developing an operational definition and assessment tool to further

understand the construct of vulnerability in the college classroom? In developing an

operational definition of vulnerability for the higher educational classroom, multiple perspectives

should be considered. The student's and the instructor's perspective is important, as well as the

difference of how factors are rated between randomly selected instructors and excellent instructors.

First, the highest rated factors by the students should be considered. Based on the results of the excellent instructor's survey, the factors that scored the highest are "my instructor is personable," "my instructor uses real life example and stories to teach course concepts" and "my instructor creates a safe environment."

Secondly, the other three factors that had the highest percentages of "strongly agree" and "agree" responses (above 90%) other than those listed above are "My instructor uses humor in the classroom," "My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them" and "My instructor uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence."

Third, themes from the interviews with instructors should be included as excellent instructors have insight into how they are intentionally communicating with students, which results in them being recognized with these prestigious awards. This commentary is instrumental because it provides context and clarity to the quantitative data.

A safe environment was mentioned several times by instructors. It was also questioned as to what the meaning of "safe" actually means. One instructor does not want his or her students to feel "safe" but rather motivated and uncomfortable at times if that means they will be called on in class and held responsible for knowing course concepts. Another instructor pointed out that "safe" may mean that they have a "voice" since that was rated highly on the first round of data. And yet, another instructor pointed to her students feeling safe by disclosing personal information to other students, such as their favorite book and favorite cuss word.

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The ability of an instructor to self-disclose and share real life stories that may showcase the instructor in a less than favorable light seems to be a mechanism excellent instructors use to demonstrate vulnerability. Students might not even be recognize the fact that instructors are making themselves vulnerable in sharing these stories, but rather see this instructional tactic as the instructor relating.

Effective instructors seem to be purposeful with providing opportunities for students to engage with course material first-hand rather than lecturing. Lastly, humor seems to play a role in effective instruction. Two excellent instructors listed this as their primary tool used when teaching to temper critique or to relate to students. Humor also increased the most from the first round of data to the second round of data moving from 14th place to 7th place.

So, the main factors that should be considered based on the above commentary are as follows:

1. Personable

2. Shares real life stories – sometime ones that are less than favorable

3. Safe environment – allowing students to have a voice

4. Humor

5. Sticks to course objectives – and allow for student engagement with course material.

6. Uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

Summary

This study explored the instructional techniques used by business instructors to teach college students various courses and compared data collected via student's perceptions of their instructors to instructors who were previously vetted as "excellent" college instructors. The excellent instructors were asked to comment on the first round of data's findings. The data

collected from quantitative and qualitative means showcased six key instructional techniques. "Personable" was the top characteristic, receiving the highest mean by the student survey, followed by the instructor using real life examples and stories in the course. The instructor creating a safe environment received the top mean score for the business instructors and the third place mean score for excellent instructors, so it is also included as one of the important traits for college instructors. Three more characteristics were identified as important for a college instructors based on over 90% of students rating their excellent instructors either as either "agree" or "strongly agree." These characteristics are humor, sticking to course objectives, and using class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence. All six of these characteristics were undergirded by comments by the instructors during the interviews.

Chapter 5 discusses findings and recommendations based on this research study, and also suggests ideas for future research.

Chapter Five: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter restates the problem, purposes and findings of the study and then provides results, recommendations and suggestions for further research and a final summary of the data collected.

Restatement of Problem

Trust is valued in the workplace and as a trait in business leaders (Covey & Merrill, 2007). Since the purpose of college is to prepare students for the workplace so they are able to effectively contribute within that environment, trust should be a topic that is practiced within that environment. Displays of vulnerability are an efficient way to build trust within a work culture (Brown, 2012), yet vulnerability within the undergraduate business classroom has not been a focal point of research studies in the past, which also means there are no assessment tools to measure instructional vulnerability within a college classroom.

Although active learning has become a contemporary topic discussed in higher education, vulnerability and trust-building techniques have not been central to the conversation. Because learning incorporates more than a cognitive process, it is important to understand how emotions, connections and bonding modeled by the instructor impacts the learning environment.

Restatement of Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to bring clarity to the complex construct of instructional vulnerability by creating a preliminary assessment tool to measure effective instructional vulnerability in an undergraduate college classroom. Students were queried to further determine how instructors are modeling trust-building within the business undergraduate classroom and how students' perceive their ability to learn course content is impacted by the instructor's displays of vulnerability. The purpose of this dissertation was to further understand which trust-

building techniques are most effective to teaching students course concepts while also building a culture of trust within the classroom environment so that students can apply these trust-building skills to their business profession once they graduate.

By further understanding how vulnerability-building and trust-building teaching techniques impact the learner's ability to apply course concepts as well as form connections with their classmates college instructors will have another resource to impact deep learning.

If vulnerability within the classroom is a positive and worthwhile strategy that aids student understanding of course concepts and ability to trust their instructor and/or other students, providing clarity through a preliminary operational definition would seem to be helpful. In this manner, instructors will have a framework of practical ways to demonstrate vulnerability through their teaching style. In addition to a definition, an assessment tool will be created to measure and/or quantify displays of vulnerability and its effectiveness.

Restatement of Research Questions

In studying student perceptions of vulnerability-building teaching techniques and the impact vulnerability has on students, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques do college instructors use that students identify as highly effective?
- Research Question 2: Do students self-report learning and applying more classroom content from college instructors who demonstrate high levels of vulnerability than from those who do not?

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- Research Question 3: Do students self-report trusting their classmates and instructor more in a classroom environment that uses frequent trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques?

- Research Question 4: Which trust-building and vulnerability-building factors should be included in developing an operational definition and assessment tool to further understand the construct of vulnerability in the college classroom?

Summary of Methodology

To further understand vulnerability in the classroom and develop a preliminary operational definition of the complex construct of vulnerability, a mixed methods research study was conducted at Sierra Nevada College that included a two-stage factor analysis followed by short interviews with instructors to gain further insight into the data collected. First, students from four randomly selected business classrooms were asked to participate in a study by completing a survey with 18 items that describe vulnerable, productive teaching techniques. Exploratory factor analysis was used to analyze the data from these surveys to clarify construct elements of "vulnerable teaching techniques" by calculating correlations among the factors. The initial survey asked about the student's perceptions of retaining class information and trusting their peers and instructor based on their experience in the classroom.

Then, the same survey was distributed to the five classrooms of instructors who were nominated for the 2014 or 2015 Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Medal award or Teacher of the Year award. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyze the second set of data collected. The object of the confirmatory factor analysis was to test the hypothesis of the factors that define the construct of vulnerability in the classroom. When the quantitative data were collected, four Nazir and Mary Ansari Excellence in Teaching Gold Metal

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award candidates and the Teacher of the Year were interviewed for 30-minutes to provide insight and commentary on the findings from the first round of surveys. During these short sessions, each instructor was shown findings from the first round of data collection that were first tabulated and aggregated to protect the identity of the students. The analyzed results were shown to each instructor on a printed document. Then, each instructor was asked: 1. "Based on the student survey that was given to 43 students, we found the following results_____. Do you have any initial thoughts or insights about the data that was collected?" 2. "Do you find this to be accurate based on your experience in the classroom and why?" The goal of this study is to create a preliminary operational definition of the construct of "vulnerable teaching techniques" and to have an assessment tool to measure and help quantify vulnerability in a classroom setting.

Key Findings

Research Question 1: What trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques do college instructors use that students identify as highly effective? The survey validated the premise that the second round of instructors were in fact more effective at teaching course concepts compared to the first round. The randomly selected business instructors were rated as highly effective at teaching course concepts by 60.42% of survey participants. This number significantly increased in the second round, where 85.29% of students stated in the surveys that their instructors were highly effective at teaching course concepts.

The top identified factor student's associate with excellent instructors is being personable. Using humor dramatically increased from 14th place for the random instructors to 7th place for the excellent instructors, suggesting that this is a factor that is observed more frequently in instructors who are rated as effective in the classroom.

One factor that decreased in ranking for excellent instructors is the instructor relating class material to problems students face in everyday life. Here, the ranking decreases from 4th place for the random instructors to 13th place. This suggests that instructors do not need to make the connection of course concepts to everyday situations in order to be effective.

In the second round of data, there were five questions where over 90% of the students who took the survey rated these excellent instructors as strongly agree or agree. These questions are:

 #1 My instructor is personable

 #6 My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts.

#2 My instructor uses humor in the classroom.

#13 My instructor sticks to course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them

#17 My instructor uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

Research Question 2: Do students self-report learning and applying more classroom content from college instructors who demonstrate high levels of vulnerability than from those who do not? Students self-report applying course concepts 60.42% of the time in a randomly selected instructor classroom. In excellent instructors' courses, 70.59% of students report learning a lot, 20.59% report learning a good amount and 8.82% report learning some. Students self-report applying course concepts 88.24% of the time when learning from an excellent instructor.

Students enrolled in a random instructor's class report that 64.58% have a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and 72.34% report having a B or higher grade in that particular instructor's class. This finding would seem to imply that students perceive that they are achieving at a higher level

in their current course compared to other classes they are currently or were previously enrolled in.

Many students enrolled in an excellent instructor's class report that they have high overall gpa in college, with 82.36% having above a 3.0 gpa. Slightly more students, 85.3%, report having a 3.0 gpa in the excellent instructor's class.

The first 18 questions of the student survey were designed to understand the level of vulnerability an instructor displays in a classroom by asking questions that are all found in the literature as vulnerable (Chen, 2014; Conti, 1998; Covey & Merrill, 2007; Knowles, 1977; Story & Butts, 2010). So, if all of the questions' point values are tallied, based on how students rated the questions (from strongly disagree receiving a -2 numeric value and strongly agree receiving a 2 numeric value) the first round of data collection (the random business instructors) would have a vulnerability mean score of 18.77. If this same process is used for the second round of data collection, it would receive a mean score of 20.38, demonstrating that the second set of instructors demonstrate higher levels of vulnerability in the classroom.

Research Question 3: Do students self-report trusting their classmates and instructor more in a classroom environment that uses frequent trust-building and vulnerability-building techniques? Students in the randomly selected business instructors' classes reported that 35.42% were highly comfortable, 35.42% were comfortable, 16.67% were indifferent, 8.33% were somewhat comfortable, and 4.17% were not comfortable sharing personal information about themselves with their instructor. Students in the excellent instructors' classes reported that 44.12% were highly comfortable, 35.29% were comfortable, 8.82% were indifferent, 5.88% were somewhat comfortable, and 5.88% were not comfortable sharing personal information about themselves with their instructor. Students seem to be slightly

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more trusting and comfortable sharing information with instructors who demonstrate higher levels of vulnerability in the classroom.

Students in the randomly selected business courses responded that 25% were highly comfortable, 43.75% were comfortable, 25% were indifferent, and 6.25% were somewhat comfortable, and 0% was not comfortable sharing personal information with their classmates. Students in the excellent instructors' courses responded that 29.41% were highly comfortable, 44.12% were comfortable, 14.12% were indifferent, 2.94 were somewhat comfortable and 8.82% were not comfortable. These data seem to state that displays of vulnerability by the instructor can slightly increase the student's comfort level of sharing information with other students, and it may also decrease their likelihood as well. Less vulnerability by the instructor correlates to more students feeling "indifferent" about peer trust and sharing personal information.

Research Question 4: Which trust-building and vulnerability-building factors should be included in developing an operational definition and assessment tool to further understand the construct of vulnerability in the college classroom? First, based on the results of the excellent instructor's survey, the factors that scored the highest are "my instructor is personable," "my instructor uses real life example and stories to teach course concepts" and "my instructor creates a safe environment."

Secondly, the other three factors that had the highest percentages of "strongly agree" and "agree" responses (above 90%) other than those listed above are "My instructor uses humor in the classroom," "My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them" and "My instructor uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence."

Third, themes from the interviews with instructors should also be included. A safe environment was mentioned several times by instructors. An ability to self-disclose and share real life stories that may show the instructor in a less than favorable light seems to be a technique instructors use to demonstrate vulnerability. This intentional display of vulnerability might not even be recognizing as vulnerability by students, but rather as a means for their instructor to try to relate and a way for the student to understand the world from their instructor's perspective. Effective instructors seem to be purposeful with providing opportunities for students to engage with course material first-hand rather than lecturing. Lastly, humor seems to play a role in effective instruction. Two excellent instructors listed this as their primary tool used when teaching to temper critique or to relate to students. Humor was also that factor that increased the most from the first round of data to the second round of data moving from 14th place to 7th place respectively.

So, the main factors that should be considered are as follows:

1. Is personable

2. Shares real life stories – sometime ones that are less than favorable

3. Creates a safe environment – allowing students to have a voice

4. Displays humor

5. Sticks to course objectives

6. Uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

The first three characteristics can be defined as an instructor who is highly "relatable" to the students by providing an environment where the instructor can disclose real life stories, sometimes that uncover flaws or mishaps of the instructor, and thus relating to the students and allowing them to have a voice as well. A safe environment also part and parcel to students

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feeling like they can have a voice in class, yet feeling safe begins with the instructor and the tone they set for the classroom experience.

Coupled with the concept of relatability, humor is the second most important concept that an effective instructor can bring to the classroom environment. Humor is the salve that acts as a healing balm after offering constructive criticism to student work, it is a lubricant that keeps students engaged and moving from one topic to the next, and it is an aid that helps students to relate to instructors even though there may be a large age, cultural or experiential gap.

Lastly, two important factors in effective instructional techniques are keeping students learning and engaged in course material by a) sticking to course objectives and b) using class activities to help students grow and develop into a healthy independence. These last two concepts are foundational to the higher education experience because otherwise, if the instructor focuses primarily on being personable, the instructor would be failing at creating a "learning" environment.

The ability for an instructor to respond to their audience, just like one of the excellent interviewees claimed is what is most important. If an instructor is always focused on having a good time and cracking jokes, they will lose credibility. If an instructor only stays on track and does not relate to the students, they will be seen as cold and unfriendly. Likewise, if an instructor relates to students, yet doesn't utilize humor, the instructor may not be utilizing their full capacity to provide criticism, encourage students and form connections. Instructors must be able to use all of these skills interchangeably to be effective.

Purpose Expansion to Include Vulnerability and Instructional Excellence

This study began with the purpose to understand how vulnerability impacts the undergraduate classroom, proposing the idea that an instructor's vulnerability could be a crucial

element for effective college-level instruction. Yet, the data pointed to six key factors (being personable, sharing real life stories, creating a safe environment, using humor, sticking to course objectives and using class activities that encourage student growth to great independence) that from an outsider's perspective may not inherently be linked to "vulnerability." Within this study, vulnerability has been operationalized as the "ability to risk emotional exposure, chance making a mistake, or disclose personal information because the outcome is viewed as favorable." Theoretically, an instructor could be viewed as personable by the students because the instructor is kind or shares a common interest with their student. Within this scenario, the instructor might not display any emotional vulnerability or personal disclosure, yet be viewed as personable by the students. Likewise, an instructor could use sarcasm or deadpan humor, and not risk much emotional exposure other than risking that students might not be receptive or laugh at the joke. Sharing real life stories may be the factor that most closely intertwines with vulnerable teaching techniques, and yet stories shared in the classroom may or may not involve the instructor self-disclosing personal information or unflattering information. An instructor could potentially only share flattering stories that only showcase them as the hero or at least in a positive light.

At the same time, the top six factors identified within this study are not the antithesis of being vulnerable. In fact, each question on the student survey was selected because prior research identified these concepts as related to vulnerable practices. So, although vulnerability may play a role in an instructor sharing stories with the class, being personable, and using humor, the extent to which vulnerability is involved in these practices is uncertain. Therefore, vulnerability is not a standalone teaching technique, but must be balanced with other core teaching strategies, such as focusing on course objectives and relating class material to problems students may face in everyday life to truly be effective in the classroom.

Furthermore, while a balance of instructional techniques is important within the college classroom, the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence does showcase that vulnerability is viewed as important by students, particularly students having a voice and the instructor being personable. Students having a voice implicates that they feel comfortable to share their opinion, even when it might be viewed as controversial. Students feel that they can be "me" in class, their ideas are accepted, and they are participating in class activities that help them to grow toward greater independence. All of these descriptors showcase openness or a willingness on the student's part to be vulnerable. Likewise, in the middle chord of the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence, the instructor being personable has many connections to being vulnerable as well. Sharing stories and instigating humor include a certain amount of risk and vulnerability. It is also important to note that students in both the first and second round of data collection how important a "safe environment" is to the classroom experience. This safety may be the foundation needed for students and the instructor to be vulnerable with each other so they can take a step toward intellectual and psychological growth. While on their own the six main factors identified in this study do not portray vulnerability, the "student voice" and "personable" chord in the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence relate to vulnerable teaching techniques. Therefore, it is suggested that a future study delve into this topic to explicitly explore how vulnerability plays a role in instructional excellence.

Caveats to Research

Since all four departments within the college were surveyed (humanities, fine arts, science and business) it is important to note that the findings identify effective instructional practices across multiple disciplines. Obviously, some disciplines require students to memorize course concepts, such as a biology or math class, while others course disciplines, such as

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journalism and outdoor adventure leadership courses, ask students to be more reflective of their academic journey. Teaching techniques from multiple disciples have been incorporated in this study.

In addition to each instructor teaching a diverse subject matter, it must also be noted that each instructor approaches teaching from their own unique style. Sierra Nevada College allows for a wide range of academic freedom and instructors to teach using their own voice. This means some instructors rely heavily on story-telling, while others rely on case studies.   Some lecture in almost every class period while other instructors plan interactive activities to convey the course concepts. Some instructors are natural extroverts and engage in a dynamic interplay with the students during class, while others are more introverted and depend on small group communication and break out groups. All of these methodologies are useful and work better for certain instructors as it fits with their own personal style. The purpose of this study was to examine data collected from student participants to see if there were common themes that correlated with effective instructors across disciplines.

Benefits of Humor

One characteristic that seemed to vary significantly between the two groups of instructors – the business instructors and the excellent instructors – was the use of humor. To further understand the benefits of humor in interpersonal relationships, the literature was examined once again.

Humor is a trait that has been linked to creativity, happiness, resilience, positive relationships, innovation, social intelligence and adaptability. A good sense of humor is one of the most desired traits socially and within romantic relationships, and people who exhibit humor are typically seen as friendly, pleasant, interesting, attractive, creative, trustworthy, and able to

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form "connections" or closeness amongst strangers or a grouping of people (Edwards & Martin, 2014; Greengross, Martin, & Miller, 2012; Hampes, 2010). Being humorous typically involves mental shifts from the current atmosphere to relating to another topic or event, while also taking into consideration the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of the people who are listening to the joke. So, it takes awareness and mental capacity to engage in lightening the mood (Hampes, 2010).

Because humor often means saying one thing and meaning or referring to another thing, sometimes this verbal duplicity can lead to confusion of the audience, which is another reason the joke-teller must be aware of the audience and the timing of the joke. The joke teller must be aware of boundaries and what is appropriate and what is not. This is where humor is linked with vulnerability. The joke teller must take a risk and expose themselves to criticism if the joke does not go over well or is misunderstood. If the joke is self-deprecating, they may lose credibility or face misperceptions by their audience (Strong, 2013).

Humor has been studied in the higher education classroom, and it has overwhelming positive results. Students learn and retain more material, feel more comfortable, have lower reported anxiety and higher levels of trust when humor is exhibited in the classroom. Jokes and lighthearted stories also help with student engagement and keeping the student's attention throughout the class period (Seidman & Brown, 2016; Strong, 2013). Humor used in a classroom builds a playful environment where students are more willing to speak up and share their stories too. Humor leads to bonding and a sense of community. Much like a group of old friends who have shared experiences and common language, humor begins to carve that path and create a unique culture within the classroom where participants feel included in this environment that shares common expressions and stories. Humor is also a good way to temper criticism by

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letting a student know what they are doing is unacceptable, yet let them know they are still accepted within the group (Strong, 2013).

There are two types of humor according to the Humor Styles Questionnaire that are enhancing or positive. The first type of humor is affiliative humor used to put the listener at ease, which promotes social bonds between the joke teller and the joke receiver. The second type of positive humor is self-enhancing humor that is able to counter-balance the adverse or challenges faced in life. Humor during these times can help the teller of the joke and the audience see the brighter side of life. Both of these uses of humor correlate positively with "openness" and intimacy. Self-defeating humor and aggressive humor have the opposite impact on their audience and can make their audience feel uncomfortable (Greengross et al., 2012).

Humor could be a counterweight or balance to the other classroom dynamics. If the class is feeling stressed, humor could be the anxiety reliever. If students are feeling disconnected, a joke could bring the students together through laughter, and when students feel discouraged because of a poor grade, humor can lift their spirits. It takes a talented instructor to be aware of their audience and morph their approach to the situation at hand. Humor may be the key ingredient to forming a safe environment where students and the instructor grow to trust each other enough to have a voice and participate in class activities.

Stand-up Comedians

Standup comedians are a skilled group of performers who write their own material and perform in front of a live audience. They have practiced their routines, and they must be aware of their audience to be able to set a lighthearted tone (Greengross et al., 2012). There are a couple tricks of the trade that are important when trying to break-in to the stand-up comedian profession. Some of these include:

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1. Be yourself, be spontaneous, and look like you are having fun (Krebs, 2013)

2. Captivate the audience by telling stories (Volle, 2015)

3. Know the audience (Gladstone, 2013)

4. Don't criticize the audience too harshly (Gladstone, 2013)

5. Know your craft (Volle, 2015)

6. Pick the right material for the audience (Gladstone, 2013)

It is noticeable that there is crossover between key skills of a stand-up comedian and the key traits that were identified in this study:

1. Is personable

2. Shares real life stories – sometime ones that are less than favorable

3. Creates a safe environment – allowing students to have a voice

4. Displays humor

5. Sticks to course objectives

6. Uses class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

Although there seems to be a link between a comedian being aware of their audience and use humor to create a conducive social atmosphere, there is also a clear difference between a comedian and a higher educational instructor. A comedian has a clear purpose to provide levity and lightheartedness to their audience, whereas a college instructor must impart knowledge and guide students in the learning process.

Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence

The results of this study have been synthesized into the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence to understand the key attributes of classroom instructional techniques that build trust and are highly effective. First, this model is based on the premise that the classroom

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environment is dynamic because it involves people. The student and the instructor both have unique past experiences, personalities, and preferences they bring into the learning environment that will influence the learning process. Because people are multi-dimensional, it would be expected that the learning process would be multi-tiered as well, and hence, this model focuses on three "chords" to success that allows instructors to utilize multiple dimensions to facilitate the learning environment.

First, the model is based on the instructor, which is represented by an oval at the bottom. The instructor is the main influencer in the classroom and sets the tone for the learning environment. They are the person who sets the stage and begin forming the classroom culture based on how they approach the learning environment. The three tools or "chords" the instructor can utilize to reach the student are: giving students a voice, being personable, and focusing on course objectives. Much like a chord of three strands, the teaching process is more effective if these three chords are working in alignment with each other, rather than in disparate means. Giving students a voice was the first factor identified in the factor analysis, and it is composed of numerous questions on the student survey (3, 9, 4, 1, 8, 16, 14, 11, 1, 17, 15, 6, 13, and 18). Some of these include students feeling like they are listened to, students knowing their ideas will be accepted, and instructors facilitating discussion on controversial topics. This chord focuses on the third and sixth key findings of this study, namely to create a safe environment where students have a voice and using class activities that encourage student's growth to greater independence.

Being versatile, the second factor identified in the factor analysis (Questions 2 and 12) combines an instructor utilizing humor and being knowledgeable in the course material. Yet, for the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence, this chord is called "personable" because this was

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the highest rated factor in the student survey and it incorporates being versatile. People who are personable are able to use multiple tactics to "switch" teaching methodologies from using humor to more concrete fact-based knowledge based on the circumstance. Additionally, in this category are instructional practices instructors use to connect with students such as stories and letting students know it is a safe learning environment. This chord incorporates the first four key findings of this study, namely being personable, sharing real life stories, creating a safe environment and using humor in the classroom.

The third chord, identified as the third factor (Question 13) is an instructor focusing on course objectives. This is also the fifth key finding or takeaway from this study – focusing on course objectives.

Whether and instructor is cognizant of it or not, students are perceiving and assessing an instructor based on these three chords as well – it is what "connects" the student and instructor. So, some instructors may mainly focus on delivering course objectives, which "strengthens" this chord by connecting academically with the students, while being rather impersonal and relying heavily on one-way communication. This type of instructor would be easily identified as a "lecturer". Other instructors may be highly personable by telling jokes and being friendly inside and outside of the classroom, yet they do little to engage students with classroom content. This instructor would be known as a "fun" instructor. The third type of instructor, who is strong in using student engagement activities, yet is not very personable and students do not learn much course content.   This instructor would be an "easy" instructor. There are numerous variations of how instructors can be represented on this scale. The important things to note is that all instructors are perceived through these chords, and with intentionality, instructors can use these chords to become more effective in their teaching ability. Being aware of the student audience

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and modifying the instructional approach by utilizing humor at the appropriate times or giving students more voice or focusing more on course objectives is what truly makes teaching successful.
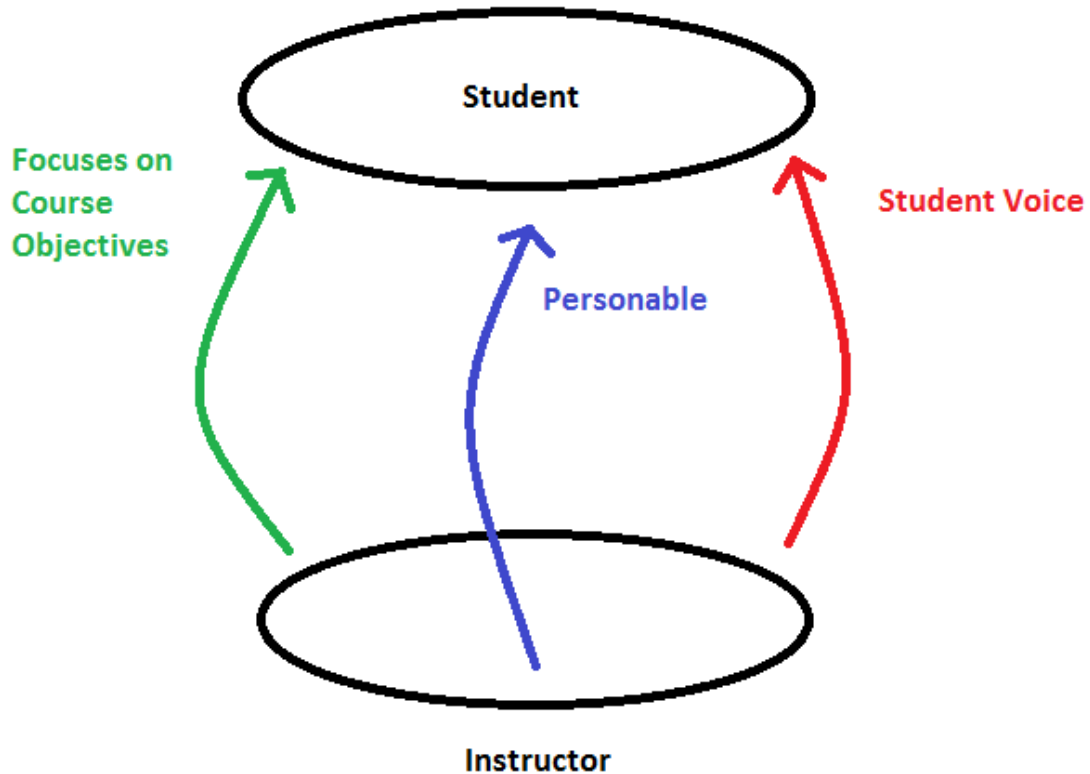
Student

Focuses on Course Objectives

Student Voice

Personable

Instructor

Figure 13. Huddy model of instructional excellence.

Focusing on course objectives is the traditional focus of higher education. Without fulfilling course outcomes, a college course becomes "watered down" and pointless. Giving students a voice and allowing them to engage with the course concepts is a more contemporary higher education topic often described as active learning. Here students contribute to the learning environment through reflection, debate, and hands-on activities. The third chord, being personable, is a concept that is underutilized in higher education, yet, based on this study it

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seems to be an effective tool. "Humor" was the question on the survey that most dramatically increased between the two groups of instructors. Yet, humor, used exclusively would not be appropriate focus of a college instructor. That is why all three chords should be utilized together to engage students academically, emotionally, and intellectually.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, there are two recommendations for higher educational institutions to implement for effective instruction:

1. **Operationalizing Productive Vulnerable Teaching Techniques with the Higher Educational Classroom**

The purpose of this study was to operationalize "vulnerability" within higher education, yet based on the findings from this study, vulnerability used independently is ineffective. Productive vulnerability is most useful in forming bonds or connections between the instructor and student, which is often referred to as being "personable." Therefore, as an outcome of this study, it is proposed that productive vulnerability is defined as "the ability of instructors to relate by using personal stories and humor to connect with students or change the mood of class so that students feel safe to share their voice and participate in course activities and become involved in self-discovery and exploration of course learning objectives."

2. **Integrate the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence to Higher Educational Settings through Faculty Development Trainings**

The Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence could be a huge asset to instructors across the globe as it simplistically, yet powerfully identifies the three main contributors to effective classroom instruction. The model can be drawn on a whiteboard and the concepts explained on how all three chords work together to engage students. Examples can be provided and an

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example of each of these chords practically demonstrated in class, such as a joke that would be appropriate in a Biology 101 classroom or a personal story that could accompany a business case study. Next, faculty would be asked to identify what their weakest chord is and then brainstorm how they could improve or "strengthen" this chord during the following semester. Faculty would be held accountable to put this idea into practice by their supervisor.

Suggestions for Future Research

While the purpose of this study was to create clarity around the complex construct of instructional vulnerability within the undergraduate college classroom, the findings from the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study both led to discussions about instructional excellence and effective instructional techniques that are not necessarily "instructionally vulnerable". The top six indicators of an effective instructor (being personable, sharing real life stories, creating a safe environment, using humor, sticking to course objectives and using class activities that encourage student growth to great independence) are not inherently implicit of vulnerability or an instructor's willingness to take an emotional risk. Therefore, it is suggested that another study is conducted exploring the extent vulnerability plays in instructors being personable, sharing stories, or using humor, etc.

It is suggested that a future study examine the three chords of the Huddy Model of Instructional Excellence, namely focusing on student objectives, being personable, and allowing for students to share their voice and how these concepts intersect with vulnerability. To isolate the role vulnerability plays, students could be provided scenarios of how these three constructs would be practiced in a college classroom and asked to choose which scenario they would prefer. Students could be provided with one vulnerable option and the other would **not** include a clear "risk" or vulnerability from the instructor. For example, students could be asked "Would you

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learn more from an instructor sharing a personal story of how they made a poor hiring decision and the consequences they faced or from an instructor sharing a case study about a Fortune 500 company making a hiring error and its consequences." Each question could draw from the three main chords identified in this study, and by asking these questions in a dyad fashion, a researcher could analyze how an instructor's vulnerability directly impacts instructional excellence.

Gender bias would be another interesting topic for further research. Of the excellent instructors who participated in this study, two were male and four were female. Both of the male instructors commented that humor was the teaching tactic they used most often, and even necessary to what they defined as an effective teaching. None of the female instructors commented on intentionally using humor, even though their students reported that humor was used in their classrooms. Women instructors focused on being flexible in standards, relating course objectives to personal stories and sticking to course objectives, rather than mentioning humor. In fact, one instructor mentioned that being personable is not required for effective instruction. It is suggested that gender and humor-based instructional techniques be further explored in future research studies.

Another recommendation for further research is to ask excellent instructors to review summary data collected on excellent instructors. In the current research, excellent instructors were asked to review data collected from random business instructors. This data might not represent effective or successful instructional techniques; therefore, they were asked to comment on data that excellent instructors might not identify with. Excellent instructors may be able to comment on data that reflects effective instructional techniques they are used to implementing in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Use the following scale to rate your instructor on the below questions:

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1. My instructor is personable.
2. My instructor uses humor in the classroom.
3. I feel that my ideas and contributions in class will be accepted rather than criticized.
4. My instructor creates a safe environment.
5. I feel uncomfortable to talk to my instructor after class.
6. My instructor uses real life examples and stories to teach course concepts.
7. My instructor is good at clarifying expectations and providing constructive feedback to students.
8. My instructor is humble.
9. My instructor listens to me, and I have a voice in class.
10. My instructor admits when he or she is wrong without trying to cover it up.
11. I can be "me" in class.
12. My instructor provides knowledge and is typically not available for outside of class instruction.
13. My instructor sticks to the course objectives set at the beginning of the semester without deviating from them.
14. My instructor asks students to contribute stories from their life or work experience.
15. My instructor accepts errors as a natural part of the learning process.
16. My instructor avoids discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgements.
17. My instructor uses class activities that encourages student's growth to greater independence.
18. My instructor relates class material to problems students face in everyday life.

_____

20. Have you applied course concepts from this class to your life?

Yes   No

21. If yes, provide an example of how you have applied course concepts.

_____

22. In your opinion, how effective is your instructor at teaching course concepts?

Ineffective   Somewhat Ineffective   Indifferent   Somewhat Effective   Highly

Effective

23. In your opinion, how much have you learned in this class about the course topic?

Not Much   A little   Some   A good amount   A lot

24. How much do you trust or feel comfortable sharing personal information about

yourself with your instructor?

Not Comfortable   Somewhat Comfortable   Indifferent   Comfortable   Highly

Comfortable

25. How much do you trust or feel comfortable sharing information about yourself with

your classmates?

Not Comfortable   Somewhat Comfortable   Indifferent   Comfortable   Highly

Comfortable

26. What is your gender (male or female)?

27. What is your current grade in this class?

F   D   C-   C   C+   B-   B   B+   A-   A

28. What is your class standing (freshman, sophomore, junior or senior)?
29. What is your current grade point average in college?

Below 2.0   2.0-2.5   2.5-3.0   3.0-3.5   3.5-4.0

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APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology Student

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

VULNERABILITY IN THE CLASSROOM: HOW UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS INSTRUCTORS' ABILITY TO BUILD TRUST IMPACTS THE STUDENT'S LEARNING EXPERIENCE

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Shannon Huddy M.B.A. and Dr. Eric Hamilton at Pepperdine University, because you are a student at Sierra Nevada College and your class was randomly selected to be surveyed. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for you records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to learn about effective instructional techniques within the college classroom.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to…

1. Read this document and either provide your consent to participate or remove yourself from this study with no consequence. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not want

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to participate, please indicate this to the researcher and you may leave the room until you are instructed to return.

2. Participation will take place in a group setting but we ask you refrain from conversation to maintain the integrity of individual responses.

3. Complete the survey which includes questions relating to student perceptions of classroom instructional techniques. Demographic information collected will be restricted to class standing and grade point average. A personal computer or smart phone is necessary as Survey Monkey will be used in survey administration. It is a short survey and you will have up to 15 minutes to complete the survey.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study are minimal, but may include boredom or fatigue.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include: insight and further understanding of into effective colligate instructional techniques.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study will be rewarded with class participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Responses from these surveys will be shared with selected faculty to gain further insight into how instructors view vulnerability in the classroom. The survey responses will be first tabulated and aggregated to protect the identity of individual students. I will keep your records for this study anonymous as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also

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access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to

protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators

office. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be de-

identified and utilized for research purposes. There will be no identifiable information obtained

in connection with this study. Your name, address or other identifiable information will not be

collected.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss

of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and

discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or

remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION
The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items
which you feel comfortable.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical

treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine

University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION
I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have

concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Dr. Eric Hamilton at

xxxxxxx@pepperdine.edu if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

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If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University.

Los Angeles, CA 90045, xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxx@pepperdine.edu.

APPENDIX C

Notice of Approval for Human Research

Date: February 25, 2016
Protocol Investigator Name: Shannon Huddy
Protocol #: 16-01-177
Project Title: Vulnerability in the classroom: How undergraduate business instructors' ability to build trust impacts the student's learning experience
School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Shannon Huddy:
Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in* Research: Policies and Procedures Manual at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.
Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.
Sincerely,
Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson
cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist

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