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Teacher Self-Disclosure From the Perspective of International Students in the Communication Classroom : A Case Study

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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Darlene J. Geiger for the Master of Science in Speech Communication were presented May 1, 2000, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Teacher Self-disclosure from the Perspective of International Students in the Communication Classroom: A Case Study.

Self-disclosure as an interpersonal concept was developed almost 40 years ago with the work of Sydney Jourard (1964). Although the original definition included nonverbal forms of communication, the concept has evolved since then into an 'intentional act of sending verbal information about one's self' (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1972; Wheeless, 1976; Wheeless & Grotz, 1977). In contrast, the present study broadened the definition for self-disclosure to include nonverbal behaviors and took a new methodological approach to understanding the effects that self-disclosure can have for international students in the communication classroom context.

Teacher self-disclosure from the perspectives of international students is an unexplored area and therefore a phenomenological, qualitative case study approach utilizing both focus groups and individual interviews was most appropriate given the purpose and population. Schutz's (1932/1967) social phenomenology and Philipsen's (1982) case study provided the theoretical framework, while Seidman (1998), Luborsky (1994) and Lofland and Lofland (1995) were combined methods used for data collection and subsequent analysis.

Based on analysis of the data, this study revealed findings significant to understanding self-disclosure in terms a receiver model for communication. Whereas research in self-disclosure has primarily relied on a sender-centered model of communication, a receiver-centered model was more appropriate for understanding international students' perspectives. Distinctive nonverbal features considered by participants as sources of information about the teacher included time, silence, space and distance, and body behavior. International students of this study seemed to be using both verbal and nonverbal behavior as information regarding the teacher.

Understanding the impact that teacher nonverbal behavior has on the relationship, more specifically the learning experience of international students, has the potential to maximize learning outcomes in the communication classroom for all students. This thesis proposes a more complete definition for self-disclosure, one that includes nonverbal behaviors as sources of information about the teacher. Based on a composite of the a priori and data-driven definitions in this study, a working definition was created for future explorations of self-disclosure.

TEACHER SELF-DISCLOSURE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY

by

DARLENE J. GEIGER

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This thesis is dedicated to:

Jane E. Geiger
and
Robert W. Geiger

Mom and Dad, you have endlessly offered your love and encouragement.

Thank you both forever, I love you.

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Although my name appears alone on this thesis, I have never felt alone in the process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 4: Research Questions and Methodology

Chapter 5: Findings for Key Categories

Chapter 6: Discussion

TABLES

FIGURES

Chapter 1

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the international student's perception of U.S. native teacher self-disclosure in the U.S. classroom context. Two relevant areas for consideration are the literature on self-disclosure, in general, and the changing composition of the U.S. classroom. The research on self-disclosure in interpersonal communication has primarily followed the work initiated over thirty years ago by Sydney Jourard (1964). Self-disclosure has been considered in the research on such theories as *uncertainty reduction* (Berger, 1979; Berger & Calabrese 1975) and in relation to such concepts as *appropriateness and liking* (Cozby 1972) and *attraction* (Archer, Berg, & Runge, 1980). These theories, as well as much of the extant literature on the subject, have held similar definitions of self-disclosure that emphasize verbal self-disclosure. In addition to having similar conceptualizations for the definition, the methodological approach has primarily remained quantitative regardless of the context within which it was thought to occur.

Although limited, studies have considered self-disclosure in the classroom context (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Nelson, 1992; Sorenson, 1989; Youlles, 1981). However, the foregoing research primarily investigated self-disclosure from a quantitative perspective, and even fewer studies have considered self-disclosure in the context of a multicultural classroom (Jourard, 1961; Melikian, 1962; Nelson, 1992).

In general, the classroom environment in the United States has gone through many changes in the past twenty years; more specifically, it has evolved from a mostly

Anglo-American with some selected cultures represented, to a multicultural even international context. According to the Digest of Education Statistics 1996, international student total population in the U.S. had increased every year for 15 years (1980-1995). In 1995 the total number of international students enrolled in institutions of higher education reached almost .5 million with South and East Asian students comprising close to 58% of the total population. European students comprised the second largest population at 14.3% followed by Latin American students (10.4%), Middle Eastern students (6.7%), North American students (5.2%), African students (4.6%) and finally, Oceania (1%) (Table 408).

Minorities and international students are increasingly changing the demographics of the college classroom. Despite this new context, the definition for self-disclosure continues to reflect a western, mono-cultural bias. The present study examined self-disclosure in an attempt to expand traditional conceptualizations of self-disclosure for a more contemporary classroom context consisting of a multicultural group of students, doing so utilizing a qualitative rather than quantitative approach.

Theoretical Assumptions

With a few exceptions (Bradac, Tardy & Hosman, 1980; Derlega & Chaikin, 1988), the literature on self-disclosure in general, reflects a definition that makes it an intentional verbal act (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1972; Sorenson, 1989; Wheeless, 1976). This common definition as, "persons who voluntarily disclose information about themselves" (Berg & Archer, 1983, p. 269) carries important

implications for the classroom teacher and students. From this perspective the teacher, as part of any lesson plan, strategically discloses or withholds information about herself making it a conscious act; she has control of all information about herself that is available to the students. Taken to its logical conclusion, students would only acquire personal information about the teacher through what the teacher tells them about herself. Based on this definition, most unintentional behaviors such as dress and facial expressions would not reveal personal information about the teacher to the students. Intuitively, this does not seem true for U.S. native students, and even less so for international students.

It makes sense that one could make inferences about the person based on nonverbal behavior: what she is like as a person, based on her teaching approach and patterns of interaction, or even based on her physical appearance. Granted that most knowledge would be based on inference; however, one can envision justification for such inferences. Teacher verbal self-disclosure would not be necessary for the student to know the teacher as a person (eg: her values and assumptions). For international students who may be non-native English speakers, the teacher's nonverbal behavior may tell them more about the teacher than the words she may use to describe herself. The emphasis for the international student may be on the nonverbal forms of self-disclosure, rather than the verbal. Therefore, the definition for this study includes nonverbal behavior.

Self-disclosure Defined

Based on the foregoing, the definition for this study includes both verbal and nonverbal forms of self-disclosure (Bradac, Tardy & Hosman, 1980; Derlega & Chaikin, 1988). It also includes consideration of the context and the teacher-student relationship (Sorenson, 1989). For this study teacher self-disclosure is defined as:

> Teacher's verbal and nonverbal acts in the classroom that may or may not be related to subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn without having interaction with that teacher.

There are several important elements of this definition. First, nonverbal forms of self-disclosure are relevant to understanding the other. Second, disclosures may or may not directly relate to content. This has implications for how self-disclosure occurs and is interpreted by students. Third, the definition is dependent on interaction with the teacher; it is important for the student to have direct contact. The research questions were formed with this definition in mind.

Research Questions

The research questions were broadly based with the intention to explore the international student's experience of self-disclosure in the communication classroom. The aim of taking a broader definition of self-disclosure into the research is to consider the possibility that inferences can be made about the teacher based on both verbal and the nonverbal behaviors.

RQ1: What do international students consider to be teacher self-disclosure?

RQ2: How do international students perceive teacher self-disclosure? (Affect)

RQ3: How is international student uncertainty affected, if at all, by teacher self-disclosure? (Self-disclosure as a strategy for reducing uncertainty)

Additional sub-questions were derived from these primary research questions:

1. Based on the perceived role of the teacher in U.S. communication classrooms, what constitutes as acceptable teacher self-disclosure? (student-teacher roles)
2. What levels of self-disclosure do international students consider as appropriate for the communication classroom? (appropriateness)
3. What feelings do international students express as a result of teacher self-disclosure? (affinity and liking)

Researcher Background: My Interest in Self-disclosure

The research process and findings of this study are the result of shared research between another graduate student, Susan Kuhn and myself. We share an interest in the communication classroom, both in terms of relevant communication theory and the experiences of international students who have come to the U.S. in pursuit of an education. Although we share common interests, our chosen research areas differ. This study is specifically interested in the experiences of international students with regard to teacher self-disclosure, while Susan's research focuses on uncertainty as experienced by international students. Although our interests overlapped in particular areas, the specific topic for each thesis stands alone; therefore it was necessary to write separate, but complementary theses.

Having earned my undergraduate degree in communication and continuing that interest at the Master's level while also teaching related courses, I have made observations about self-disclosure as both a student and a teacher. As an undergraduate student, I have had teachers who self-disclosed as part of their teaching approach and others who did not. As an instructor, I have both intentionally and unintentionally disclosed information about myself through verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

Being aware of self-disclosure as student (receiver) and teacher (sender) throughout my classroom experiences, I held some beliefs about what occurs in communication classrooms. I vividly remember an incident at the end of the third grade when I asked my teacher who was the baby in the picture on her desk. When she told me it was her baby I realized for the first time that she was not only my teacher, but she was also somebody's mom. Since then, I have enjoyed teacher self-disclosure not only for learning about my teachers as people, but I have also found disclosures useful in learning about interpersonal communication.

I have realized that my own disclosures have been influenced by my experiences as a student, which in turn has affected my teaching style. I agree with Smith (1996), who reiterated Buber's (1958) I and Thou philosophical assertion, that it is the ethical responsibility of the teacher to "make the effort to come to know the student in that person's wholeness, a process that inevitably requires considerable disclosure of our selves, with all the anxiety that may involve" (p. 10). I make an effort to know the names of my students and to develop an interpersonal relationship

where mutual respect underlies the learning experience. This is delicately balanced with a "careful 'holding back'" that often requires a level of "detachment on the part of the teacher" (p. 10). With regard to the international student, I wondered if teacher self-disclosure would be relevant to the learning experience...and so began the search for a clearer understanding of balance, as it is uniquely applicable to the communication classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the study, its purpose and how researcher interests and extant theoretical assumptions provide the foundation for topic inquiry. The definition of self-disclosure and the research questions are further explored in the chapters that follow.

Chapter two consists of a review of the self-disclosure literature that has evolved over time and resulted in a definition of self-disclosure that is primarily reliant on verbal, intentional acts by the self. Beyond the definition, chapter two reviews the literature pertinent to this particular study including the functions and factors that have influenced its conceptualization over time as well as the treatment of context.

Chapter three provides an introduction to culture and perception in order to understand the influence that one's culture has on the individual. Also included in this chapter is a brief discussion of sample characteristics and cultural backgrounds of those represented in the study sample. Chapter four explains the underlying philosophy for this particular research, as well as the specific methods used in the

collection and analysis of data. Chapter five reports the findings and chapter six engages the reader in a discussion of overall findings, strengths and limitations of this study, as well as areas for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature on self-disclosure is immense. This chapter identifies the most pertinent research related to self-disclosure and the college classroom as context. The first sections directly address self-disclosure: the definitions, functions and factors involved in understanding its conceptualization over time. The next sections reveal the importance of context for a better understanding of self-disclosure in the communication classroom. Context is explained in terms of social and cultural research with the final sections examining the literature on student-teacher role pairs and the application of self-disclosure in a multicultural classroom.

Definitions for Self-Disclosure

The definition of self-disclosure remains fairly consistent in the literature; self-disclosure is the communication act of verbally revealing personal information about oneself to another person (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1972; Wheeless, 1976; Wheeless & Grotz, 1977). This common definition focuses most often on the verbal aspect of self-disclosure.

In contrast with the present verbal focus, Jourard's (1964) initial conceptualization included nonverbal features of self-disclosure (pp. 31-32); however, the nonverbal component of self-disclosure has gradually dropped out of the literature over time. The implications that this may have for students who place a greater

importance on the context are considerable when nonverbal is necessary for the creation of meaning.

There are a few researchers who chose to consider the nonverbal elements in their definitions. Bradac, Tardy & Hosman's (1980) definition included a broader spectrum for nonverbal features.

> "...Disclosure style comprises linguistic, paralinguistic, kinesic, and proxemic elements (Bradac, Hosman & Tardy, 1978). Thus, someone can disclose personal information encoding his or her message in high- or low-intensity language, using a loud or soft volume of voice, making few or many gestures, and standing at a close or far communication distance" (p. 228).

Derlega and Chaikin (1988) tried to narrow the focus of nonverbal in their definition by limiting it to specific behaviors.

> Eye contact, a fleeting touch, or a special smile may be used to communicate personal information in subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways (p. 103).

The foregoing definitions are among the few that include both verbal and nonverbal forms of self-disclosure; however, the non-verbal dimension is seldom referred to in later research. Thus current conceptualizations of self-disclosure are almost exclusively purposeful, verbal self-disclosure. Additionally, most of the research on self-disclosure has utilized a quantitative approach, operating with definitions whose focus has concentrated on verbal self-disclosure and the functions that self-disclosure can serve in interpersonal situations (Archer, Berg & Runge, 1980; Chelune, Skiffington & Williams, 1981; Collins & Miller, 1994; Dindia & Allen, 1992; Wheeless.& Grotz, 1977).

As mentioned in chapter one, the definition of self-disclosure for this study included both verbal and nonverbal forms of self-disclosure. It also included

consideration of the context and the teacher-student relationship (Sorenson, 1989). For this study teacher self-disclosure is defined as:

> Teacher's verbal and nonverbal acts in the classroom that may or may not be related to subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn without having interaction with that teacher.

Functions for Self-Disclosure

Beginning with Jourard's research (1964, 1971b), self-disclosure was believed to be necessary for and central to producing healthy interpersonal relationships and ultimately, a healthy individual. By the late 1970s, Rosenfeld (1979, p. 74) relays that the research on self-disclosure "has been shown to have a large number of benefits: increased trust" (Wheeless and Grotz 1977), "increased liking" (Cozby, 1973), and "increased attraction" (Gilbert and Horenstein, 1975).

The degree of depth (*quality*) and breadth (*quantity*) of information disclosed (Chaikin & Derlega, 1974a/b; Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1973) were investigated in subsequent studies and appeared to allow researchers to predict outcomes for self-disclosure. Depth considers the intimacy level of the disclosure and breadth refers to the amount of information offered. Cozby (1972) found a curvilinear relationship between *high-low levels of self-disclosure* and liking using concepts of depth and breadth. Altman and Taylor's Social Penetration theory (1973) was founded on the notions of depth and breadth. The theory suggests that when both breadth and depth of information is increased in a relationship, the level of intimacy will also increase. Using notions of depth and breadth, existing research had identified more and more benefits for self-disclosure. However as more potential benefits (functions) were

identified, influencing factors in predicting efficacy of those functions also emerged as relevant to understanding self-disclosure.

Influential Factors in Self-disclosure

In addition to the functional view of self-disclosure as a concept, self-disclosure is subject to other factors that influence its course and outcome in various interpersonal situations. Factors include the perceived relationship of participants and the physical context in which interpersonal relationships exist. For this research the identified relationship is that of teacher-student and the context is the communication classroom. Interpersonal situations can also be influenced by factors such as *level of intimacy* and *cultural expectations*, both of which are examined in this study.

This research focuses on the perceptions of self-disclosure of eight international students. Based on data collected during the pilot study, the influencing factors selected for inclusion in this study were chosen because they appeared in the reported perceptions of students, and are considered relevant to understanding the classroom experiences with regard to both teachers and students. The factors for consideration included appropriateness, reciprocity and uncertainty reduction, and attraction. This next section examines more closely each of these factors as they are discussed in the literature on self-disclosure.

Appropriateness

Appropriateness of self-disclosure refers to the level of intimacy for information given in a particular context. Chaikin and Derlega explain that

"disclosing intimate information about oneself at the wrong time or to the wrong person may reflect inadequate socialization or maladjustment" (p. 588, 1974a). They point out the context as a determinant of appropriateness. On the other hand, Gilbert and Horenstein (1975) stress the relationship between perception of the recipient toward the appropriateness of disclosure and liking the discloser. They determined that the "appropriateness of disclosure, as it is perceived by the recipient, is an important determinant of the effect it is likely to exert on the relationship" (p. 317).

Collins and Miller (1994) further clarified the relation between self-disclosure and liking in a meta-analytic review. "Observers appear to develop more positive beliefs about others who are willing to disclose personal information about themselves" (p. 465). This may be because "disclosers and recipients appear to share a common understanding that self-disclosure communicates something more than the actual content of what gets exchanged" (p. 471). However there are moderating variables for liking that were found in this review including "study paradigm, type of disclosure, and gender of the discloser" that suggest a "dynamic interpersonal system" within which the effects of self-disclosure are integrated (p. 457). This makes the concept extremely difficult to determine using cause-effect methods.

This led Collins and Miller (1994) to conclude that "rather than thinking of causality as operating in only one direction, we assume that variables have reciprocal effects on each other" (p. 470). What this means is that appropriateness is first determined by the context and then it can be influenced by any number of factors relevant to either the sender or receiver; however no studies were found in this

literature review that determine appropriateness of self-disclosure in an intercultural classroom context. The intercultural classroom context as a factor in determining appropriateness of self-disclosure may also reveal the likelihood for reciprocity.

Reciprocity

The notion of reciprocity, as developed by Altman & Taylor in their book Social Penetration (1973), assumes that subjects tend to reciprocate a similar intimacy level of self-disclosure in an interaction. Intimacy level can be described using "onion-skin" as metaphor. The layers of the onion progress from relatively "quite superficial and inconsequential" (p. 55) information (e.g., sex, age, and personal history) on the outer skin to intermediate layers, containing "attitudes and opinions about various issues" (p. 17) and then finally, the core of the onion represents one's fears, self-concept and basic values. The discloser becomes more vulnerable as the revealed information comes from deep within the core (p. 18).

As a strategy for reducing uncertainty, self-disclosures revealed at an appropriate level for the context will elicit a similar level of disclosure from the target person to the extent that outcome is perceived as reward rather than cost and intimacy level for topic is similarly taken into account. When topic for disclosure was applied to reciprocity in a cross-cultural study with Koreans, it did not prove valid. Won-Doornink (1985) found that "Koreans are less likely than Americans to reciprocate self-disclosure by discussing the same topic as that initiated by the other person" (p. 97). Reciprocal self-disclosure is considered an interactive strategy used in the reduction of uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Uncertainty Reduction

Uncertainty Reduction theory suggests that humans communicate from a position of inquiry: "attempting to understand himself and those with whom he has relationships" (Berger, 1979, p. 123). Uncertainty as a cognitive state may occur on different levels; if the level of "cognitive uncertainty is decreased, persons are more likely to assert that they know and understand each other" (p. 126), and therefore there is less uncertainty in the encounter. The theory is considered a model used in initial encounters between people to predict and explain human communication behaviors (Berger, 1979; Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Three strategies were discussed in subsequent studies: passive, active and interactive (Berger, 1979). These strategies were described as "plans...to find out things about others in order to reduce their uncertainty about [others]." Passive strategies involve being an unobtrusive observer or rather, having a "lack of direct intervention." The active observer must "exert some kind of effort in order to find something about the target person." The interactive strategy requires both persons to "engage in direct symbolic exchange" (p. 134). The theory of Uncertainty Reduction offers self-disclosure as an interactive strategy used as a means of reducing uncertainty in a relationship (Berger, 1979; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Gudykunst, 1983, 1985).

There have been other studies that have applied uncertainty reduction theory cross-culturally (Goldsmith, 1992; Gudykunst, 1983, 1985,1986; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Gudykunst, Nishida & Schmidt, 1989; Sanders, Wiseman & Matz,

1991). Hofstede (1986) incorporated uncertainty into his life-long research of individualism and collectivism in culture. When considered "as a characteristic of a culture, [uncertainty] defines the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations which they perceive as unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable, situations which they therefore try to avoid by maintaining strict codes of behaviour and a belief in absolute truths" (p.308). However, Hofstede never directly speaks of self-disclosure as a means of reducing this uncertainty.

Findings from studies in the classroom context revealed that teacher self-disclosure reduced student uncertainty (Nelson, 1992) and increased liking (Nelson, 1992; Sorenson, 1989). These results appear to favor the original theory as proposed by Berger and Calabrese (1975), using similar subjects as in previous studies: primarily U.S. white, middle class college students. This literature review only found one cross-cultural study that has considered the use of self-disclosure as a means for reducing uncertainty in the classroom (Nelson, 1992).

Nelson's (1992) results are based on the use of culture-specific examples used by an international teaching assistant to explicate concepts for U.S. native students in the university classroom. The U.S. students are the subjects. Despite the familiar approach in conceptualization and methodology, Nelson is the only one who has considered self-disclosure as a means for reducing uncertainty in the classroom context, but with U.S. native students and an international teaching assistant. No studies could be found that examined the opposite configuration: native US teacher

self-disclosure perceived as a strategy for reducing uncertainty from the perspective of the international student.

Attraction

Interpersonal attraction occurs when one person develops an interest toward or a positive impression of another person. There are infinitely many factors that can affect attraction, including similarity, physical beauty and complementary needs; but according to Trenholm & Jensen (1996) we may never be able to completely understand the reasons why one particular person is attracted to another. We can however, speculate on the effect that self-disclosure has on one's attraction towards the discloser.

Chaikin and Derlega (1974a) connected the act of verbal self-disclosure to the level of attraction toward the discloser. Subjects observed strangers exchanging self-disclosures at varying levels and at different rates of reciprocity. The subjects were most attracted to the people who used the appropriate level of self-disclosure for the context and appeared to reciprocate at the same intimacy level as their partners. With these findings, Berg and Archer (1983) studied attraction in direct relation to equally reciprocated intimacy levels. They found that "attraction was greater for an intimate [disclosing partner] than a non-intimate [disclosing] partner when topics for disclosure were the same" (p. 269). In both preceding studies, the participants were of equal status; on the other hand, examining attraction in the teacher-student relationship would be a study of unequal status interaction.

Curran and Loganbill (1983) studied attraction with pairs of unequal status in a counselor-patient context. In a search for ways to increase a group leader's attractiveness in a counselor-patient relationship, "high levels of self-disclosure were found to have a significant effect on attractiveness" (p. 350). Self-disclosure "enhanced the perceived attractiveness of a group leader" in a laboratory situation where participants were randomly assigned to groups (p. 353). This suggests that the relation between self-disclosure and attraction will stand when applied to role pairs of unequal status. However when the theory is applied cross-culturally, the results may appear to contradict traditional findings.

In a study of Japanese college students, Nakanishi (1986) found that Japanese students rated low levels of self-disclosure more positively than high levels when asked to respond to situations between two Japanese college students of the same sex. Although Nakanishi's study is limited to Japanese students who are of equal status, the advantage is that his findings "might be used to validate our general insights into variations in communication patterns within cultures and across cultures" (p. 183). Barnlund (1989) further notes that "the introspectionist emphasis found in Eastern religions is regarded by and seems more congenial to the Japanese than the expressionist emphasis found in Western religions and philosophy" (p. 116). In other words, because the underlying values of the Japanese culture do not emphasize self-expression, this may be one context where increased levels of self-disclosure would not necessarily result in increased attraction.

Self-disclosure and the Importance of Context: Social and Cultural

In her research on self-disclosure and uncertainty reduction in the U.S. classroom with an international teaching assistant and U.S. native students, Nelson (1992) suggested the context is "an important element in the reduction of uncertainty" (p. 43). She further acknowledges that "the relationship between self-disclosure content and context in reducing uncertainty merits further research" (p. 44). In other quantitative studies where classroom context with unequal pairs was considered an important element in determining the outcome of a particular variable, similar assessments of context were made (Sorenson, 1989; Goldstein & Benassi, 1994).

In Goldstein and Benassi (1994) self-disclosure was positively related to student participation, that is when teacher self-disclosure increased within the classroom, student participation also increased. They realized "that the positive relation between teacher self-disclosure and class participation is a function of the interpersonal context created by such disclosures and not just the examples of class concepts that such disclosures provide" (p. 215). In their study, both the interpersonal relationship and the context in which interaction takes place are important elements affecting student participation. It is important to note however, that the positive relation between teacher self-disclosure and class participation was determined from a sample of U.S. students and teachers from thirty different disciplines. The communication classroom context may present new information regarding the relation between self-disclosure and classroom participation with other than U.S. native students.

Sorenson (1989) further emphasizes the importance of context as it relates to self-disclosure when she states "that perceptions of self-disclosure in the classroom [context] may be a critical variable in determining the relationship between teacher and students" (p. 261). The relationship between the U.S. native teacher and the international student is unique, not only because self-disclosure for this role pair has not been considered from the point of view of the international student but also because the international classroom context has not been thoroughly examined in the literature. In terms of the international classroom asserts Paige (1983), "human environments are complex social organisms that deserve greater attention in the theoretical and research literatures" (p. 109). The emphasis on context, both social and cultural, for understanding teacher self-disclosure will help to develop a greater awareness of the impact that such disclosures can have for international students.

Context of the Communication Classroom

Sorenson's (1989) is the only study to consider self-disclosure in the communication classroom. The sample consisted of 617 students who were enrolled in two basic communication courses. However, the relevance to the discipline was not discussed as part of her research. A principle reason why the communication classroom was chosen as the context for the present research is due to the interests of the investigators. More than that, it is assumed that the communication classroom is unique from other university classrooms in many ways, specifically in its approach to teaching content; that is, the relationship between teacher and student, as integral to the process of teaching/learning content in communication, demands a transactional

view of communication where sender and receiver simultaneously create reality. The traditional view of classroom interaction would have the teachers as sender and the students as receivers. In the communication classroom the teacher is also a receiver and the students are also senders. Relationships in the classroom can be viewed using communication models.

The traditional model for communication in the classroom is sender centered (Sprague, 1999, p. 16); the teacher transmits information to students who simply receive knowledge like water placed in a vessel. There is no exchange involved in the one-way transfer of knowledge. As research and common experience would contend though, the sender adjusts the message as the receiver sends verbal and nonverbal messages in response; there is an exchange between sender-receiver; this is two-way communication. Thus a transactional view of communication reinforces notions of mutual "responsibility in communication and the [mutual] construct of a relationship between the communicators" (Lederman, p. 9). The transactional, two-way form of communication is better suited than the linear, one-way form for describing the context of the communication classroom.

In this next section, the communication classroom context is reviewed including students, teachers, the interaction between students and teachers, and the methods and objectives for instruction of content. Communication as it exists in our everyday lives is nothing new to college students.

> "The vast and intricate symbolic systems associated with the use of oral language in human interacting are so integral to the everyday living of even the youngest members of the human species, that these abilities are easily seen as

> 'natural,' as comparable more to breathing than to learning" (Lederman, 1992, p. 4).

Since birth, crying and smiling communicate meaning to the caregiver. As we grow, we "know how and when to use the language and in what ways" (p. 4). On the other hand, communication as an area for study is not familiar to most college students, and for those who have had some classroom experience previous to entering the college classroom, they see it as something one 'does' or must learn to "do" (as in giving speeches or resolving conflict). The "paradox," as Lederman explains is that "students who enter it [the communication classroom], enter with a wealth of experience with the process for communication, but with few skills for insight into that process" (p. 5). "Communication is not just another content area for students to master or even just another academic skill" (Sprague, 1999, p.18). The communication teacher combines the experiences of the individual student with course theory (i.e.: conceptualizations, models, definitions, etc.) to guide the student toward insight.

The teacher is someone whose position is inherently dominant. "Simply by having the title of instructor/professor, the teacher is perceived as a credible source of information on the subject matter...the teacher has a profound impact upon the learning process (Kolb, 1984)" (Lederman, p. 7-8). The learning process takes place quite differently for individual students and teacher communication styles differ from one another as well. For the teacher to effectively teach a group of individuals, she would strive to adjust her teaching style to student learning styles in order to have a truly profound impact. The student who must also go through some form of adjustment, also provides feedback that will aid in the teacher's process of adjustment.

In this sense, relationships are developed in order for the teacher to maximize learning for all students.

Lederman (1992) recognizes two components of the teacher's relationship with students in the communication classroom: the teacher's relationship to course content and with the students themselves. The instructor of any course has knowledge of a particular subject and the students conceivably want it. The communication teacher must present him or herself as someone who has knowledge of communication and can use this knowledge effectively in relationships so the students will also want the knowledge that the teacher has. "Within the Communication field, students expect to view a teacher as a model of personal communication competence as well as a communication scholar" (Galvin, 1999, p. 252). The students expect teachers to have and use this knowledge not only in terms of content/information imparted, but also in their interactions in the classroom as well. Invariably, the relationship becomes a strategy for teaching course concepts that affect communication and is affected by it. It is not uncommon for a teacher of communication to speak of the current interaction realities in a meta-analytical sense with students in an effort to identify course concepts with current communication situations.

The relationship between teacher and student is played out in the methodology of instruction that the teacher chooses to use in order to achieve the learning objectives of the course. Depending on the objectives, the teacher may involve one or more of the three aspects of the learning environment--cognitive, affective and behavioral--in order to achieve particular learning objectives (Bloom, 1976). "Cognitive objectives

are those outcomes which involve intellectual mastery or understanding. Behavioral objectives are outcomes involving action. Affective objectives are feeling-level or experiential outcomes" (Lederman, p. 21). Depending on the level of learning, a teacher chooses which methods to employ. For instance, to teach the concept of ethnocentrism it would be helpful to give a definition and origins of the concept in a lecture (cognitive). Then the teacher would have students simulate an experience where ethnocentrism is likely to occur (behavioral) so that they can feel what it is like to be ethnocentric (affective). "Most academic disciplines at the college level emphasize the cognitive domain, and Speech Communication is no exception. However, instructional goals from the other two domains are evident throughout our curricula" (Sprague, 1999, p. 23-24). By using all three aspects of learning, the student has hopefully had more of a continuous learning experience with regard to the concept of ethnocentrism and is thus able to incorporate knowledge about their own communication into future interactions.

Lectures, discussions and experienced-based learning all can be found in communication classes. A continuous learning experience with the three objectives of cognitive, emotional and behavioral would most likely include a mix of classroom strategies. The instructor is in the influential position to choose effective strategies that positively impact student learning. "Certainly one of the contexts in which the role of the relationships between people has significant impact is the classroom" (Lederman, p. 10). "The teacher as well as the student must attend to the intentions and understandings of the other to sustain a valued teaching-learning interaction"

(Sprague, 1999, p. 254). Because the teacher can choose the strategies for continuous learning, the student-teacher relationship is essential for understanding which strategies would prove most effective for a particular student or group of students. This is why a transactional model of communication in the classroom would be most suited for understanding the relationship between teacher and student in the communication classroom.

"Relationships between people and their impact upon the communication in the classroom are an important aspect in the creation of an environment conducive to learning" (Lederman, p. 11). What this implies then, is that the teacher in the communication classroom has an ethical responsibility to create a supportive environment where effective communication about communication can occur on all levels of learning. This most likely involves genuine interest toward developing interpersonal connections between teacher and student.

The Social (Relationship) Context: Teacher-Student Roles

Roles can be conceived of from the perspective of being static, dramatist or interactive (Galvin, 1999). A static view is most traditional and suggests the role of teacher is to be consistent, that is, teachers come to class prepared, they treat students fairly and they evaluate student performance. The dramatist view regards teacher as performer; this view parallels teacher as playing parts to facilitate learning (i.e.: expert, authority, supporter, etc.). The interactive perspective views the role of the teacher as dynamic and "describes each party [students and teachers] in an interaction as mutually involved...teachers and students are engaged in a constant mutual

influence process with each simultaneously affecting how the other communicates" (Galvin, 1999, p. 243-244). However one chooses to view the roles of teacher and student, they exist in every society in one form or another and influence how one views the process of teaching and learning.

Hofstede (1986) discusses teacher and student as an archetypal role pair that is "played in different ways" in many societies (p. 302). The roles are patterns reinforced through generations and are defined as the "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another" (Hofstede, 1980: p. 25). The international students who come to learn in the context of U.S. higher education have at least eighteen years of cultural programming in their own learning institutions before entering the U.S., college classroom. Hofstede has identified four basic problems in this transition.

> As teacher/student interaction is such an archetypal human phenomenon, and so deeply rooted in the culture of a society, cross-cultural learning situations are fundamentally problematic for both parties. The problems lie in the following areas:
>
> 1. differences in *social positions* of teachers and students in the two societies;
> 2. differences in the *relevance of the curriculum* (training content) for the two societies;
> 3. differences in *profiles of cognitive abilities* between the populations from which teacher and student are drawn;
> 4. differences in *expected patterns* of teacher/student and student/student interaction (italics added, p. 303)

An example of expected patterns for an archetypal role pair in Japan is revealed by Ulrich (1986) as being opposite from that seen in the U.S. "The Japanese do not interact in the classroom with each other or with the teacher as is encouraged in the U.S....In both the Japanese HS [high school] and UNI [university], the teacher and

student relationship is not as 'open' and communicative as in the U.S." (p. 94). Ulrich identifies the differences as related to the social position for the pair. "With the prevailing value of hierarchical relationships, students and teachers are not recognized as 'equals' in Japanese society. However...they [students] indicate that they would like this behavior but not that the teacher actually treats them this way [as equals]" (p. 98).

The difference in expected patterns of interaction and the perceived status of the individuals involved is precisely where Hofstede predicts these differences will occur. Levy (1997) found that "a student in a class which is more multicultural will see the teacher in a different way than the same student in another class which is less multicultural" (p. 48). For instance, Levy found that "the greater the number of cultural backgrounds in the class the more cooperative the perception of teacher behavior" (p. 45). Levy further reported that perception of teacher dominance in the class changes with cultural demographics. For instance, "the more students from the U.S. who speak English who were in the class, the more submissive was the class perception of teacher behavior" (p. 44). It is clear that one's own culture as well as the cultures of others with whom one comes into contact, influence perception in the classroom.

The context of the communication classroom in the U.S. is one in which international students are engaged in the mutually influencing process of teaching/learning. However, this may not be the expected patterns for interaction with the teacher-student archetypal role pair for the international student, and may elicit a

view of the teacher role that was not experienced in international students' native countries. At least in communication classrooms, "roles are no longer taken for granted or prescribed; rather they are negotiated and renegotiated within a particular context" such as in the intercultural classrooms of this study (Galvin, 1999, p. 244-245).

Self-Disclosure in a Cultural Context

As noted in the section, *Self-disclosure and the Importance of Context* (p. 17), recent research has considered self-disclosure in the U.S. classroom. Verbal self-disclosure has been documented to increase classroom participation and learning (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Nelson, 1992; Youlles, 1981). However, the increasing presence of the multicultural classroom context presents a variety of unforeseen influencing factors. For instance, if the student-teacher role is perceived differently by international students, their expectations for what self-disclosure is and the appropriateness of it in this context may contradict commonly held beliefs about self-disclosure in the classroom. The student may react differently than U.S. native students in relation to self-disclosure related concepts such as uncertainty reduction, reciprocity, appropriateness and attraction. Other indicators of possible difference that may affect classroom interaction as well as perception of teacher self-disclosure include Hall's high-low context continuum and Hofstede's model for individual and collective cultures.

High and Low Context: Edward T. Hall (1976) developed the notion of contextualizing cultures in Beyond Culture, a frequently cited book that serves as a

key resource in the intercultural communication literature. In this book, he identified a continuum that is used to characterize the communication message in a particular context. "A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person...a low context (LC) communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" (p. 91).

The implications that these characterizations have for self-disclosure are simple. Someone from a high context culture is not as likely to verbally self-disclose in a situation because much of the message meaning is inherent in the context. Someone from a low context culture is expected to disclose information because assumptions about context are not inherent to the interaction. "Context is the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event" (Hall & Hall, 1998).

The degree to which individuals attend to and infer meaning from the information around them is another way to look at context as either high or low. For example, Japanese culture is often used as an example of a high context culture in contrast to the U.S., which is considered a low context culture.

> Japanese, Arabs, and Mediterranean peoples, who have extensive information networks among family, friends, colleagues, and clients and who are involved in close personal relationships, are high-context...Low context people include Americans, Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians, and other northern Europeans; they compartmentalize their personal relationships, their work, and many aspects of day-to day life (Hall & Hall, 1998, p. 201).

Often the interpretation of information in a high context culture is derived through previously established knowledge about relationships and the current nonverbal

interaction taking place in a particular environment. The interpretation of information in a low context culture is primarily derived through extensive verbal exchange, including a most recent update of the relationship for interaction. Every culture has both high and low context features associated with it; Hall's taxonomy is useful for understanding specific behaviors in any given context. Another taxonomy for understanding culture is Hofstede's collectivism and individualism scale.

Collectivism and Individualism: Hofstede (1998) identifies fifty countries as either collectivist or individualist cultures in values and assumptions. An individualist culture is one in which the ties between people are 'loose':

> *Everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism* as its opposite pertains to *societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty*" (p. 346).

An example of an individualist culture is found within the United States where "telling the truth about how one feels is the characteristic of a sincere and honest person." This is in contrast to "a collectivist family [where] children learn to take their bearings from others when it comes to opinions. 'Personal opinions' do not exist: they are predetermined by the group" (p.348). "Lots of things which in collectivist cultures are self-evident must be said explicitly in individualist cultures. [For instance,] American business contracts are much longer than Japanese business contracts" (p. 350).

Although Hofstede never directly addresses the issue of self-disclosure within these societies, it becomes obvious that the self is considered central to an

individualist society, whereas it may not even be considered in a collectivist society. For instance in Japanese society, which is considered a collectivist and high context culture, Sugita (1992) confirms that the concept of self-disclosure does not directly translate. Barnlund (1989) explains, "perhaps the closest approximation to the idea of a self would be to regard the Japanese as having a 'contextualized self,' the ego incorporating within it all other members of the primary groups to whom one owes allegiance" (p. 116). The fact that the concept of an individual self is not central in Japanese culture and that self-disclosure is not part of ordinary language suggests that perhaps the Japanese will perceive self-disclosure differently than U.S. natives.

There has been much criticism that these taxonomies tend to compartmentalize culture. The first and most obvious criticism is based on who and where the research was conducted: white, U.S. native males primarily considered interaction in the business context. The second criticism is that the taxonomies tend to simplify behavior, which easily leads to misunderstandings in actual intercultural encounters. Despite the tendencies to compartmentalize and overgeneralize, the taxonomies provide a starting point from which a broad understanding of human behavior can develop into specific ideas.

Conclusion

The self-disclosure literature can be overwhelming. Many scholars have considered the positive functions for self-disclosure in an effort to make the concept useful for obtaining desired outcomes during interaction. The verbal component of

self-disclosure was emphasized because it was readily observable; however, the focus on the verbal has revealed a number of influential factors (i.e.: appropriateness, reciprocity, uncertainty reduction and attraction) that have made the quest difficult in determining a cause-effect for human behavior.

The difficulty is further compounded when nonverbal behavior is taken into consideration for a more complete definition of self-disclosure. After reviewing the literature and the numerous influences that can affect the outcome of self-disclosure, it becomes clear why the verbal component was emphasized over time and the nonverbal component essentially dropped out of the definition when context, both social (relationships) and cultural, has been identified as possibly the most influential aspect in considering the outcomes for self-disclosure.

Thus in this chapter a literature review began with the traditional definition of self-disclosure. The functions for self-disclosure and the influencing factors affecting outcome were followed by the importance of context, both social and cultural. The cultural context can be initially considered in terms of Hofstede's (1980) and/or Hall's (1976) taxonomies, but neither provide complete understanding of the individuals in a particular context. They do however, have implications for the way self-disclosure is examined in the intercultural classroom setting. For instance Hall's high-context culture, which tends to rely on nonverbal forms of communication for meaning, implicates the need to include nonverbal behaviors for examining self-disclosure in a classroom that includes students from cultures that have been identified as high-context, such as Japan.

The next chapter, *The Influence of Culture,* will take a closer look at the cultural context of the classrooms for study, as well as provide an introduction to culture and general information about the participants' native country educational systems. The U.S. university classroom consisting of international students and U.S. native teachers is a context in which self-disclosure remains unexamined and therefore a pilot study, which is discussed in chapter four, was necessary to formulate the interview guide and research questions used in the final study.

Chapter 3

The Influence of Culture

Introduction

A look at Hofstede's (1980) cultural "programming" (also see this thesis p. 26) of each participant is necessary for understanding the reasons why these particular international students might perceive the classroom situation and the role of the teacher differently than U.S. students. It was necessary to include this information as a separate chapter due to the complex influence that culture inevitably has on the classroom context. More specifically, the influence that culture may have on perceptions of self-disclosure.

The first section of this chapter defines culture, worldview and perception so that the reader has a sense of how cultural programing takes place and the profound influence it has on the individual. Second, the internationalization of education in the U.S. and the importance of having international students as part of the classroom for global learning to take place on all levels is discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the demographic profile of the study sample, which is included here so that the reader may connect the general cultural information to the particular participants in this study. The chapter concludes with a general overview of the individual cultures represented in the sample, including such features as the goals of each culture's educational systems, the role of the teacher and student, and the like.

Definitions of Culture, Worldview, Perception and Communication

Samovar, Porter and Stefani (1998) define culture as

> a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning (p. 36).

Culture is not genetically predetermined, but a shared system of meaning that is learned, just as communication is learned. It is multidimensional and all pervasive. One learns how to communicate through interaction with one's culture. Culture is also necessary for the individual to be able to communicate his/her thoughts and feelings. Culture is necessary for understanding one's self, similar to seeing one's reflection as necessary for a conscious existence; to be born without culture is to be born without a sense of self.

Culture can be viewed in broad sense--U.S. culture, Japanese culture--or it can be viewed as more specific and individually based--that is, one's family, friends and various groups. Thus, each person participates in multiple "cultures" and is influenced by them. As Martin and Nakayama (2000) note, "we see the world in particular ways because of the cultural groups (based on ethnicity, age, gender and so on) to which we belong" (p. 30). The Friday happy hour crowd is a culture in which the individuals who regularly attend have shared beliefs, values, customs and artifacts that bring them together. A closer look at the definitions for beliefs and values will help to explain the influence of culture.

Beliefs are "convictions in the truth of something"--with or without proof (Samovar et. al., 1998, p. 58). Beliefs are learned through one's trusted sources.

Whether it is the daily newspaper, an elder or Holy Scripture, if the individual trusts it as truth, then beliefs are learned. "One of the most important functions of belief systems is that they are the basis of our values" (p. 60). That is, the enduring attitudes about the preferability of one belief over another. Values are translated into action and thus cultural patterns of behavior are enacted through learned rules for what is considered "normal" behavior to a particular group of individuals.

Values also involve our assumptions about human nature, the nature of the physical and spiritual world, and fundamental beliefs about how humans should relate to each other" (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p. 30). Value orientations make up one's worldview, which provides the answers to philosophical questions such as the meaning of life.

> Worldview is a culture's orientation toward such things as God, humanity, nature, questions of existence, the universe and cosmos, life, death, sickness, and other philosophical issues that influence how its members perceive their world (Samovar et. al., 1998, p. 89).

The answers are "so fundamental [that] we rarely question them (Singer, 1987)" (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p. 30). Until one steps outside of one's own culture and into another where what is considered right and wrong is questioned, one may not have an awareness of one's own values. The primary function of values is to provide a system of criteria from which one can make judgments in order to understand one's own behavior and that of another. This understanding is regarded as perception.

"Perception is the means by which we make sense of our physical and social world" (Samovar et. al., 1998, p. 56). It is a process through which one can associate

new stimuli with that which is already known. Culture provides a base for what is already known and therefore perception is dependent upon culture for interpretation.

Communication and culture are inextricably bound together in that one continues to influence the other. Carey (1989) defines communication as "a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed" (p.23). This definition reflects a "ritual view" (Carey, 1989, p. 18) of communication where one's reality is brought into existence through communication (p. 25). In other words, individual perception affects and is affected by the communication rituals of one's culture.

Through communication, individual perception creates a belief system and many beliefs together form values. Value orientations make up one's worldview, which in turn affects perception, communication and therefore culture. The next section illustrates how cultures are increasingly coming into contact with one another, especially through institutions of higher learning.

Internationalization of Education

The discussion about foreign students as a population in U.S. universities is fairly recent. According to Paige (1983) the "post-World War II era has witnessed the emergence of U.S. colleges and universities as major educational settings for the world's students" (p. 103). He continues to say that

> Just as America's domestic minorities have jolted this nation into addressing such fundamentally important issues as race relations, equality of educational and occupational opportunity, women's rights, and a host of related problems, America's foreign-student minority will challenge us to examine critical

> foreign policy questions, the role of the United States on the world scene...Americans will be confronted with substantially different perspectives on a wide range of international relations problems (p. 104).

The increase of foreign students in U.S. universities presents new opportunities for the United States and for its students. Mestenhauser (1983) contends that foreign students are "underutilized resources" and that it is the responsibility of U.S. institutions to "broaden the educational goals in intercultural studies and adjust their views about evaluation of these goals" (pp. 157-168).

This means, as Furey (1989) points out, that "cultural values, the role of the teacher, modes of learning, teacher-student interaction patterns, and norms of interaction must all be considered in cross-cultural analysis" (p. 15). These aspects of the classroom must be re-evaluated for this new intercultural context that includes increasing numbers of international students. More specifically she states that "along with linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical factors, we must also consider cultural differences as we select, implement, and evaluate our teaching methods and classroom practices and orient our students to them" (p. 16). The literature tells us that from the level of the institution to the individual classroom, it is the responsibility of all educators in a multicultural society to not only utilize foreign students as resources for teaching and learning, but to also accommodate the learning needs of all students so that institutions of higher learning in the U.S. can become stronger entities in the new millennium (Mestenhauser, 1983; 1998; Paige, 1983; 1993; Dobbert, 1998).

Mestenhauser substantiates his claims of institutional responsibility on the philosophical arguments of Moscovici (1976) who speaks of the minority as holding a position of influence on society.

> "Every group member, irrespective of his rank, is a potential source and receiver of influence...Influence is exerted in two directions: from the majority towards the minority, *and* from the minority towards the majority...influence is a reciprocal process, involving action and reaction of both source and receiver" (pp. 67-68).

Although Moscovici never directly speaks of the international student, it is clear that the international student occupies a minority position within the U.S. university. It becomes even clearer that the sojourner's presence among faculty and other students is an invaluable resource for learning and must also be utilized in research to find out about their experiences from their own point of view.

Paige directly addresses the opportunities for influence, to which Mestenhauser alludes, in terms of the three modes of learning: cognitive, affective and behavioral.

> From these opportunities can emerge new knowledge about oneself and others (cognitive learning), a higher level of global knowledge (cognitive learning), empathy and greater appreciation of the aspirations of others (affective learning), and new behavioral repertoires for functioning in intercultural communication situations (behavioral learning) (1983, p. 106).

"In addition" Paige continues, "few settings are more conducive to and oriented toward new forms of learning and the expression of new ideas than the university. In theory, if not actual practice, the American university is an important context for intercultural learning" (p. 106).

Portland State University, for example is considered an urban campus, and as such attracts many people from varied backgrounds. According to *PSU's Fall Term*

Fact Book for 1999, international students comprise almost 5% of the total student population; there were 782 students from 68 different countries. Rather than being given the opportunity for making significant contributions to the university experience, one of the implications for such a small percent of the total population has been that international students may be getting 'lost in the crowd'. Unfortunately, international students are not viewed as resources for learning; instead they are often seen as being disadvantaged in their assimilation into the classroom culture (Mestenhauser, 1983).

International Student Demographics for this Study

This section describes the actual sample of international students drawn from PSU for this study. The eight international students who were eligible to participate (see p. 72) in this study were asked specific demographic questions (see Appendix D) related to sex, age, native country, time in the U.S., level of English and student history. The resultant information is organized in Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.

The first table (Table 3.1) reveals biographical characteristics about native country, first language, sex and age. International students, regardless of country of origin were eligible to participate in this study. It was purely coincidental that the sample consisted of one Yugoslav, one Australian, one Saudi Arabian and five Japanese students. The number of Japanese students was initially a concern, however when looking at the percentage breakdowns, Japanese students comprise almost 20% of the entire international student population at PSU. Yugoslav and Australian

students comprise less than 1% of this population and Saudi Arabian students comprise just under 5% (*Portland State University factbook,* Fall 1998, Winter 1999). The study sample contained three males and five females and ranged in age from 17-31 years old (average age was 23). Neither gender, nor age appeared to be an issue during data analysis.

Table 3.1
Participant Biographical Characteristics

Gender	Age	Native Country	First Language
Male	25	former Yugoslavia	Serbian
Male	22	Saudi Arabia	Arabic
Male	24	Japan	Japanese
Female	23	Japan	Japanese
Female	31	Japan	Japanese
Female	22	Japan	Japanese
Female	24	Japan	Japanese
Female	17	Australia	English

Although seven students did not speak English as their first language, each had studied English in their native countries prior to coming to the U.S. (see Table 3.2). One student learned English as her first language and therefore was not required to take the TOEFL examination (Test of English as a Foreign Language). International students who do not speak English as their first language are required to pass the TOEFL examination with a minimal score of 527 prior to entering into regular classes at Portland State University.

Table 3.2
Participant Study of English and TOEFL scores

NC Study Time	US Study Time	TOEFL
Native speaker		
3 years	10 weeks	515
5 years		-
6 years	20 weeks	533
9 years		550
10 years		534
10 years		575
10 years	10 weeks	547

Note. Dashes indicate data was not obtained (student unable to recall score)
NC= Native Country; US = United States;
TOEFL = Test of English as a Foreign Language

The average TOEFL score for study participants was 542, with one student unable to remember his score. International students will often take English Second Language (ESL) classes that are separate from regular course work at the University. Not all international students are required to take ESL classes; those students who come to the U.S. and pass the TOEFL examination may attend regular classes without taking ESL classes first. The average time spent studying English in their native countries was 8.9 years; only three of the eight participants having studied English in the U.S. before attending regular classes.

In addition to the foregoing, participants were also asked how long they had been in the U.S. (see Table 3.3). Participant time in the U.S. ranged from less than 2 months to 7 years for a group average of 2.34 years. Six participants were students for the entire time in the U.S.; two participants were briefly in the U.S. before becoming a student.

Table 3.3
Participant Time in United States (US)

Time in US	Time as student in US
0.2 years	0.2 years
0.6 years	0.6 years
0.8 years	0.5 years
1.0 years	1.0 years
2.5 years	2.5 years
2.6 years	1.6 years
4.0 years	4.0 years
7.0 years	7.0 years

Just as varied as the time spent in the US were the individual majors and interests in communication courses (see Table 3.4). Three participants were Communication majors, while the others represented four different disciplines with one undecided.

Table 3.4
Participant Major

Major	# of courses in Communication
Communication	6
Communication	6
Communication	6
Computer Science	2
Administrative Justice	2
Management Information Systems	2
Applied Linguistics	1
Undecided	1

In addition to the demographic data gathered for each individual, cultural reviews, that emphasize the educational systems for each participant, were conducted for each country represented in this study.

Cultural Reviews of Educational Systems in each Country

The following reviews constitute a general overview of the countries represented in this study. "Most cultures that have formal education systems teach much the same content--reading, mathematics, writing, and so forth--but educational differences can be found in *what a culture emphasizes and how the content is taught"* (Samovar, et al., 1998, p. 199). As with most cultural information, it is general and may or may not apply to specific individuals within that culture. The information presented here is a guide for the reader to recognize the varied approaches to teaching the youth of a particular society. They are each unique in interesting ways. The four countries represented in this study and are therefore part of this education review are Japan, Saudi Arabia, Yugoslavia and Australia.

Japan

The Japanese system of education is similar to the U.S. in that the levels of school are for similar ages: elementary, junior high and high schools. The similarities appear to stop there. The primary goal of the Japanese is referred to as "zenjin kyoiku," or "whole person education" (Wray, 1999, p. 49). Shaping student attitudes and behaviors so that they may conduct their lives as "orderly members of a group" is necessary for classroom management, and for developing student character. The

younger years of the Japanese students are regarded as a time for developing group consciousness. Teachers who work toward developing an "explicit emotive and bonding relationship" with their students elicit motivation and cooperation (p. 53).

The teacher is established as the authority of the classroom; however, the authority is not similar to that of the teacher's authority in the U.S. In the U.S. the teachers stress self-identity, personal autonomy and unique creativity, and appear to hold their authority as objective in the development of cognitive achievement. In Japan, teachers stress respect for others, self-control and restraint, and appear to hold their authority as integral to the imitation that takes place. Teachers are role models in this sense and "students learn by persistent imitation of proper form" (p. 64). As children enter and pass through junior high, entrance exams become the focal point for education in Japan. After junior high and again after high school, students take entrance exams that determine whether they will ultimately attend a prestigious university and have "social prestige, better income, and to be part of the ruling elite" (p. 157). Depending on which university accepts them, the student's life will be marked.

The pressures to do well at the lower levels of the system are tremendous and so children and their families seek supplementary support. Supplementary education is referred to as "cram schools" and is attended by most Japanese students in profitable institutions called *juku* and *yobiko*. Students attend these institutions after regular school classes and on weekends to further prepare them for successful entrance exams into the high schools and universities of their choice. Successful scores on high school

entrance exams will send students to the public schools, while those students who do not do as well on the exams will have to go to private schools. "Both schools charge tuition. An average family spends about 5 percent of its gross income on a child's public high school education; private schools cost twice as much" (Finn & Bennett, 1987). Pressures are not only felt by the children, the parents and teachers are also pressured to ensure student success and are evaluated based on that success.

The Japanese system of education can be summarized as rigorous. The teachers are strict role models and children are uniformly taught "moral values, character, and good habits, such as neatness, punctuality, and respect, as well as the three R's" (Finn & Bennett, 1987). Getting into a public high school can be compared to U.S. students seeking entrance into an elite university. The pressure is extreme and requires great amounts of time and money to ensure success. Placements in high school and ultimately university determine the child's position in society and whether the child will have the prestige and power of the elite.

Saudi Arabia

Education is Saudi Arabia is inextricably linked to Islam as a way of life. The philosophy of all levels of education in Saudi Arabia follows that of the Islamic religion and maintains the "process of education to be based for the performance of the duties of teaching an individual about God and his religion so that he may act according to its rules, for meeting the needs of society and for attaining the goals of the nation" (Al-Zaid, 1982, p. 35). There is no desire to separate religion from education. In fact to do so would be absurd because "Muhammad, who was Allah's

messenger, was both a political and religious prophet...Islam is a codification of all values and ways to behave in every circumstance, from child rearing to eating" to teaching and learning (Samovar et. al., 1998, p. 97). Education plays an intricate role in passing on the patterns for worship and rules for societal living, so that each individual may have God in every aspect of daily life and bring prescribed ethics with him or her to all situations.

All levels of education are nationally funded; no one pays tuition for their education at any level; only elementary level is compulsory (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1991, pp. 12 & 27). Students who attend higher education are selected to develop practical specialization in areas such as medicine, dentistry and teaching, thus meeting the needs of society at present and in the future while "allowing it to keep up with the beneficial development which realizes the aims and noble aspirations of the nation" (Al-Zaid, 1982, p. 51). Both men and women are able to attend university; however as with the lower levels of education, classes, faculty and in most cases, even the physical buildings are kept strictly separate between genders. If a teacher of the proper gender is not available to teach, accommodations are made. "When female university teachers are not available in certain subjects, women students are taught by men via closed-circuit television" (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1991, p. 13).

"Girls' education should be so set as to accommodate all girls who reach an age that entitles them to it, and should provide them with the opportunity to receive all types of education in accordance to their nature and compatible with the needs of the country" (Al-Zaid, 1982, p. 56). Men and women who have natural ability that suits

the needs of the Kingdom are allowed to continue their education after high school with no financial burden. In fact, those who become teachers are paid 1/3 more than professionals with comparable qualifications and have three months off in the summer (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1991, p. 59).

The teachers of Saudi Arabia are required to follow the uniform curriculum set by the centralized decision makers for national education: the Ministry of Education for boys and the General Administration of Girls' Education (GAGE). All textbooks are created and published by these agencies and their hired authors. The teacher is required to teach certain subjects for certain times during the day and the students are tested twice a year on the information that is laid out in the curriculum. The student-teacher relationship is formal in that "class management depends on a mixture of moral and chronological authority, persuasion, admonition, and punishment. Corporal punishment is officially prohibited but is commonly practiced at the elementary and intermediate levels" (Al-Baadi, 1995, p. 843).

Saudi Arabian education can be summarized as calculated. The Islamic religion and the politics of the Kingdom are clearly connected so that one can not exist without the other and the educational system is no different. Teachers, textbooks and students are all of the same religious cloth and the interests or needs of the Kingdom are primary to one's educational experience. Although education is free to everyone at all levels, as of 1992 statistics, illiteracy afflicts almost half of the population (Al-Baadi, 1995, p. 843).

Former Yugoslavia

While Yugoslavia as one constituent does not currently exist, the student in this study was actually educated in the traditional Yugoslav system before coming to the US. The most interesting aspect of the former Yugoslav educational system is the aim for every nation and national minority to be educated in their mother tongue (Kornhauser, 1988, p. 729). This is truly amazing when one considers the ethnic diversity of which Yugoslavia was comprised. For example, the Serbs, Croats, Moslems, Slovenes, Czechs, Turks, Macedonians and Montenegrins are all recognized as cultural entities who were among others not only guaranteed an equal chance for education, but guaranteed an education in their preferred language. This aim was consistent with the primary goals of the educational system to develop the "intellectual abilities and manual skills, as well as the cultural and social attitudes" of all students (p. 729). Cultural identity and intellectual growth was considered to go hand-in-hand in linking education and productive work "geared both to the needs of the individual and to the development of the community" (p. 730). The government was considered to be self-managed and education decentralized since most of the decisions concerning specific curriculum was at the local and individual levels.

Students were required to attend school through the eighth grade; after that, "guided or vocationally directed" education was the option of the individual. However, funding for education was not the direct responsibility of the government and self-managed communities had to decide who received funding (OECD, 1981, p. 65 & 92). Although federal allocations were made for education, the self-managed

local communities organized donations within the community to support needs beyond the government funds available. Students who wished to continue after the eighth grade were awarded grants based on family income and academic achievement (Kornhauser, 1988, p. 731). "There [was] no pretense that every student should be able to choose the subject of his or her own choice" (OECD, 1981, p. 69). It was assumed that if a student wished to continue his or her education, then he or she would be able and willing to enter into the work force with a skill at any time after the ninth year of school.

There was a strong emphasis on practical work skills and application. Teachers of the ninth and tenth years focused on vocational education that provided "basic professional knowledge and skills, which [were] then used and improved in the first year of professional work." At the eleventh and twelfth years, the teacher strongly emphasized "research and development work for industry, other parts of the world of work, and the local community" (Kornhauser, 1988, p. 732). University teachers were appointed to their positions and along with local industry and community members, played an influential role in the specific curriculum choices for students. This can obviously pose problems for students who wish to change from one curriculum to another; equivalence is difficult to measure "from the point of view of content and expected cognitive achievements" (Kornhauser, 1988, p. 734).

The position of the former Yugoslav educational system could be summarized as precarious and complex:

> No one inside or outside Yugoslavia can assume an assured and uninterrupted path to peace and prosperity. The traditional threat of disruption from without

> must continue to exist for a country poised between East and West and seeking actively to lead the non-aligned countries. Disruption from within is similarly always possible in a country so recently united after so long a fragmentation, and where the deliberate aim is to secure social accord not by the coercion of the state but by the free interchange of autonomous and interdependent communities. The balance between anarchy and autonomous, between regional freedom and federal control, between the market and the bureaucrat, citizen and Party member, is one of delicate complexity (OECD, 1981, p. 29)

Education in Yugoslavia had noble aims with regard to the individual cultures that existed and preferences of the teacher, student, community member, industrial worker and family member. In the decentralization of decision making power, each individual was responsible for creating and maintaining a self-managed society; however, as recent ethnic wars in the former Yugoslavia have proven to be irreconcilable, the question of whether humans are ready for self-management is certainly disputable.

Australia

The system in Australia is similar to the U.S. system of education in many ways since both are "populated mainly by people of European background and the basic institutional framework is British in origin" (McKenzie, 1995, p. 40). The goals of education in Australia are distinctive between the compulsory years and the secondary and above. In the compulsory years, approximately kindergarten through tenth grade, the main goal is to foster individual development and socialization. The secondary years and post years are aimed at the more broad economic and social goals of society.

Teachers have freedom to choose methods for instruction, particularly at the lower levels. Similar to the U.S., younger students are taught by a more generally

trained teacher, while older students are able to choose electives and teachers who are more specialized in that particular subject. At the higher levels, the clarity of expectations in the perceived relationship between teacher and student appears to be most important to the overall experience at that level. According to Prosser and Trigwell (1999) those students who perceived teaching to be "relatively good," based their responses on teacher clarity in expressing goals for the course, whether the teacher emphasized independent learning and achieved a certain depth for the subject matter (p. 69). A student-focused approach, where the teacher adapts to the needs of the students, is more likely to elicit favorable experiences of learning than an "information-transmission", teacher-focused approach (p. 162). Although a student-focused approach appears to be the preference for student learning, it is discussed in Prosser and Trigwell (1999) as occurring with substantial variation across teaching situations and primarily at the higher levels.

Education at the compulsory level is publicly funded and equally accessible to all people and is the responsibility of the individual states and territories. The curriculum reflects a general education that emphasizes "communication and research skills, computer literacy, and the ability to work in groups" (McKenzie, 1995, p. 41). Although private schools are generally free from government direction, the curriculum is often similar to the public school and will often prepare students in the same way. Private schools earn tuition from students in addition to allocations made at both the state and federal levels. "The states provide about 60 percent of all public expenditure on education, and the federal government 40 percent" (McKenzie, 1995, p. 45).

"Higher education institutions are autonomous bodies established under state legislation"; however, many are federally funded and supervised by a member of Parliament who is accountable to the Commonwealth (McKenzie, 1995, p. 41). Financial aid is available to students in a similar way to the U.S.; grants are made based on parental support and income level.

The Australian educational system could be summarized as equitable. Broad curriculum decisions are made at the state level so that the teachers can enjoy certain autonomy in choosing what to emphasize at the local level. Teachers also choose methods for instruction; however, just as the U.S. debates the issue of control "much uncertainty remains about the appropriate balance of state and local responsibility for schooling" in Australia (McKenzie, 1995, p. 40). Economic prosperity of the country encourages youth to attend twelve years of education and fifty percent of those students go on to higher education within two years of graduation (p. 43).

Conclusion

International students who come to the U.S. to obtain higher degrees are faced with an educational system that is, in most cases, very different than in their country of origin. Understanding their perceptions of communication behavior in the U.S. classroom will help to gain greater awareness of the internationalization of education. The countries represented in this study are Japan, Saudi Arabia, former Yugoslavia and Australia. The general education reviews provided here may or may not be reflected in the individual participant; it is only meant to provide a basis for

understanding the data. The next chapter will explain the method of data collection and subsequent analysis.

Chapter 4

Research Questions and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides the research questions and methods used to collect and analyze data. Traditional approaches to researching self-disclosure are discussed as well as the reasons why a new approach is necessary. A qualitative phenomenological case study is the approach used for inquiry into the definition for self-disclosure as perceived by international students. Issues of reliability and validity, details of sample size, type, recruitment procedures and the like are also discussed in the chapter.

Traditional Approach to Self-disclosure Research

Most of the research on self-disclosure that has been conducted uses a quantitative approach with primarily white, middle-class, U.S. college-age students as the subjects (Archer, Berg & Rung, 1980; Berg & Archer, 1983; Bradac, Tardy & Hosman, 1980; Chaikin & Derlega, 1974a, 1974b; Cozby, 1972; Gilbert & Horenstein, 1975; Miller, Berg & Archer, 1983). These quantitative studies were primarily in controlled environments capable of variable manipulation. The actual operationalization of the definition for the studies was translated into numerical representations for quantification in an effort to predict the effects of self-disclosure and potential outcome in relationships.

According to Hecht, Shepherd and Hall, univariate designs, which are commonly used in the self-disclosure research, "are inappropriate in cases where the

dependent variables are correlated" (pp.235-6, 1979). Chelune (1979) has discussed the fact that the unidimensional procedures used in self-disclosure are "limited in what they can contribute to the meaningful and systematic understanding of self-disclosure as a behavioral process" (Chelune, Skiffington & Williams, 1981). Seeking outcomes for self-disclosure appears to have stifled the understanding of self-disclosure as a behavioral process and generalizations have been made about self-disclosure without considering the varying communication contexts.

Qualitative Approach to Inquiry: A Phenomenological Case Study

It is my contention that self-disclosure research conducted in the context of the classroom requires a fresh approach, especially in light of multicultural influences. Not only has teacher self-disclosure not been qualitatively researched in the communication classroom, but also it has not been considered from the perspective of the international student. A qualitative approach is necessary for a more complete understanding of the implications that nonverbal behaviors (both intended and unintended) have for self-disclosure as a concept and the effect self-disclosure has in the communication classroom context. Again, for purposes of this study, teacher self-disclosure is defined as:

> Teacher's verbal and nonverbal acts in the classroom that may or may not be related to subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn without having interaction with that teacher.

This broadened definition allows the inquiry to remain flexible so as to gain the participants' experiences of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. This study is not

focused on numerical enumeration of data, but rather exploration of international student perspectives of what constitutes teacher self-disclosure and the impact, if any, that teacher self-disclosure has on student and the environment. This study attempted to clarify self-disclosure as a behavioral process occurring in the context of the university classroom. More specifically I sought to examine teacher self-disclosure, both verbal and nonverbal, in the communication classroom from the perspective of international students, using a qualitative phenomenological case study as a method for inquiry.

Phenomenology

Schutz's (1932/1967) social phenomenology served as the theoretical framework that guided the study and within which data were collected and analyzed. Phenomenology "refers to a consideration of all perceived phenomenon, both the 'objective' and 'subjective'" (Babbie, 1998, p. 281). Schutz (1932/1967) makes a distinction between the self-explication of a lived experience and the interpretation of that lived experience by another. The lived experience of any person is completely unique.

> One cannot "observe the subjective experience of another person precisely as he does...this experience of mine would then have to duplicate his experience down to the smallest details, including impressions, their surrounding areas of protention and retention, reflective Acts, phantasies, etc...In short, my stream of consciousness would have to coincide with the other person's, which is the same as saying that I should have to be the other person" (p. 99).

The self-explication of this lived experience is "confined to the self-interpretation of the person who lives through the experience to be interpreted" (p. 99). At this point, no one can enter into an understanding. The difference is when the self-interpretation

of the individual is explicated so that the observer can understand the experience through the concept of *signative apprehension,* more commonly referred to as the sharing of symbols to create meaning between two people.

Signative apprehension allows the observer understanding of an individual's experience only insofar as s/he is able to explicate the experience through use of a shared system of symbols. This process creates a type of intersubjective meaning for the lived experience. One is able to "'perceive' the other's experience if we did not imply that we directly intuited them in the strict sense but meant rather that we grasped them with that same perceptual intention with which we grasp a thing or event as present to us" (p. 100). A phenomenological perspective allows the researcher to report from the perspective of those actually participating in it; in this case, the perspective of the international student using his/her own words to describe perceptions of an U.S. teacher's self-disclosure.

For the phenomenologist, reality is embedded in the discovery of the participant's worldview. And it is only obtained through an active and disciplined process of inquiry. Here, according to Babbie (1998), is where the qualitative researcher attempts to "make comprehensive observations at the outset and then to winnow out any elements that originated in their own worldview rather than in the worldview of the people being observed and/or interviewed." "People are unique in alone constituting real objects and events, and giving meaning to the world" (Lu, p. 36-37). Phenomenology, as it is used in this study of the international's student

perception of teacher self-disclosure, serves as the philosophical underpinnings for report of a case study.

Case Study

Philipsen (1982) defines a qualitative case study as a "prose description, of an instance of a specified class of phenomena, which is written so as to permit cumulative analysis and interpretations of multiple instances of the class" (p. 4). Philipsen continues his explanation of the definition in terms of two, interdependent levels: qualitative description and qualitative abstraction. The first level, qualitative description, is just that. It is the words to describe the setting, the influence of the researcher on the phenomena observed, the approach to measurement, and the nature of the observer as participant relationship (p. 5). This level is purely informative in nature; it does not provide for interpretation.

Level two, qualitative abstraction, is derived out of the first level of description, and is where the researcher makes the move of telling the reader what it's all about. This level is where researchers make the "arguments about the class of phenomena they study" (p. 12). The implications of what has been described give meaning to the study, and possibly valuable insights into theory.

Philipsen (1982) identifies four uses of the qualitative case study, three of which are relevant to this study. The first is to generate hypotheses, or insights. Self-disclosure has not been researched from the perspective of the international student and is therefore open for new insight. The second use is to test the soundness of extant claims: in this study, that is the empirical generalizations in the literature related

to the concept of self-disclosure. These claims are reviewed at the level of abstraction for what Philipsen refers to as "grosser assessments of linkages and for detecting structural relationships" (p. 14). A third use of the case study is to "qualify the scope of extant claims," that is to question, verify, narrow or expand current claims in the extant literature. Unlike quantitative hypotheses that seek to predict and explain outcome, a qualitative case study employs research questions that are nondirective and exploratory in purpose; therefore, a pilot study was necessary before the research questions and final interview questions were constructed.

Pilot Study

Based on Hall (1976) and Hofstede's (1980) taxonomies (see this thesis, pp. 28-31) a number of working hypotheses was identified and pilot study was conducted.

1. International students from high-context cultures, who place greater importance on the *context* of the situation rather than on the verbal message, may reflect a different definition for self-disclosure.
2. Teacher self-disclosure may be viewed differently by the student who has another perception of the *role expectation* for the teacher.
3. *Direct forms* of self-disclosure may be considered to be more, or less favorable than *indirect forms*.
4. The *gender* of the teacher may influence whether or not the student will find self-disclosure appropriate or not.

5. International students may experience *uncertainty* but whether or not they wish to reduce it may change among those students who experience uncertainty, rather than avoid it as part of their culture.
6. *Nonverbal* forms of self-disclosure will affect the international student differently than the verbal.

To begin looking at student experience and teacher self-disclosure in the context of the classroom, a three-phase pilot study that was conducted in summer 1998. There were two purposes for conducting a pilot study. Phases I & III sought a basic understanding of international students' experiences and allowed for the testing and reconstruction of the interview guide used in the final study. Phase II aided in understanding teacher intentionality of self-disclosure and teacher perceptions of the teacher-student roles.

Phase I consisted of an "expert panel" composed of two international graduate students at Portland State University who were acquaintances of the researchers. They were individually interviewed about their experiences as students in U.S. university classrooms. One graduate student was from South America and the other was from Southeast Asia. General questions were asked about their experiences with self-disclosure and uncertainty reduction as students in both their native countries and in the U.S. These interviews served as the initial base from which more specific questions were drawn for the interview guide to be used in phase III.

Phase II of the pilot study consisted of an expert panel of teachers composed of two female, communication teaching assistants who were jointly interviewed to

ascertain teacher intentionality of self-disclosure and to learn about common practices in the communication classroom. Questions about teacher and student roles were asked along with specific questions regarding their perceptions of international students in the classroom.

Phase III of the pilot study consisted of a focus group with three undergraduate international students. One was from Indonesia; one was from Southeast Asia; and one was from Eastern Europe. They were recruited from an introductory communication course with a white, female U.S. native teacher. These international students provided further insight into the international students' experiences of self-disclosure with U.S. teachers. From each phase of the pilot study, the researchers gained a greater awareness of the overall experiences and perceptions of international students in university classrooms. More specifically, the pilot study helped to gain further insight into the pertinent questions of self-disclosure and uncertainty as they relate to the international student in the communication classroom context and how to frame those questions (eg, some interview questions were shortened, clarified or reworded).

Research Questions

In this study, the research questions are broadly based with the intention to explore the international student's experience of teacher self-disclosure in the communication classroom. The aim of taking a broader definition into the research is

to consider the possibility that inferences can be made about the teacher based on both the verbal and the nonverbal behaviors associated with teacher self-disclosure.

RQ1: What do international students consider to be teacher self-disclosure?

RQ2: How do international students perceive teacher self-disclosure? (Affect)

RQ3: How is international student uncertainty affected, if at all, by teacher self-disclosure? (Self-disclosure as a strategy for reducing uncertainty)

Additional sub-questions were derived from these primary research questions:

1. Based on the perceived role of the teacher in U.S. communication classrooms, what constitutes as acceptable teacher self-disclosure? (student-teacher roles)
2. What levels of self-disclosure do international students consider as appropriate for the communication classroom? (appropriateness)
3. What feelings do international students express as a result of teacher self-disclosure? (affinity and liking)

Both the primary and secondary questions guided methods for data collection and analysis in that the approach chosen was consistent with research aims and theoretical framework for understanding experiences from participants' points of view.

Methods for Data Collection

Two interview approaches were used in this study: focus groups and individual interviews. Morgan's (1997) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, served as a guide for the focus group interviews. The term "focus group" is broadly defined as "a

research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (p. 6). This study went beyond what Morgan suggests as the common goals of focus groups (to gain the attitudes and opinions of the participants) and into his preferred approach, which is to learn of the experiences and perspectives of the students (p. 20).

Based on experiences from the pilot study (see pp. 58-59), focus groups appeared to be most appropriate for the purpose of this study given the nature of the participants. "The simplest test of whether focus groups are appropriate for a research project is to ask how actively and easily the participants would discuss the topic of interest" (p.17). The participants in this study were international students who, in most cases, did not speak English as their first language and were not completely familiar with the interview as a form of communication. In this sense, the strength of using focus groups lies in the fact that this method can "'give voice' to groups that would not otherwise be heard" (p. 20). It can also provide a "useful starting point for individual interviews that involve unfamiliar topics or informants" (p. 22). The focus groups were used in conjunction with structuring individual interviews adapted from McCracken's "four-step method of inquiry" as described in *The Long Interview* (1988).

The first step in McCracken's four-step method, "review the analytic categories" consists of a thorough literature review to identify specific categories and relationships within which the data may appear. In this case, the literature review served to identify extant claims and potential areas for further research. It also

provided research questions, which aided in the construction of the interview questionnaire. Basically, this step began "to establish the domain the interview will explore" (p.31).

The second step, "review the cultural categories" one holds as a researcher, gives the investigator the advantage of having both an intimate familiarity and appropriate distance from the topic. This step is understanding of one's own cultural assumptions and categories within which one operates, identifying the biases and assumptions that one has about the topic and why they exist in the form they do. The assumption is that a "clearer understanding of one's vision of the world permits a critical distance from it" (p.33).

Step three, "discovery of cultural categories" grounded in the extant literature was relevant to focusing the interview guide, including planned prompts in a "general and nondirective manner" (pp. 34-35). In this case, it allowed for a better understanding of the sample population and the approach necessary for accommodating unique characteristics. For example after the pilot study, it was realized that a completely nondirective approach was too vague for participants; instead of approaching the interview from general to specific, the guide began with specific comparisons between the US and participants' native countries. General, more non-directive questions about US classrooms and teacher behavior were asked toward the middle of the interview and then followed by more specific concluding questions (see Appendices E-F). Another example of the accommodations necessary in this step was interview length. McCracken estimates the long interview to be two-

three hours; however, based on the pilot study, it was determined that international students start to experience language fatigue after one hour, and thus the actual time for an individual interview needed to be slightly modified to accommodate this population.

The fourth step, "discovery of analytic categories" takes place in a five step process that guides the researcher's record of reflection and data analysis. The process is consistent with Seidman's (1998) approach for analyzing data in that both seek to focus the data through a search for categorization (see following section).

Methods for Focusing and Analyzing Data

In determining which analytic method was best suited for this research, no single approach appeared perfect. Seidman (1998), Luborsky (1994) and selected pieces from Lofland & Lofland (1995) present themselves as most suitable when used in conjunction with one another.

Seidman's (1998) process for data analysis begins with full transcription of all interview data. This produces "an enormous amount of text [which then has]...to be reduced to what is of most importance and interest" (p. 99). Only then does the researcher engage in an inductive process of data reduction. Reading vertically through the transcripts, the researcher "brackets" passages that appear as important or of interest. "What is of essential interest is embedded in each research topic and will arise from each transcript" (p. 101). Sorting information that appears as important during bracketing provides for patterns and themes to emerge which "researchers can

later check with the participants to see if what they have marked as being of interest and import seems that way to the participants" (Seidman, 1998, p. 100).

Luborsky (1994) uses what he calls "theme identification" to describe the process of bracketing. What is marked in the data after a vertical reading is considered to be "of great meaning to a person(s)...the research task is more interpretive, requiring the investigator to identify importance by criteria internal to the discourse and to the speaker's own sense of significance" (p. 196). "Chunks" or "meaning units" are derived from the data and in most cases, generated from the participant words (emic). The chucks of data are then labeled as themes.

Luborsky defines themes as "manifest generalized statements by informants about beliefs, attitudes, values, or sentiments" (p. 195). Themes generated from an emic perspective lend credibility to findings in that they seek "to understand and reflect the informant's own views and words" and they primarily use "manifest and explicit statements rather than inference and background knowledge about the person or situation" (p. 195). This approach to focusing the data from the words of the participant is most consistent with the aims of a phenomenological study. Luborsky's themes are considered "low inference descriptors," which LeCompte and Goetz (1982) suggest the researcher uses to maintain internal reliability (p. 41).

After "bracketing" or "chunking" is complete, the researcher begins to shape data into a manageable size for interpretation and bracketed passages are grouped into categories and then studied "for thematic connections within and among them" (Seidman, 1998, p. 102). A horizontal reading of categories occurs at this phase to

find relationships among the excerpts in the category. In this next phase the researcher looks for "patterns" to describe the "findings from the researcher's frame of reference" (p. 195). In this interpretive phase, the researcher employs an etic perspective (his/her own interpretations), using analytic memos to systematically track analysis from the concrete to the abstract (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

Memos provide a means for the researcher to explain how the labels were assigned to the categories, ask emergent questions of the data and fashion possible logic for what appears to be happening. The memos are then sorted into more developed ideas and another memo may be written based on the first group of memos. This process is repeated until the researcher gains insight into key phrases and main ideas or issues (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p.194).

Lofland and Lofland's approach is complementary to Seidman and Luborsky's perspectives (p. 102). Although Lofland and Lofland are primarily interested in the analysis of social settings, there are selected pieces from Lofland & Lofland that hold interest for this research. For instance "roles" and "relationships" directly pertain to the experience of the international student in college classrooms. Perceived *roles* of student and teacher, as well as the *relationship* in which these roles are enacted compliments Seidman's (1998) approach in that it can provide additional ways of looking at the data in terms of societal domains.

Once relationships within and among categories have been discovered and documented, the researcher further conducts analytic interpretations. Finally, a reintegration of the data takes place during this phase; and the researcher can see how

the various categories are fit together and influence one another to "understand the details of people's experience from their point of view" (Seidman, 1998, p. 112).

Reliability and Validity

"The value of scientific research is partially dependent on the ability of individual researchers to demonstrate the credibility of their findings" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 31). This credibility to which LeCompte and Goetz refer is the validity and reliability of the study. The individual researcher has the ethical obligation to adhere as closely as possible to the cannons of reliability and validity in striving for authentic results. The following section outlines those factors that make a study, such as this one, both reliable and valid.

Reliability

Whether the findings of the study can be replicated will depend on the degree of reliability that is present. Reliability has both external and internal problems to consider in obtaining credibility. External reliability concerns itself with the issue of "whether independent researchers would discover the same phenomena or generate the same constructs in the same or similar settings" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 32). External reliability is not necessarily relevant to a case study because there is no intention of replication. Internal reliability is the degree to which other researchers would match given constructs with the data in the same way as the original researcher.

Although replication is not the intent of a case study such as this, strengthening external reliability none-the-less remains important. External reliability is enhanced

when the researcher recognizes and properly deals with "five major problems: researcher status position, informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises, and methods of data collection and analysis" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 37). In this study, external reliability is enhanced first through the dual status of the researchers. Both researchers hold roles of student and teacher within the university system, which allows for an inside approach to gaining information. Informant choices were clearly defined for the study as undergraduate, international students. Analytic constructs and premises, and methods of data collection were detailed.

Internal reliability is accounted for in this study in two ways: through the use of multiple researchers and the use of low-inference descriptors. First the research team discussed the meaning of what was observed and heard in interviews and the coding of transcripts until agreement was reached. "Crucial to internal reliability is interrater or interobserver reliability, the extent to which the sets of meaning held by multiple observers are sufficiently congruent so that they describe phenomena in the same way and arrive at the same conclusions about them" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 41). Low-inference descriptors, "verbatim accounts of what people say as well as narratives of behavior and activity," was the second way researchers were able to enhance internal reliability for this study (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 42).

Validity

"Establishing validity requires determining the extent to which conclusions effectively represent empirical reality and assessing whether constructs devised by

researchers represent or measure the categories of human experience that occur" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 32). Validity has both internal and external considerations. External validity refers to the degree to which such representations may be compared legitimately across groups" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 32), while internal validity refers to the extent to which the measurements used actually represent the reality of human experience.

In this study, external validity is the most difficult to ascertain given the originality of research. Teacher self-disclosure, as perceived by the international student, has not been extensively researched, it has also not been considered as being experienced differently than what the extant literature suggests with native, U.S. students.

Internal validity, concerned with accuracy of interpretation is enhanced in this study through use of participant quotes and subsequent member check. Following analysis, the researchers met a third time with selected participants to verify interpretations of the data. This, in addition to consultations with research partner, Susan Kuhn, allows the study to claim greater validity in its findings [LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, pp. 41 & 47].

Every attempt was made to enhance reliability and validity of this study, but as LeCompte & Goetz (1982) stress, "attaining absolute validity and reliability is an impossible goal for any research model" (p. 55). Reliability in replication can be the researcher's goal and the criteria for credibility kept in mind, however "because human

behavior is never static, no study can be replicated exactly, regardless of the methods and design employed." (p. 35).

Sample Type and Size of Current Study

The students who were asked to participate in the central study met three criteria for inclusion.

1.) Participants were undergraduates at Portland State University at the time of the study.

2.) Participants had taken or were currently taking a lower division course (non-public speaking) in the Communication Department with a white, U.S. native, female teacher.

3.) Their student classification was "International Student" in the U.S., which means they hold a non-immigrant student visa.

Undergraduates were chosen because more lower division courses are offered in the Communication Department than graduate courses. Public speaking courses were eliminated because it was assumed that speaking apprehension, common to many students in public speaking courses, would greatly influence international student experiences. International students were chosen because it was assumed that their experience is distinct from other students in the classroom. International students would be more aware of the patterns for interaction simply because they can observe behavioral differences that native students may not notice because they are so

naturally a part of U.S. student experience. International students were also chosen because as a population, they are underrepresented in classroom research.

The length of time in U.S. was initially a consideration; however, based on the responses in the pilot study it did not appear that student understanding of the U.S. classroom and student-teacher interaction differed significantly--whether they had been here ten years or eight months. Kamal and Maruyama (1990) reinforce this idea with their findings based on Qatari students studying in the U.S. The data suggested that "positive attitudes [toward American people] do not result simply as a function of time spent in proximity with Americans...it appears that particular types of contact promote the development of positive attitudes" (p. 130). Attitudes were dependent on context rather than length of time. It is assumed that context overrides the individual's length of time in the U.S. for this study as well.

Sample size was limited to eight to ten international students. The intention to keep it small was two-fold. In the pilot study it became clear that to gather valuable, in-depth information, we needed to allow more time for interaction before, during and after the interviews. It was necessary to take greater care in establishing a comfortable environment by offering food and drink and light conversation to break the officious interview setting. The size of each group was limited to two or three participants so that students' pauses were not interrupted as often and the opportunity to speak was greater. It was also clear that this population was not familiar with the interview process and basic notions of turn taking would need to be established. With this approach, the participants would hopefully feel more comfortable in speaking about

their experiences. Fewer interviewees per sessions and overall attention to unique differences in sample population helped to establish the interview process and enhance interviewee comfort. It also became clear during analysis that the data received from the sample proved to be rich with experience and reflective observation. In fact, more participants may have hindered findings in the above mentioned ways.

Comments by McCracken (1988) lend support to the decision of taking care in this instances. He contends that "it is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than more superficially with many of them...eight respondents will be perfectly sufficient." He further reminds the quantitative social scientist that "this group is not chosen to represent some part of the larger world" (p. 17). This is a case study that is more interested in testing extant conceptualizations than with making generalizations.

The researchers decided to conduct the focus group interviews with each student before the individual interviews for three reasons. First was to establish a level of comfort for participants in which they could speak about their experiences. By having two-three participants in a group, no one student was totally responsible for offering information. The second reason follows the first in that the population for research is not only diverse in their familiarity with the interview process, as mentioned earlier, but they are most likely not also experienced in self-disclosing their feelings and attitudes about teachers or classroom. The third reason for beginning with focus group interviews is that, overall, the interview questions were more broadly

formed for the focus groups, becoming more narrow in the individual interviews (see Appendices E-F).

Contacting International Students

Subject recruitment was perhaps one of the more difficult aspects of the study due to the specificity of our selection criteria. Class rosters from winter term, 1999 for all lower division, non-public speaking, Communication courses with white, female, U.S. native teachers were compiled. Human Subjects stipulated that International Education Services identify the international students on the rosters (see Appendix A). The rosters were given to them along with the criteria for invitation. International Education Services identified 11 possible participants from 11 rosters and provided telephone numbers and addresses for each.

Letters were sent to each student explaining the purpose of the study, the researchers' interests and the expectation that participation entailed (see Appendix B). Individual phone calls followed the letters by one week. Of the 9 who agreed to meet for the first interview, only six actually showed and one was unable to interview because only he showed. Of the five remaining participants, we were able to conduct two group interviews: one with two students and one with three. Due to the low number of recruits, we quickly decided to gather the rosters from fall term 1998 and follow the same procedures to recruit three additional students for additional group interview.

From 13 rosters, International Education Services identified 14 international students as potential participants. After letters were sent and calls were made, two students agreed to meet with us. A student who did not show during the first set of focus group interviews was called again and he agreed to meet with us. All three participants participated in the third focus group. From two sets of rosters and twenty-five letters, we were able to meet our minimum requirement of eight participants.

The Interview Site and Process

Although the context of the classroom is the focus in this study, the research site is considered to be where the interviews took place. Most of the interviews were held at a coffee shop on campus that has a conference room available for customers. If the room was not available when we needed it, we conducted the interviews at a library study room. The coffee shop was our first choice because it provided a more casual atmosphere and we had permission to bring food and drink. Similar to the library, it was quiet with tables and chairs. However, the coffee shop has many windows that face a walkway on campus, which was refreshing, and it was much more relaxing with food. The great care taken in establishing environment was determined necessary for the sample type.

As the participants arrived we offered them food and drink. After twenty minutes of introductions and light conversation, a consent form (see Appendix C) and a demographics form (see Appendix D) were presented before the actual interviews began. The forms were read aloud while the participants followed with their own

copies. A brief summary of intent and process was followed by time for questions. The participants each signed the forms and gave one copy to the researchers and kept one copy for themselves. The interview officially would begin after all this had been established.

The first two interviews were both group interviews; one group had two people and one group had three. The next three interviews were individual. A third group interview was held, followed by the remaining three, individual interviews. Total interviews included: three group interviews and six individual interviews. Total number of participants was eight; six students were interviewed individually and two students were not. The majority of the data collection, including three focus groups and six individual interviews was completed in a period of five weeks.

All interviews, except two of the individual interviews, took place in the coffee shop. The focus group interviews averaged fifty-five minutes and the individual interviews averaged fifty minutes. After each interview the participants seemed pleased to have talked and no one refused a subsequent interview. Actual time with participants was often more than the average time reported for recording. As mentioned, we would take time for introductions and social talk. After each interview we stayed until they decided to leave. So actual time spent with participants was half to one full hour more in each case.

All interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed for a total of nine transcripts. Transcription was difficult due to accents and outdated equipment. To ensure the most accurate data, both researchers shared the process of transcription.

We each transcribed half of the tapes, re-checked for accuracy with a second listening before exchanging tapes with each other. To further ensure accuracy, we reviewed each other's transcriptions while listening to the original taped session. Any revisions/additions were added and the transcripts returned to the original transcriber, who then checked added sections while listening a third time to the tapes. Disagreements among texts were discussed with each other before a transcript was considered complete. This process of interrater checks of the document (four times), ensured the most accurate rendering of the tapes, thus enhancing internal reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 41).

The excerpts that were ultimately pulled from data for use in the final write-up were coded with relevant demographic data. The codes, which appear in chapter five, *Findings of Key Categories*, provide additional information for the reader. They can be understood as follows:

1. The first letter of the code is either "I" for individual interview or "F" for focus group interview.
2. The second letter of the code is either "F" for female or "M" for male.
3. The third and forth letters indicate speaker's country of origin. For instance, Saudi Arabia is designated with "SA" and "J" indicates Japan.

In other words, [IMY] would indicate for the reader that this excerpt is from individual interview data conducted with a male from Yugoslavia and [FFJ] indicates data derived from a focus group interview with a female who is from Japan.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the methods for data collection and analysis as well as the specific procedures used to ensure reliability and validity of findings. The methods used in this study are not traditionally employed in self-disclosure research. The many reasons for using a qualitative phenomenological case study approach were provided, as well as broad questions aimed at understanding the international students' experience of self-disclosure in the communication classroom. The next chapter reports the findings for key categories.

Chapter 5

Findings for Key Categories

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings for categories identified in the data during analysis. Original transcripts were "chunked" according to similar ideas among participant statements (emic themes) and researcher observation and analysis of regularity, structure or inferences (etic patterns) (Luborsky, 1994, p. 195) resulting in nine emic themes and twelve etic patterns identified as categories in the data (see Table 5.1).

The twenty-one emergent categories were derived both from the participants' statements (Luborsky, 1994; Seidman, 1998) and from researcher understanding of those statements. Thus, Table 5.1 represents both the emic and etic approaches to qualitative research, emic being "the inside view--the actor's definition--of human events" (Patton, 1980, pp.306-307) and etic being those categories imposed by the researcher based on researcher understanding of the phenomena.

Although each category was initially considered as potentially relevant to understanding participant experience, four key categories were identified that most directly addressed the study's research questions (see p. 4). They were (1) Communication Classroom; (2) Teacher Characteristics; (3) Verbal Self-disclosure; and (4) Nonverbal Behaviors.

The four key-categories were composed of one or more related sub-categories. For instance the key category, *Teacher Characteristics*, subsumed categories such as

Role, Expectations, Liking and *Comparison* as they became relevant to this report of findings. Similarly, *Verbal Self-disclosure* and *Nonverbal Behaviors* both included *Comfort, Comparison, Liking* and *Knowledge*. Key categories subsumed categories as they became relevant during analysis; sub-categories were not restricted to any one, particular key category.

Table 5.1
Emergent Categories in Data Analysis

Emic Themes: Participant Generated	Etic Patterns: Researcher Generated
1. *Comfort* in the classroom 2. *Comparisons* of U.S. classrooms and U.S. teachers with their native country classrooms and teachers 3. *Confidence* in the classroom 4. *Advice* students offer for future international students and U.S. native teachers 5. *Liking* as it occurs in the classroom for teacher and students 6. *Communication classroom*: what is expected and how it is different than other classes at PSU 7. *Understanding* and lack of understanding as it occurs for the student in the classroom 8. *Teacher* characteristics 9. *Language* issues as they occur in the classroom	1. *International student*: general statements made 2. *VSD*: Teacher *verbal self-disclosure* 3. *In-group and out-group* distinction 4. *Feelings* generated in the classroom (U.S. and country of origin) 5. *Knowledge* as it occurs and is expected from the teacher and in the classroom 6. *Nonverbal* behavior 7. *Student/teacher relationship* 8. *General classroom* (other than communication) 9. *Expectations* (for the classroom and teachers) 10. *Roles* of teacher and student 11. *Strategies* used in the classroom to reduce uncertainty 12. *Other*, which includes data considered important which does not clearly fit identified categories/themes

Communication Classroom: Key category #1

Based on informant responses, a profile of the communication classroom was constructed from the perspective of the participants to "recreate" the context for the reader. The profile is a compelling way to "present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process...all central components of qualitative analysis" (Seidman 1998, p. 102). Specific elements of their experience are included so that the reader may visualize how relationships were enacted in this context. Participants' own words are used to convey their perceptions of what happens within the communication classroom between the teacher and students, and among the students themselves. Structurally, the profile progresses from perceptions of teachers to the activities occurring in the classroom, to the other students with whom they interact.

Perceptions of the Teacher

The profile begins with (a) how the student perceives the role of the teacher in the class, (b) what they actually receive from the teacher, and (c) their perceptions of what they received. More specifically, this part of the profile begins with participants' words that explain how they see the role of the teacher as being an "authority" of the discipline.

> [Teacher] being in a sense uh, the person to, to contact or ask, or cite whenever something is said and ah, about the subject and then there's always relating to this instructor who is um, totally oriented toward that particular thing that they are teaching....As someone who would teach me about this subject, is an authority on the subject. [FMY]

Following a traditional model for learning, participants viewed the teacher as the person with the knowledge that students were to obtain from her in class.

> I look at it that way, they teach. So, all that they do would be take their knowledge, put it in our heads. [FMSA]

Although the teacher's primary responsibility in her role is to impart knowledge of a particular discipline, she may go beyond that to make learning "easier" when she imparts that knowledge together with personal information that makes content more understandable.

> ...she had the experience in intercultural communication by herself so. She, she always use her examples, besides using textbook examples. It's very easy for me to understand...[IFJ]

In fact, participants may actually be taking "more information" from the teacher when she imparts knowledge of the discipline together with information that makes content more understandable.

> Ah, I prefer American style...Mm, mm. Equality. Yeah, because we can uh, exchange our information more, I can take more information from the teachers. So that's, that's great. [FFJ]

Furthermore, not only does textbook and teacher's personal information constitute knowledge, but information that the teacher elicits from students can also constitute knowledge.

> [In Japan] they are the one who are gonna say, they give permission to ask, but in America teacher have attitude to get information from, or opinion from the students (moves forward in her chair). Like uh, they want, they listen to student idea and sometime they ask, well, often they ask question, I mean opinion to the students. [FFJ]

Participant reactions to this encouraged interaction is that the teacher is "more open" to new ideas and/or experiences.

> But as far as interaction, the instructors, the instructors seem to be more open. [FMY]

> [US teachers] they more opened minded, they wanna know how this, this people think, you know, the people who comes from other countries. [FMSA]

> First day, I went into the class, really nervous and scared, I didn't know what to expect...She was already trying to create [an] open classroom with like discussions and that...that was strange to me because I wasn't used to that sort of interactions...that was much different than what I was expecting...I was worried...But it was not like that at all...it was good I liked it like that, I like that style. [IFA]

With this exchange of information, participants not only viewed information derived in the course (e.g., concepts from the text) as knowledge they acquired, but they also regarded teacher personal experience as knowledge. In fact, their overall reaction to learning relevant teacher experience is that course concepts become more trustworthy.

> I can trust and respect experienced teacher not only information from the book but from, from their own experience [FFJ]

Participants perceived the primary role of the teacher to be someone who imparts knowledge of the discipline. Knowledge is not only considered to be information about the discipline, but also includes information regarding experiences and opinions of the teacher and students. The reactions to acquiring both types of knowledge were positive; participants reported having an easier time learning course content, liking the exchange of information that occurred between the teacher and students, and trusting text-based information more.

Activities that Occur in the Classroom

Activities in the communication classroom that promote interaction between students, and between teacher and students include presentations, class discussions,

small group discussions and group work. Although most of these activities can conceivably occur in just about any classroom, the frequency with which "interactive activities" occurred in the communication classroom was recognized by the participants as being different from their native countries and from other classes at PSU. The participants reported having 'less structure,' 'more interaction' and 'more practical' experiences.

> There's a different focus...well the business teachers are there to teach us business, like things to do with business and so teachers just sort of stand up there with overheads and explain all about business. Whereas in the communication classes, I think they're just trying to, it's um less structured and I think they're just trying to get us to interact...more practical work on what we're learning and more interaction with each other. [IFA]

Interactive activities that occurred in the communication classroom, and at the university in general, appeared to be favored over classes in their home countries.

> But there is a lot more interaction, which I like. [Australia and US compared] [FFA]

> I think I'm more active toward learning in, in the States where I'm doing the learning. [Yugoslavia] [FMY]

Although these interactive activities were found to be difficult at times because of language difficulties existing for most international students, participants reported liking this aspect of the communication classroom and it appeared to help them feel more comfortable in class and 'more confident' in their speaking.

> I got maybe a little confidence (T. small laugh) to speaking up in front of people, so...Well, cause we had, we had a presentation, and group work, discussion, class discussion oh, and pretty much, and then I, I was getting used to.[speaking in front of people]. [FFJ]

> A little bit I have confidence in [her] class cuz I have many chances to speaking up in her class, so everybody already knew my pronunciation is not

> good...but in many other classes, presentation is the only chance to speak in class. [IFJ]

The interaction that took place in the communication classroom was preferred over the more traditional learning model in which teacher-student interaction is more structured, similar to lecture style, and consequently students had less opportunity to speak during class.

Other Students in the Communication Classroom

Students in communication courses were perceived by many participants to be different from those in other PSU classes and were referred to as being "friendlier" and "more diverse."

> You can tell the people who take this kind of classes they really more friendly. [FMSA]

> I think it should be different. People are more willing to know other cultures and people from other countries...I've taken history class and...the atmosphere is different, just the way they react to international students. [IFJ]

> Usually student[s] who are taking that kind of class are interested in other cultures, so they are pretty much open minded, but some of them are not. So, it was kind of hard, just, to be in that same class with American student who [is] not open minded to other culture, like to me, to international student...but there are some who seems to be there just [because] they have to take the course. [FFJ]

As these comments seem to reflect, the overall preference for the interaction that takes place in U.S. classrooms, more specifically in the communication classrooms, was associated with more positive perceptions of other students in the class with whom activities took place.

As the foregoing profile suggests, participants perceived a uniqueness of the communication classroom in terms of the teacher, the activities and other students in

the class. The difference was significant when compared to schools in their native countries and was also distinct from other classes at PSU. Although participants primarily expected to receive knowledge from the teacher, what they actually received reveals a broader understanding of what constitutes knowledge, at least in the communication classroom. Knowledge, as learned through encouraged interactions between teacher and student, student and teacher, and among the students, extends beyond participants' initial definition.

Communication Teacher: Key Category #2

The category, *Teacher Characteristics* is the second key category that related directly to the research questions of this study. In the previous key category, *Communication Classroom,* perceptions of the teacher appeared as one component of the general classroom profile. The present category probes more deeply into specific features of the role for teacher in communication classrooms, in this case the white female, U.S. native teachers to whom participants refer.

It was necessary to include this key category as separate from the classroom key category because this thesis is most interested in learning about teacher self-disclosure: what the students know about their communication teacher and how they know it. The students had a lot to say about what constitutes the communication teacher role: (a) what meanings are inferred from attributed characteristics; (b) what feelings they have about the teacher; (c) how they perceive the teacher feels about students; and (d) the perceived hierarchical structure of teacher-student relationships.

Lofland & Lofland's (1995) "role" as a domain in society was relevant for analysis in this category. Roles comprise the "abstracted categories of social 'types of persons' (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 105) and can be analyzed in terms of three aspects: cognitive, emotional and hierarchical (p. 113-121).

In order to answer the broad question of this category, "How do students perceive the role of the teacher?" more specific questions were asked as a part of the three aspects suggested by Lofland and Lofland (1995): cognitive, emotional and hierarchical.

Cognitive: What meanings emerge from attributed characteristics?

Emotional: How does she [your teacher] feel about students?

Emotional: How do you [participants] feel about your teacher?

Hierarchical: What is the perceived power distance between U.S. teacher and student?

These questions were the basis for reporting the findings in this key category. More specifically, the sections address (1) role and attributed characteristics, (2) student perceptions of affinity, and (3) relationship hierarchy: power distance.

Role and Attributed Characteristics

Roles come with certain expectations. What is considered normal for someone to do or say in a particular role will determine whether expectations have been met. There were two themes that emerged as part of the cognitive aspect of teacher role: "Teacher as Teacher" and "Teacher as Person" (see Figure 5.2). As the participants spoke about their teachers, they would make distinctions between her as teacher and as

person at various points in their descriptions. Some excerpts are more obvious in this distinction, whereas others are subtle with some reference to the context. For example this participant was describing his teacher as a 'friendly neighbor,' which suggested that he was thinking of her more as a person than a teacher outside the context of the classroom.

> I would love to have her as a neighbor because she's so friendly and ah, I don't know I could imagine her coming to over to visit with my mother and they would have. They would share a coffee, a cake recipes (D laughs) and drink coffee. [FMY]

In a less subtle example, this participant explained negative attributes for 'teacher as teacher' in context when she offered her first impressions of the "big professor."

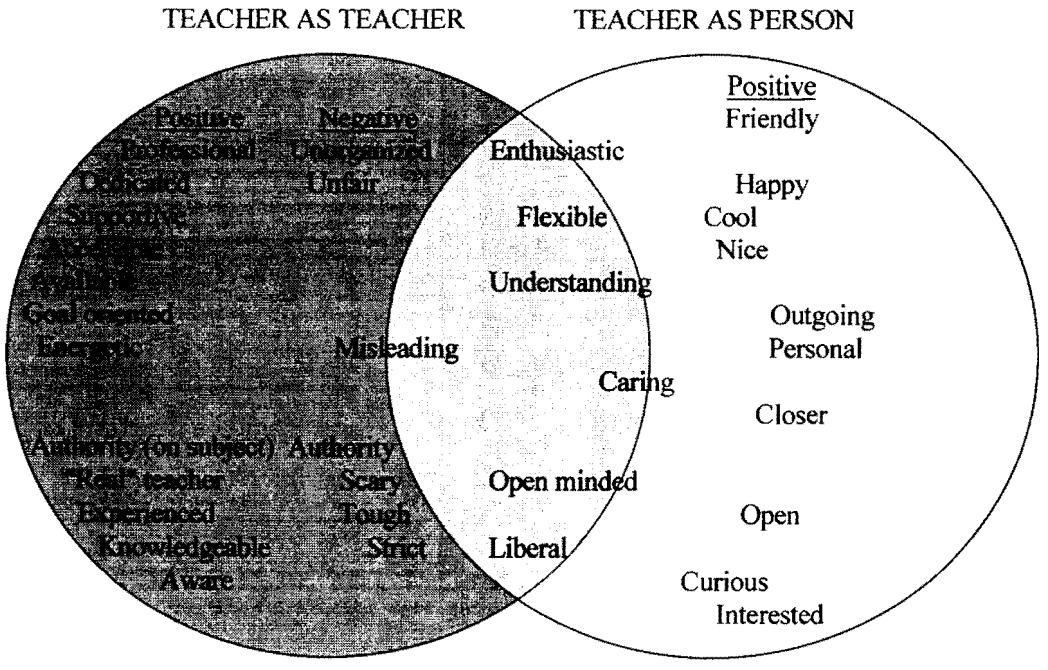
> [She looked] very *stern* at the first time…I was scared…if I think she's very strict and then she's like…big professor, I will feel uncomfortable …and then she smiles at me so I try to find those good things about her. [IFJ]

Although all the characteristics listed in Figure 5.2 are not represented in the following excerpts, the characteristics in the figure were taken directly from participant statements as they were found in the data. It is important to note that the emergent themes, "teacher" and "person," were derived from the distinctions made as part of participants' statements.

> I could see American teacher as, more as a person, but I don't do it enough yet, so I just see teacher as a teacher, so if she isn't a good teacher I just don't like her…I believe she was a good person, but I just see her as, I just see her as a teacher and she wasn't a good teacher for me. [IFJ]

> she's a person who can really teach us intercultural communication because she, she experienced it. Lots of things, and she knew what, mm, how we feel and how we think. I see her more, she's like a person. [FFJ]

Figure 5.2
Teacher Characteristics



Characteristics about the professional teacher appear in Figure 5.2 in the left column, "teacher as teacher." As previously mentioned, it is expected in the role of a teacher that she be an "authority on the subject" (see p. 82). It appears that this is not only an expectation, it is also a positive attribution of the professional teacher. The word "professional" frequently appeared in the participants' statements; one participant was able to tell us what it means to be a professional teacher. Her communication teacher was perceived as "professional" and she described this teacher as having "goals," being "interested" and "energetic."

> she showed me she's a professional. Yeah, I like, I like people, I, I admire people who's, who's trying to be professional...I admire people who want to, who try to be professional. I think she's a professional teacher. She's trying to

> increase her, and develop herself as a teacher....energetic people, yeah. interested people, yeah, I like people who is trying to find their, go to those people's goals and trying to find the real things, the way to get the goal...Professional people is those who love job, their job. [IFJ]

Similar to being goal oriented, another participant implied that a professional teacher is someone who "is totally oriented" toward the subject; this also meant that, as part of her professional role, she would not talk negatively about what she was teaching to students.

> being in a sense uh, the person to, to contact or ask, or cite whenever something is said and ah, about the subject and then there's always relating to this instructor who is um, totally oriented toward that particular thing that they are teaching. If the instructor is talking about maybe not liking what they teach or what they do and decided to change what they wanna do in the future. That could make...that would make me feel a little bit um, not respecting that instructor as an instructor. As someone who would teach me about this subject, is an authority on the subject. [FMY]

Appearance was definitely a relevant component for one participant's construct of "professional."

> She didn't look profess-, enough, professional enough to be teacher, to be talking to us. Yeah. Actually, well, it's amazing how much it affected my view of person, of, of teacher. Like I really want them to look professional...like some teacher just wear casual, and, really don't care about they look. But I do care. I do. [IFJ]

In fact in this example, the participant questioned whether 'unprofessional' attire on 'teacher as teacher' affected her view of 'teacher as person.' The statement cited above was the only hint of a negative attribution of the 'teacher as person.' Therefore, at least for the participants of this study, there were no negative characteristics attributed to 'teacher as person' (see Figure 5.2). Some of the positive characteristics, however, appeared to apply both the 'teacher' and the 'person.' For instance, "liberal" is the word

this participant used to describe her teacher and it is not clear whether she is referring to 'teacher' or 'person' or possibly both.

> Her idea is very liberal, liberal (had trouble pronouncing)...Liberal, yeah, and then, mm (thinking) *Xxxxx* is enjoying a, uh, well, liberal, liberal stuff, I don't know (M. laugh), how can I say? Ohh...Uh, like uh, uh, people from Peace Corps has a kind of, a certain kind of atmosphere, I feel that from her. (4 second pause). [IFJ]

Since the excerpt does not apparently speak to the expected role of the teacher (as authority of discipline and manager of classroom) the characteristic, "liberal," was categorized in the middle of Figure 5.2. With regard to context, "liberal" could be considered as 'person' since the example used to further explain "liberal" was "people from Peace Corps." It appears in Figure 5.2 as both 'teacher as teacher' and 'teacher as person.'

Positive characteristics for 'teacher as person,' such as "friendly" and "nice" do not appear to be expectations of teacher role; rather they are characteristics participants might expect to find in a person, a friend.

> like the teachers weren't as bad as I thought they were gonna be (S and D laugh) but they were more um, friendly and um, sort of yeah. Understanding and explain things, which is great. [FFA]

> She was very nice, so in that sense, they, she was nicer than, I, as I expected. [IFJ]

As the previous excerpts reflect, the participants were describing their teachers both in terms of "teacher as teacher" and "teacher as person." As part of understanding the communication teacher in the context of the classroom, participants seem to be cognitively organizing characteristics into these two themes.

Student Perceptions of Affinity

In the above section, *Role and Attributed Characteristics*, the focus was student cognition for attributed teacher characteristics. In this section the focus is on student emotion as part of meaning. Isolating feeling from cognition facilitates initial analysis, however it does not recreate the full experience of the participants. As Lofland & Lofland (1995) state, to "separate meaning from feeling--is, of course to distort the experienced world...cognitions are an integral part of feelings just as emotions are an integral part of meanings" (p. 116). Feelings were separated here, based on student responses to attributed characteristics. In many instances, the participants explicitly spoke of their feelings about various teacher characteristics, but in other instances the researcher inferred participant feelings based on overall sentiment toward a particular teacher.

Two questions were answered in the data that pertained to the emotional aspect of teacher role. The first was overtly asked as part of the individual interviews, "How does she [your teacher] feel about students?" (see Appendix F). The second question emerged as 'How do you feel about your teacher?' The first question, 'how the teacher feels' appeared to be more difficult for students to answer. In fact one student was surprised that we were asking how the teacher feels about students, and reacted as if that had never occurred to her.

> I've no idea. I've never thought of that way, 'how teacher think about students?' I don't know, how (all laugh). [IFJ]

Although several other participants initially had trouble with the question as well, upon reflection they were able to articulate a range of teacher liking for students and their reasons for their perceptions.

> I don't know, her expectation is very, very high...she feels good with good students, but she feels...'oh well' with the bad student...It depends on the students I think. [IFJ]

Participants included the characteristics of "motivating, " helpful," "caring," "supportive" and respect" in their descriptions of why they thought the teacher liked students.

> [She] likes her students...well she doesn't hate them, she doesn't dislike them, umh, that leads me to think that she likes them. [IMY]

> She's trying to motivate students...yeah, she likes students. [IFJ]

> She's very helpful...And she cared about me...I think she was very helpful for students. [IFJ]

> I thought it [teacher self-disclosure] showed that she respected us. [IFA]

During the interviews, participants had a much easier time sharing their own feelings about the teacher, especially positive feelings.

> Lots of stories, yeah, I like that, I like that. I liked her [FMSA]

> another impression I have of her is that she's, I'm, I'm, I like being in her classes, I enjoy her, I enjoy her classes [IMY]

> I know that she was aware of that and sort of um, you know, made sure she explained things and that um, tried to help different people, um, so everyone would understand. And um, I really liked her teaching style. [IFA]

> I liked her, I like the teacher when she asked questions specifically about the country, or my country and culture, cause I know, that's easier. [IFJ]

However, one student reported being misled by his feelings about his teacher as the term progressed.

> [It] was a little misleading for me that she was so outgoing in classes...I perhaps, didn't expect that she would be that strict on the mid-terms or exams...good discussions and she'd always wave her hands and explain stuff, and she'd laugh and make us laugh...I would expect some other instructor to be that tough on mid-terms. [IMY]

Despite feeling misled, this participant expressed liking for his teacher. Participant statements indicated that all but one student liked their communication teachers. This participant reported not liking her teacher because the teacher was not organized.

> I just didn't like her because she was not organized as a teacher...Honestly, I didn't like her...Even though she might be a good person. [IFJ]

The primary reason for not liking this teacher was lack of organization. It appeared that 'teacher' characteristics were more important for this participant than 'person' characteristics in determining liking.

In contrast, this next excerpt from another participant, who is speaking about the lack of organization in another teacher, seemed to place 'person' characteristics over 'teacher' characteristics. This participant expressed liking for her teacher throughout the interview and as the following excerpt seems to indicate, external conditions account for negative behaviors.

> I thought she's not so well organized because she's so busy (laughs), she can not spend time to organize, things, not, not everything...Sometimes her instruction is not clear, because...I think she can not spend a lot of time to write instruction. [IFJ]

In general, participants reported liking their teachers as 'persons' and all but one student reported liking their teachers as 'teachers.'

Relationship Hierarchy: Power Distance

There is an inherent hierarchical structure in the teacher-student role, and the students spoke of a hierarchical difference as being more pronounced in their native countries and as less so in the U.S. Obviously the teacher is still the authority in the U.S. classroom; however this authority is not omnipresent, as is often suggested in their comments about their countries of origin. Rather a greater sense of equality is perceived to exist between teachers and students in U.S. classrooms.

Figure 5.3 displays data that reflects the perceived power distance between teachers and students, ranging from those of greater power distance at the bottom of the figure to those perceived to exist in the communication classrooms of this study at the upper end of the figure. Using emic terms (participant generated), attributed hierarchical characteristics are arranged on a continuum from 'more power' to 'more human' and include comparisons with native countries as reference points. For instance, at the bottom of figure teachers and students in Yugoslavia are perceived to have greater power distance, that is, the teachers "have a lot more power."

One student, aware of the larger general university hierarchy, was surprised at the status of the teacher within the university system. It was lower than what she had assumed based on the teacher's knowledge and ability.

> She's just an instructor. I was surprised why she's not professor. I mean she did very good job in teaching and she knows very much about intercultural communication and she was still instructor (laughs). [IFJ]

Despite the surprise this student expressed about differences in the larger social hierarchy, the typical teacher-student relationship seemed to appear as less

Figure 5.3
Hierarchical Aspects of the Communication Teacher

Human ↑	It was a good example...I think it's a good way to teach because I feel closeness...because she told her story, her own story. And I feel like she is a *human* being not *authority*. [IMJ]
Equal ↑	In Japan teachers are just teachers, just like they're in a different place, I mean, the relationship between teachers and students, are like this, teachers here (showing with her hands, one above another, that teachers are higher than students) down, students. So we never have like human kind of relationship with teachers, but I feel I could have more human-like relationship with American teachers, and see them as a person, as an individual. [IFJ]
Friendship ↑	They wear very casual clothes. That make me feel more close to teachers.[IFJ] We're more like on a friendship kind of basis and she wasn't so, sort of like powerful and sort of up high and I was like down low, sort of more level. [FFA]
Casual ↑	[In Saudi Arabia] you're not very close to the instructor...here [in U.S.] I can like [ask] "hey," you know, "let's go grab a coffee together" and you know, we'll talk about this and that. [FMSA] I think American teachers are more casual...friendly, they think like friends (laughs), but in Japan, they're strict. I think they think they have all authority. [FMJ]
Authority ↑	[In Yugoslavia] An instructor is then an authority figure always older and with glasses and looking down. [FMY] [In Yugoslavia] they seem to be on a different plane and they seem to have a lot more power. [FMY]
Power	

"authoritative" to international students and they found U.S. teachers to be "friendly" and "more equal." A sense of equality was reinforced for one participant who commented on teacher appearance; this participant also perceived similarity with her teacher.

> I mean it [her clothes] did make me feel like she was more on my level. And I could sort of relate to her. Like she was the same. [IFA]

As Figure 5.3 and the participant statements reveal, the perceived power distance between communication teacher and student in the classroom is "more human" than what was expected for this inherently hierarchical relationship. In fact, one student found similarity with her teacher based on the meaning she inferred from teacher appearance.

The foregoing second key category, *Communication Teacher*, was analyzed according to Lofland and Lofland's (1995) three aspects of role. The cognitive aspect revealed a distinction that participants were making between 'teacher as teacher' and 'teacher as person.' In general, participants reported liking their teachers as 'teachers' and as 'persons.' Based on attributed characteristics, participants were able to determine teacher liking for students and provided reasons for their perceptions. Finally, participants appeared to be aware of the hierarchical relationships in the communication classroom, however the perceived power distance was less than that for student-teacher relationships in participants' countries of origin.

Perceptions of teacher role for this key category included: (a) the meanings inferred from attributed characteristics; (b) the feelings students have about the

teacher; (c) how they perceive the teacher feels about students; and (d) the perceived hierarchical structure of teacher-student relationships.

Verbal Self-disclosure: Key Category #3

Verbal self-disclosure is the next key category reported in this chapter which was compiled with the traditional definition in mind. Therefore, the areas for consideration in the verbal self-disclosure category were, (a) content/topic of self-disclosure and whether it revealed information about 'teacher as teacher' or 'teacher as person'; (b) level of self-disclosure on a low-high intimacy continuum; and (c) the reported effect teacher self-disclosure had on participants.

Participants were overtly asked during the interview setting if their teacher had ever used personal examples in class; all but one teacher was reported as having used personal examples. The excerpts displayed in Table 5.4 reflect teachers' personal statements, as remembered by the students, that had appear to be intentionally disclosed as part of the class.

The excerpts are arranged according to information about "teacher as teacher" and "teacher as person." Most of the reported teacher self-disclosure revealed information about the 'teacher as person'; therefore this theme is further arranged into two groups: general personal information and personal experience in a foreign country. The information about the 'teacher as person' in a foreign country was revealed as part of lessons in *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* courses.

During the focus group interviews, participants were overtly asked if there was anything that was "not OK" to say as part of class (see Appendix E). In this sample,

the data did not suggest that students perceived teacher self-disclosure to be inappropriate. With one exception (see next section) participant responses did not point to their being shocked, surprised, upset or uncomfortable with teacher verbal self-disclosure.

Table 5.4
Verbal Self-disclosure about Teacher and Person

TEACHER AS TEACHER (i.e., manager of class)	TEACHER AS PERSON (in general)	(in a foreign country)
'I've gotta have it, gotta have it.' [paper for class]	She did this, she did that, many things	She went to Third country...through Peace Corps
cross-cultural research	Likes art, music, classical music, dance and reading...[she enjoys] everything I think	She was afraid to do something...so afraid that, uh, she lied
how she wants it that certain way	Stories about their own life	She had experience in Sri Lanka.
show her respect to graduate student	She admitted that she is not perfect person	She had some feelings...Culture shock or racism thing, ethnocentrism...
'I don't say same thing twice'	She said she is trying to...not to have ethnocentrism.	She had the experience in intercultural communication
never give us her own opinion	She's married	Teacher admitted that she also had same feeling, and she, but she overcome it [ethnocentrism]
	She loves daisies	She gave us an example [of being with an IS from hi-context culture]
	Some examples of family [brother and aunt]	
	her husband was in hospital	
	she was Jewish	
	from somewhere in the Midwest	
	she was brought up in the countryside	
	lots of her personal example	

In fact, participants had a difficult time thinking of something that the teachers might have disclosed that would be inappropriate. However, hypothetical situations of racism, stereotypes, negativity toward teaching and/or students and the ambiguous 'too personal' were mentioned as possibly being inappropriate for the classroom depending on the class and context. When one participant was asked what would be not be "OK" for a teacher to do or say, he was asked to clarify what he meant by 'too personal.'

> It would probably just depend on the specifics of what, of what the teacher said. So and usually my experience was just something like 'oh'...it's something I wouldn't expect an instructor to say because it's a different environment. A different set up. [FMY]

This same participant gave a second hypothetical example that expressed negative opinions about the class and teaching.

> If the instructor is talking about maybe not liking what they teach or what they do and decided to change what they wanna do in the future. That could make...that would make me feel a little bit um, *not respecting* that instructor as an instructor. [FMY]

As the foregoing suggests, the hypothetical teacher would lose credibility and respect as a result of revealing negative opinions during class. Again, only hypothetical examples of inappropriate topics were offered by participants.

It was most often the case that the participant couldn't quite remember the details of the teachers' personal stories, however they were able to relate some parts, and recall how this made them feel about the teacher. This information helped to determine the level of intimacy.

Level of Intimacy

Level of intimacy was determined based on participants' reported (a) reactions to teacher verbal self-disclosure, and (b) use of Altman and Taylor's (1973) designated levels of intimacy as explicated in their Social Penetration theory. Based on verbal self-disclosure data, a pyramid was created to display and illustrate the various levels and associated topics of teacher self-disclosure (see Figure 5.5).

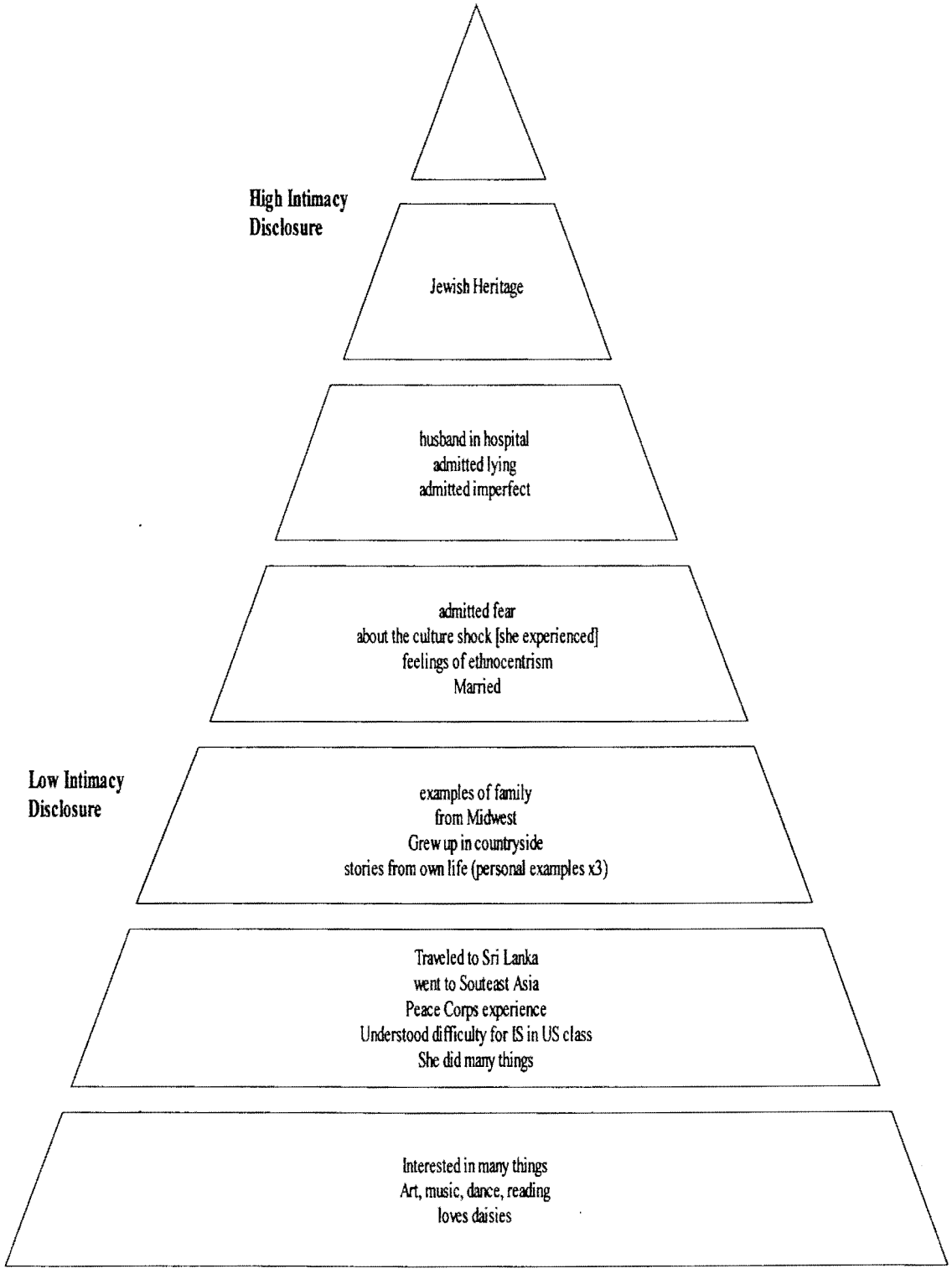
The preponderance of teacher self-disclosure, clustered at the bottom of the pyramid, consists of verbal disclosure at low intimacy levels that appears to be inconsequential in nature. Inconsequential information is defined here as general information that strangers could exchange without thinking twice about the consequences it has for the discloser (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

> she enjoys um, art, like music, classical music...Oh, because she was talking about something like that...Yeah, she, she likes to um, enjoy a little bit everything I think. Everything, music, art, and dance, and then, and reading, and everything I think. [IFJ]

The second level revealed teacher travel to and experience in another country. Like the information at the base of the pyramid, it is low level, meaning the participants did not recall all of the details of the story and did not appear to strongly react to it. This finding is consistent with Altman and Taylor's (1973) description of this level. This is further reflected in one participant's comment that:

> she got a lot of information from their country and she loved to share it. Which is cool. [FMSA]

Figure 5.5
Teacher Verbal Self-disclosure and Intimacy Level in the Classroom



The third disclosure level reveals information about family, information that continued into the forth disclosure level in which teacher's personal feelings are revealed.

> she told us that kind of thing. She was from somewhere in the Midwest, or (unclear) she was brought up in the, like, countryside. [IFJ]

> Well, she said she, she lived in Sri Lanka? and she um, (pause). But she said she had some feelings about, well, things. Culture shock or racism thing, ethnocentrism. [IFJ]

The fifth level goes beyond sharing personal feelings and into the teacher's reflection and/or judgment of the feelings.

> ...she admitted that she is not perfect person, but she, she said she is trying to, trying to not to have ethnocentrism. [IFJ]

> she gave me an example. Ah, when she went to Southeast Asia, somewhere in Southeast Asia...she had a stereotype to people in the country so she didn't ah, trust her doctor and sheee, when she was brought to hospital but now sheee, she trusts more. [FFJ]

Finally the sixth and seventh levels are moderately high to high levels of self-disclosure, and only one disclosure appeared at this level. The participant did not find "being Jewish" an inappropriate disclosure, however the topic did surprise him.

She told us that she was Jewish, I thought that was big self-disclosure [IMJ]

This participant interpreted this as a big disclosure because:

> the Jew people were so discriminated...And, even the class some students say, 'because I'm Jewish' that made me surprised. [IMJ]

Revealing one's identity as being Jewish would not be considered a particularly intimate disclosure from Altman and Taylor's (1973) perspective. Rather, it would be a moderate level disclosure consisting of the statement and any accompanying

attitudes and opinions expressed by the discloser. Therefore, this participants' response puts the topic of this disclosure at a higher intimacy level than predicted by Altman and Taylor's model. Thus aside from one participant who expressed surprise about his teacher's disclosure, none of the participants reported experiencing, or perceiving high levels of teacher disclosure in the communication classroom.

The Effect of Teacher Verbal Self-disclosure on Students

All eight participants reported liking the teacher and the class when the teacher used verbal self-disclosure as part of the lesson. It not only helped them to learn the concepts more easily, they reported feeling closer to the teacher and seeing the teacher as more human. The following quotes typify what appeared in the data.

> It was a good example...I think it's a good way to teach because I feel closeness...because she told her story, her own story. And I feel like she is a *human* being not *authority*. [IMJ]

> That was very easy to understand the lecture...I felt that it one of the was the best way to teach something easier [IMJ]

> I think that is good because yeah, we can understand clearer, clearer so to, to give us example. Yeah, and then it's, it's great to know about a teacher...We know about the teacher from those examples. [FFJ]

> just kind of um, thought that she um, last time that she kind of showed that she um, had um, respect for us and um, as a class. And sort of was like open enough to share that with us...I thought it showed that she respected us [IFA]

Teacher's verbal disclosure about experience in a foreign country appeared to be an indicator to the students in this sample that the teacher had knowledge. When the following participant was asked to clarify a comment, "What makes you think she 'knows a lot'?" she responded,

> She has lots, lots of personal example. [IFJ]

The teacher also appeared to be more credible, a "real teacher."

> she was teaching us about intercultural communication and if she had the year of that, you know experience about the intercultural communication so I see her, she is a *real* teacher (small laugh) of intercultural communication...she's a person who can really teach us intercultural communication because she, she experienced it. [FFJ]

Such experiences constitute a form of knowledge, and because the teacher shared this experience, she can be 'trusted' and 'respected.'

> I can trust and respect *experienced* teacher not only information from the book but from, from their own experience. [FFJ]

> she's a person who can really teach us intercultural communication because she, she experienced it. Lots of things, and she knew what, mm, how we feel and how we think. I see her more, she's like a person. [FFJ]

Verbal self-disclosure was the third key category reported in this chapter. It was the only category that followed traditional approaches to understanding self-disclosure. Three areas for consideration were topic, level and effect. Participants reported a range of topics from 'teacher as teacher' to 'teacher as person.' The levels of intimacy ranged from low to mid-high and were considered appropriate for context. As a result of teacher self-disclosure, participants reported liking the teacher and learning easier, as well as expressing greater trust in both textbook and teacher information.

Nonverbal Behavior: Key Category #4

Nonverbal behavior is the fourth and final key category discussed in this chapter. Nonverbal forms of interpersonal communication occur in every culture and the meanings assigned to nonverbal behaviors are dependent upon one's cultural programing. For instance, eye contact and personal space are both nonverbal forms of

communication that are interpreted differently across cultures. Whereas an interpersonal dyad consisting of two people of Arab background will stand so close as to smell the other's breath while maintaining direct eye contact, a Japanese dyad will adopt a "much more distant position with averted eyes" (Dolphin, 1994, p. 258).

The question that necessarily follows from this example is how a Japanese person might interpret, or rather assign meaning to the nonverbal behavior of an Arab? More specifically, what inferences might be made about the other based on the nonverbal behavior displayed? In order to answer this question, three aspects of the definition for nonverbal served as the basis for analysis.

> Nonverbal communication involves all those *nonverbal stimuli* in a *communication setting* that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment and that have *potential message value* for the source and receiver (ital added, Samovar, et. al., 1998, p. 149).

This definition embodies three points relevant to this study: what constitutes *nonverbal stimuli*, the *communication setting* and the *potential message value for the source and receiver*. Each is addressed as part of this study; however, the communication setting and potential message value for source and receiver are both discussed as part of the discussion in chapter six.

Nonverbal Stimuli

Nonverbal stimuli can be subsumed under four general areas for analysis: silence, space and distance, time, and body behavior (Samovar, et. al., 1998, pp. 153-172). Quotes reflected experiences in all sub-categories. Students appeared to be paying attention to nonverbal teacher behavior. The meanings attributed to nonverbal behaviors related to each category are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Silence: Participants who were not used to hearing fellow students speak as part of normal classroom behavior in their native countries, noticed U.S. student silence (or rather lack of). "We just don't speak up" as one Japanese woman explained. All the participants noticed this difference when they spoke of their classroom experiences in the U.S.

Lack of silence becomes particularly significant in the communication classroom. Class discussions regularly occur and the exchange between teacher and students and among the students themselves moves very quickly, often resulting in experienced discomfort by international students. This can be intimidating for students who do not speak English as their first language.

> The teacher speak and then student speak and then they are doing like a catch, catch ball (moves her hands as though she is throwing a ball back and forth between fingers). But if I speak, I stop their, the rhythm. Yeah. And then everybody, um, I get everybody's attention, I feel uncomfortable about that, so I don't want to stop ah, their flow. Catch ball. [FFJ]

Overall, the students in the communication classroom do not stay silent. The teacher does not expect them to stay silent. In fact, in the communication classroom, students are often required to speak up as part of their grades (i.e.: points for participation); speaking up becomes necessary for overall success in the course. The data did not reflect inferences made about the teacher based on silence as it occurred (or did not occur) in the classroom, however inferences were made about other students.

> In the beginning I was like wow, they are great, American students are great, asking questions, and having their own opinions, (S. laugh) and you know, speak up their minds in the classroom, but like, I gradually realized that their not saying that GREAT thing, I mean, at the beginning I just thought WOW

> they're asking questions in the class which we never do in Japan, so that was it, I thought that they were much better students, American students, much better...more serious, and eager (she rolls her hands forward), but now I just realize that's the way they are, just have to say what they are thinking at that point, but sometimes they just are not making any sense. (All laugh). You know. [FFJ]

Initially this participant perceived the U.S. native students as being "great...much better...more serious, and eager" because they had opinions to share and asked questions during class (they did not stay silent). Although she later changed her mind, it is interesting to note that this participant made inferences about other students based on the nonverbal stimuli, silence.

Space and Distance: The first aspect in this group of nonverbal stimuli was *physical distance* between the teacher and the student (sitting/standing close to/distant from students).

> [Teacher sat] very CLOSE to me. I, I was at that time, I was in front of her and she sat here (slaps table in front of her) and I was here (makes gestures of closeness), and oh! (All laugh) [FFJ]

It was surprising, or perhaps a bit uncomfortable for the Japanese student who had learned to show respect to a teacher by maintaining a greater distance, to sit close to a teacher; this sentiment is reflected by the explicative, "oh!" As mentioned in the introduction to this final key category, greater distance is usual for Japanese dyads (Dolphin, 1994). Additionally, greater physical distance between the teacher and student may signify "deference and esteem" in some Asian cultures (Samovar et. al., 1998, p. 165).

The unexpected closeness of the teacher prompted this participant to think about appropriate *physical* space and distance between teacher and student. A teacher

sitting on the table in front of a student who is seated in a chair does not appear to happen in Japan. It would be considered violating a norm for student-teacher interaction.

> [teacher sat] very CLOSE to me. I, I was at that time, I was in front of her and she sat here (slaps table in front of her) and I was here (makes gestures of closeness), and oh! (all laugh)...I was surprised when teacher sat on the, on the table because Japanese teachers never do that. [FFJ]

The norm for distance between two people in a dyad not only applies to teacher-student, it also apparently holds true between two students. When asked if she would have still been surprised if two students sat that close in Japan, she quickly replied, "still surprised." During the same interview a different Japanese woman related her initial experience when, as an exchange student in U.S. high school, she was surprised by the physical closeness (lack of distance) of U.S. native students.

> Boys and girls are very close [in US high school experience]...it was like life was a party. (S laughs) I felt yeah. Yeah. A lot of socialization. Yeah, sooo, and then I thought that is, that is the America...about that distance...I felt very different. [FFJ]

Despite the initial surprise by both these participants, the reduction of physical distance between teacher and student was perceived as *psychological availability.* In this next excerpt, this participant perceived his teacher as "available" based on the nonverbal stimuli, distance.

> *Xxxxx* is friendlier, and closer and more available. That's what it seemed...it's the image of her when I think of her as an instructor, she's friendly, she's available, uh, to discuss, and umh, she is, umh, and she's willing to help and she doesn't seem very distant, as some of the instructors, there's some kind of feeling of or barrier kind of...in some odd way I feel distant, more distance from them [IMY]

This same student expressed inferences of availability based on the stimuli of time.

Time:

> She seems to stick around after class talking to students, always to different ones...She's just available to the students...it looks like she is there for the students. [IMY]

Another participant made a similar inference and called it 'spending' time with students, indicating that the teacher was perceived positively for giving her time to students.

> She spend her time for student, graduate students. I think that is great. Yeah [IFJ]

As indicated in the foregoing examples of three of the four areas for nonverbal stimuli--silence, space and distance, and time--participants were inferring meaning of teacher nonverbal behavior. Participants made inferences about teacher "availability," both physical and psychological, based on the nonverbal stimulus: space and distance, and time.

Body Behavior: Of the four areas for nonverbal stimuli, body behavior contained the most participant responses. Body behavior consists of seven sub-stimuli: (a) general appearance and dress, (b) body movement, (c) posture, (d) gestures, (e) facial expressions, (f) eye contact and gaze, and (g) touch. Participants most often reported their inferences based on clusters of teacher behavior. For instance, eye contact, general appearance and movement appeared as one cluster, followed by inferences about the teacher.

(General appearance and dress): Concern about individual appearance is universal, however the 'what, where, when and how' of appearance is culturally bound. "Clothing--how much, how little, and what kind--is also a reflection of a culture's

value orientation" (Samovar et. al., 1998, p. 154). Cleanliness, hair, accessories and clothing are culturally used to reflect, and in some instances reject, notions of appropriate appearance.

Teacher appearance was the stimuli mentioned most often by participants in *Body Behavior*. The most obvious form of appearance for participants was teacher clothing. 'Casual and formal' seemed to emerge as two end points on the clothing continuum for U.S. teachers. While the participants differed in their opinions about what the teacher 'should' wear, they consistently made inferences about the teacher based on their perceptions of her appearance. For example,

> I want teachers to be well dressed or formal, or at least not jeans or T-shirt, (laughs) I mean maybe it's American, I mean casual Americans it's, maybe it's OK in America, but not for me, or not for, not in Japan, so I'm just not used to teacher dressing causal. [IFJ]

> I think it just seems to mean a character of an instructor who is...kind of an *official.* I'm allowed to be casual but an instructor is <u>supposed</u> to be someone <u>*less*</u> *casual* [FMY]

Although none of the students expressed an expectation that their teachers 'should' were casual attire, formal appearance as part of the teacher role was the expectation of two participants. From the foregoing, the term "official" suggests that the teacher is a representative of the institution who is "supposed" to appear "less casual" than someone who is not a representative of that particular institution.

(Body movement): Based on Birdwhistle's work (1970), kinesics is the study of how movement communicates meaning. As Samovar (1998) summarizes:

> In general, kinesic cues are those visible body shifts and movements that can send messages about (1) our attitude about the other person (standing face-to-face with a friend (direct body orientation), or leaning forward may show that we are relaxed), (2) our emotional state (tapping on the table or playing with

> coins can mean we are nervous), and (3) our desire to control our environment (motioning someone to come closer means we want to talk to him or her) (p.155).

The excerpts in this sub-stimuli reinforce the idea that students infer meaning from observations of teacher body movement. Movement can suggest many things to the receiver, such as mood, age, and health. Movement appeared as relevant to perception and inference making, especially when it was seen in clusters with other nonverbal sub-stimuli, such as facial expressions and posture.

> She walked in, she sort of was all happy and saying welcome and stuff, and the first thing she did was hand out um, cards with a sticker on them and then we had to find someone with the same sticker on their card...she was already trying to create sort of like a um, open classroom with like discussions and that. [IFA]

> She's very graceful, yeah, she's strict, but she's graceful and then, yeah, I think she's a good teacher, yeah. [IFJ]

(Posture): Posture is considered to be body orientation, bowing, sitting and standing. "Posture and sitting habits offer insight into a culture's deep structure" (Samovar, et. al., 1998, p. 155). For instance the deep cultural values of Japan are reflected in bowing rituals and reflect the level of respect for the other.

> The person who occupies the lower station begins the bow, and his or her bow must be deeper than the other person's. The superior, on the other hand, determines when the bowing is to end. When the participants are of equal rank, they begin the bow in the same manner and end at the same time...In the United States, where being casual and friendly is valued, people often fall into chairs or slouch when they stand (Samovar, et. al., 1998, p. 155).

Among the current sample, participants associated characteristics of "confident" and "stern" to a teacher with "very straight" posture.

> The posture is very straight, I like that, yeah I like stern teacher...they look confident. [IFJ]

In observing the posture of US students, this next participant made inferences not only about the teacher (open for communication) she also made inferences about the classroom and other students.

> Like the feet up on the chairs and that makes it a more casual setting...more casual and sort of more open for communication. Whereas in Australia you're just sitting up straight...kind of more one-way communication in Australia. Whereas here it's [teacher-student interaction is] more open, both ways. [IFA]

The teacher allowed the 'casual' posture of the other students to continue; therefore, the participant interpreted that as something that was acceptable in this context. In this case, the communication teacher is perceived to value being 'casual' and 'open.' The participant observed the posture of the U.S. students and the response (or non-response) of the teacher to indicate an opportunity for "two-way communication" rather than the "one-way" communication that this student had seen in her native country of Australia.

(Gestures): Gestures are movements used specifically to communicate meaning; pointing, beckoning, hand waving and gestures made with fingers are all considered to have meaning potential. While the pointing gesture is often used to indicate turn taking in the class, one participant suggested that teachers should not point to international students and offered a rationale.

> International students are afraid of speaking up in the class so, I feel please don't point them, when they are ready they will be happy to talk in class [IFJ]

In conjunction with other nonverbal and verbal stimuli, another participant perceived hand and finger gestures to indicate impatience.

> She kind of looked down and shook her head and made that little, (he moved the fingers of one hand through the air as though imitating *xxxxx*) shook her fingers like she was going to grab something in the air and then, "No, I've gotta have it, gotta have it..." [IMY]

The previous excerpt included verbal stimuli; gestures as a sub-stimuli, similar to the others discussed thus far, occurred in clusters with other nonverbal stimuli.

(Touch): Touch is another powerful nonverbal sub-stimuli with potential to communicate meaning. "The meanings we assign to being touched, and our reasons for touching others, help us gain insight into the communication encounter" (Samovar, et. al., 1998, p. 159). In the case of one student,

> I have to trust the teacher, otherwise I suspect I don't learn, so I'm trying to be able to like teachers. Whether stern, casual, or friendly...Yeah, otherwise I don't learn...so I try to find her good parts too, sometimes she give, give us, give me a pat, like this (reaches over to S. to demonstrate the type of pat given) [IFJ]

Touch in this excerpt communicated "trust" in a situation where the student actually sought out nonverbal stimuli in order to establish meaning for a learning environment more conducive to her needs. She needed to have "trust" in order to learn.

(Facial Expressions): Facial expressions were also discussed in clusters, as illustrated in the following excerpt that included both facial expression and touch.

> I knew, she's thinking of me, from her, from her smile, and from, from touching...I'm thinking of you, or I'm considering of you, or yeah, I felt, I felt kind of motivated, I felt I was supported [IFJ]

'Considerate,' 'thoughtful' and 'supportive' were attributed teacher characteristics based on her smile (facial expression) and touch. They are included in the above excerpt as a cluster to explain why the participant liked her instructor. Another participant inferred meaning from a smile alone.

> And she was very friendly, and she always smiled. [IFJ]

As a single nonverbal stimuli a smile is worth a thousand inferences.

(Eye contact and gaze): Eye contact was the seventh sub-stimuli reported in *Body Behavior.* It was not talked about very much, however when it was mentioned, particular meaning was inferred. For one participant, lack of eye contact was perceived to be expressed frustration or impatience.

> She kind of looked down...shaking her head and her eyes closed and a wrinkle in the forehead [IMY]

The same participant also interpreted eye contact as an indicator of acknowledgment, or turn taking.

> The instructor looks at you and acknowledges and the instructors still talking and till the instructors done and then can you [talk]. [IMY]

Nonverbal Behavior was the fourth, and final, key category reported in this chapter and was composed of four areas for analysis: (1) silence, (2) space and distance, (3) time, and (4) body behavior. Body behavior consisted of seven sub-stimuli (a) general appearance and dress; (b) body movement; (c) posture; (d) gestures; (e) touch; (f) facial expressions; and (g) eye contact and gaze.

As the foregoing data suggest, perceptions of teacher nonverbal behavior, especially those reported in clusters of body behavior were most often viewed in conjunction with other nonverbal and verbal messages. Students appeared to be paying attention to nonverbal teacher behavior, making inferences about teachers based on their perceptions of meaning for teacher behavior and appearance, and attributing particular characteristics to the teacher.

Conclusion

Analysis of the data revealed twenty-one emergent themes and patterns. Nine themes were identified from the emic perspective and twelve patterns from the etic perspective. Four key categories related to the research questions, were discussed in this chapter: *Communication Classroom, Communication Teacher, Verbal Self-disclosure* and *Nonverbal Behavior*. Sub-categories were incorporated into these four macro categories to adequately address complex features of participant perceptions. The sub-categories were among the twenty-one emergent categories identified at the beginning of this chapter and were incorporated as necessary. In each key category, one or more of the following were incorporated in the report of findings: *Feelings, Knowledge, Comfort, Comparisons, Confidence, Liking, Student-teacher relationship, Advice, Expectations* and *Roles*.

Participant statements helped to explicate the findings, and some links to the extant literature helped to explain the data. The final chapter, *Discussion*, will link these findings back to the extant literature, the research questions of this thesis and to future directions for self-disclosure research.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion of self-disclosure that includes the link to a receiver model of communication. The implications for self-disclosure from the receiver point of view are discussed, followed by an overview of each primary research question. Finally, the limitations and strengths of this study are discussed, as well as implications for future research and communication pedagogy.

Self-disclosure and the Receiver Model of Communication

The following discussion examines the expanded definition that included nonverbal behaviors as being self-disclosive, the problematics of subscribing only to intentional acts in a definition of self-disclosure and the need to adopt a receiver model of communication in order to adequately explain self-disclosure as found in this study. This study served as a test of the definition of self-disclosure as it is currently formulated in the extant literature (Philipsen, 1982).

With a few exceptions (Bradac, Tardy & Hosman, 1980; Derlega & Chaikin, 1988; Jourard, 1964, 1971b), the literature on self-disclosure in general, reflects a definition that makes it an intentional verbal act (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1972; Wheeless, 1976) of 'revealing personal information about oneself to another' (see review Collins & Miller, 1994). For purposes of the current research, the definition was expanded, a priori, to include nonverbal behaviors and meaning in interaction.

Self-disclosure has never been considered from the international student's perspective, who were likely to place a greater importance on the context, and therefore nonverbal for inferences and meaning.

The definition for self-disclosure created a priori for this study had three components that influenced how self-disclosure was researched: (1) teacher behaviors included both verbal and nonverbal messages; (2) interaction had to occur in the context of the classroom; and (3) information disclosed did not have to be related to course content. The definition for self-disclosure as developed in chapter one is revisited:

> Teacher's verbal and nonverbal acts in the classroom that may or may not be related to subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn without interaction with that teacher.

Interaction is necessary for the students to receive both verbal and nonverbal teacher behaviors. Since specific questions were asked only of the students (the receivers) in this study, the interpretation of messages is of primary interest. Teacher intentionality is not possible to determine because teachers (the senders) were not part of this study; however, both verbal and nonverbal messages can be received and interpreted as having meaning. With this assumption, both behaviors were included in the a priori definition for self-disclosure.

The decision to include teacher nonverbal behaviors was further reinforced by participant comments in the data. One participant summarized the obviousness of nonverbal behavior when she explained how she knew about her teacher as a professional person.

> I can tell that from, uh, from people's attitudes, from those people's attitudes...they don't need to speak, they do not need to explain themselves. I'm a professional, I can do this, I can do that...I know she's a, she loves her job and she's doing very well, very good, even if she doesn't say something like that, it's I think, it is redundant (all laugh). [IFJ]

To understand self-disclosure from the point of view of international students in communication classrooms, it is necessary to assume that communication occurs in this context based on the receiver model where both verbal and nonverbal behaviors may be sent as either deliberate or unintentional. Intentionality, as found in common definitions for self-disclosure, relies on a communication model that emphasizes the sender--whether the sender intended to deliberately send a message is the distinction. In other words, definitions that contend intentionality is necessary in order for disclosure to occur discount meaning inferred by the receiver if it is derived from either unintentional verbal or nonverbal behavior. What is important to this discussion is that both verbal and nonverbal messages are received, and must be perceived by the receiver as having meaning in the context and are interpreted as such.

Two questions emerge as relevant to this discussion: "Must communication be intentional?" and "Must communication be received?" The answers for this research are no and yes, respectively, which lends itself most appropriately to the "receiver model" of communication. The receiver model is promoted in Andersen's position (1991) that "communication should include any behaviors that are meaningful to receivers in any way, whether intended or not (as cited in Littlejohn, 1996, p. 8). The receiver model is based on the fact that it is the receiver's interpretation of behavior in the interaction that is crucial, regardless of speaker intentionality. The source can

deliberately or unintentionally send the message through either verbal or nonverbal channels (behaviors). The receiver can then either 'incidentally' receive the message or immediately 'attend' to the message. Either way the message, whether verbal or nonverbal, deliberate or unintentional, is received.

In this study, it was clear that international students received messages from the teacher (whether or not they were deliberately sent) and made inferences about the teacher based on their perceptions. With regard to the communication classroom, Sorenson's (1989) focused on teacher verbal self-disclosure; however, she found that "students were willing to make attributions as to how the teacher would behave in the classroom...[and found that] students perceived good teacher disclosure to be indicative of such behaviors as more eye contact, more smiling, and more time spent with students" (p. 273). In other words, she linked hypothetical nonverbal behaviors to attributed teacher characteristics through written self-disclosure statements. The students of this study made inferences based on verbal and nonverbal behaviors in an effort to define the world or more specifically, the classroom context for themselves in the U.S.

Certain characteristics accompany communication that "are common to all human beings, but are modified by such things as culture, age, rank, and gender" (Samovar, et. al., 1998, p. 27). Three characteristics of communication said to be common to all human beings are useful for establishing teacher self-disclosure from the receiver point of view: (1) No direct mind-to-mind contact; (2) We can only infer; and (3) We seek to define the world.

The receiver can only infer because there is no direct mind-to-mind contact; through these inferences, humans are able to define the world. Through communication the sender and the receiver create, maintain and modify reality of their worlds (Carey, 1989). Whether a message is verbal, nonverbal, or both, the receiver can only infer meaning because no direct mind-to-mind contact is possible.

The third characteristic states, "We seek to define the world." All humans seek to define their world. Civilizations have always asked philosophical questions of birth and death and of the human relationship to god, nature and himself. In this sense, the beauty of communication lies in the fact that humans can live among one another without absolute chaos. More specifically, social norms dictate what verbal and nonverbal acts are enacted under what conditions, with whom and to what ends. Norms and shared meaning for symbols are the products of seeking to define the world from chaos. From this discussion of the definition and characteristics of communication, it is assumed that the international students of this study sought meaning in teacher verbal and nonverbal behavior in order to "make sense" of a potentially chaotic situation, an educational system and classroom context often markedly different from earlier experiences in their countries of origin (Hofstede, 1986; this thesis, p. 26).

Depending on the context, the potential message value for the individual receiver will vary. In the case of nonverbal gestures, the potential message value greatly changes with context and with culture. If an unaware, U.S. native teacher made the "OK" gesture in a classroom in Tunisia, students may question the behavior

of their teacher: in Tunisia the "OK" gesture means "I'll kill you" (Samovar, et. al., 1998, p. 156). In the present study, one participant related why he couldn't make meaning of a nonverbal gesture because he was not familiar with its use.

> I'm not used to very much people running around Yugoslavia and showing peace, it was not very significant gesture. [FMY]

Thus, as Littlejohn (1996) notes, "Rules of meaning and action are always chosen within a context. The context is the frame of reference for interpreting an action, and your responses will differ from one context to another" (p. 191). Based on the data, the social and cultural contexts were important for inferring meaning.

The social context consisted of perceived norms for interaction between teacher and student, teacher and class, and among students. As mentioned in chapter three, certain rules for interaction differ among cultures and the roles, norms and rules for interaction might change, while some might stay they same. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter two (p. 26), however one chooses to view the roles of teacher and student will influence how one views the process of teaching and learning. In other words, perceptions of context serve as a knowledge base from which meaning is inferred and subsequent action takes place.

Whatever behavior one conceives as appropriate or inappropriate is determined from one's own understanding of the context. Teacher-student interaction and the relationships that are formed as a result of that interaction are two aspects of the social context that emerged from the data based upon participants' observations of teacher nonverbal behavior. In this study, teacher self-disclosure influenced student

perception of the teaching-learning context and what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behavior in that context.

In order to understand the cultural context, it may help to recall the definition of culture as 'beliefs, values and norms that formulate one's perception of the world' (see p. 35). For each individual (teacher and student) in the classroom, there are different perceptions of the context: different goals, learning styles, interests and experience. In this study, participants compared U.S. teacher self-disclosure to teachers in their native countries and it became clear that this phenomena was not a norm in their native classrooms; however, it was considered as appropriate for the communication classroom context in the U.S.

Student Perception and Implications for Self-disclosure

From the receiver model of communication it can be concluded that messages are not only received but have meaning for the students. Because they carry meaning, it does not matter whether the messages were intentionally sent or not. The important aspect about the receiver model is that they are "meaningful to receiver in any way, whether intended or not" (Littlejohn, 1996, p. 8). Seeking meaning in teacher behavior is nothing extraordinary. What is extraordinary, at least for the concept of self-disclosure, is that the messages received provided valuable information about the teacher as 'teacher' and as 'person,' and were derived from *both* verbal *and* nonverbal behaviors, allowing participants to make sense of the classroom context in the U.S.

Hofstede (1986) discussed issues related to the universal role pair of teacher-student and the problems associated with a sojourner's search for meaning (see this thesis, p. 26). Participants made inferences in regard to two of those issues: (1) social position of teachers and (2) patterns for interaction. None of the participants presented these issues as problematic for their transition, only different. For instance, it does not appear that teacher verbal self-disclosure occurs as frequently, if at all, in the classrooms of participants' countries of origin. Participants shared their comparisons during the interviews:

> It's rare for them [Japanese teachers] to talk about, to bring up their own experience, or examples in classroom, they don't do that often, as much as they do here [IFJ]

> I didn't really expect her to say that because usually like teachers in Australia don't say that personal information, or whatever [IFA]

> [Instructors in Yugoslavia] were never going to give personal example like that...'it's none of your business.' [FMY]

Despite this difference, participants reported feeling "more comfortable" as a result of teacher verbal self-disclosure. Furthermore, the interpersonal context created by such disclosure appears to make teacher-student social positions less distinct, as well as make learning more enjoyable.

> it [teacher VSD] made me feel sort of more comfortable...I could relate some of my experiences to the class like cuz she was doing it...more like on a friendship kind of basis and she wasn't so, sort of like powerful and sort of up high and I was like down low, sort of more level....which, um, made it better for me to enjoy the class more and sort of enjoy learning it more...I think it was good that she um, used a personal example. Cuz, made me feel more comfortable. It seemed strange, but it was good. [FFA]

Goldstein and Benassi (1994) suggested that the interpersonal context created by teacher self-disclosure is positively related to student participation (see this thesis, p. 19). Although the foregoing participant reported feeling "more comfortable" and more likely to 'relate some of her own experiences,' it was not clear whether feelings of comfort were likely to lead to participation, as discussed in terms of reciprocity by Goldstein and Benassi.

Reciprocity was also linked to attraction by Chaikin and Derlega (1974a) and Berg and Archer (1983) who connected reciprocated levels and topics of disclosure to perceived attraction (see this thesis, p. 17). Again, although participants reported liking the teacher who self-disclosed in class, it did not appear that they were more likely to reciprocate disclosures as part of classroom participation. The findings of this study are more reflective of Curran and Loganbill (1983) who suggested that in pairs of unequal status, self-disclosure enhanced group leader attractiveness (see this thesis, p. 18); notions of reciprocity did not appear as relevant in their research.

Although verbal self-disclosure is relevant to understanding perceptions of the teacher, it was clear that students' perceptions were also dependant on teacher nonverbal behaviors and that inferences were drawn from verbal as well as nonverbal. Implicit personality theory can explain some of the inferences derived from nonverbal information. Implicit personality theory states that certain characteristics are inferred based on other identifiable characteristics. Judgments are based on a "set of assumptions people have developed about what physical characteristics and personality traits or behaviors are associated with one another" (Trenholm & Jensen,

1996, p. 164). For instance, if someone is described as being short and jolly, inferences may be made about heavy weight. Clusters of characteristics appear in the participant statements and they made inferences about the teacher, based on associations among nonverbal characteristics.

> thin and kind of, a little bit dry looking...and older, so with some *authority*, and tall, again with some *authority*, with buggy eyes, which just kind of added to the little scary figure [IMY]

> she was a kind of a *strict* teacher, strict, and then stern...facial expression, and then she talks very fast, and then posture, and then slender, skinny, skinny...skinny it's, it's a kind of stereotype, skinny person is, is more...is cooler, well, well I think, plump person looks *warmer*, and skinny person looks *colder*, but it depends on the person. Yeah. Just a stereotype...And then the posture is very straight, I like that, yeah I like stern teacher...they look *confident*. [IFJ]

Appearance and dress clearly were nonverbal sources of information that had meaning for students.

> She is trying to wear something new. Well, she changes, her accessory, necklace, and then, she's, she's yeah, color coordinating, yeah. I can tell she's paying attention to her fashion too...she's paying attention to people's eye too, people's eyes too. Because she changes her dress...she's trying to, well she's, uh, disclo-, one of her disclosure, one of her disclosures, self-disclosure. [IFJ]

This participant made inferences about teacher motivation in choosing what to wear each morning. Because she is "color coordinating" and "paying attention to people's eye," this participant perceived her teacher to be intentionally expressing something about herself to the students. Perceived intentionality for teacher appearance and dress is also expressed in the next participant's observations.

> Dressed up like it looked like she took care of what she was um, wearing every morning and um, she was wearing pretty, trendy clothes, I thought (laughs)...she's cool and she's um, sort of up with things and (laughs) and knows what's happening...[IFA]

In this last excerpt this participant not only inferred intentionality, she also attributed characteristics of "trendy" and "cool" to the teacher, which led to perceptions of similarity, as seen her continued comments.

> It [trendy clothes] did um, make me feel um, like she was more on my level. And I could, you know, sort of relate to her. Like, she was the same. [IFA]

So although teachers may or may not have intentionally selected attire to communicate something about themselves some participants did, in fact, interpret that behavior as intentional. This again, brings into question the singular reliance on a sender-centered model of self-disclosure and reinforces the need to examine self-disclosure from a receiver model, one that includes nonverbal behaviors.

Perceived similarity provides another explanation for inferences made about the teacher. Perceptions of similarity have "powerful effects on attraction and credibility" (Trenholm and Jensen, 1996, p. 123). The data revealed instances of perceived similarity with the teacher derived from both nonverbal appearance, as well as her verbal self-disclosure.

> I felt that it [teacher's personal examples]...was [one of] the best way to teach something easier...make it easy for me to pick up the concept...it was good example, yeah, and I...think it's a good way to teach because I feel closeness. [IMJ]

Inferences about the teacher are being made whether or not they are correct. "Ruben says we make inferences (often faulty) about some one's intelligence, gender, age, approachability, financial well-being, class, taste, values, and cultural background' from attractiveness, dress, and personal artifacts" (Samovar, 1998, p. 153). What is

important to this discussion is not whether they are correct, but rather that they are being made to the point of finding similarity with teachers.

As discussed in chapter five, participants also made inferences based on verbal/nonverbal clusters. For instance, confirming messages included both the nonverbal head nod and a verbal positive feedback message.

> Nods her head, and then, and then has something to say back to *confirm* that there is some substance in what I said. So, there is a lot of, uh, positive feedback. [IMY]

The teacher who used personal examples (verbal messages) and smiled (nonverbal messages) was perceived to be friendly and helpful.

> Use lots of her personal example, and help me to finish the class and, and I have to take final at another, another time, she very *helpful* to me...And she was very *friendly*, and she always smiled. [IFJ]

Interestingly, gestures, as a nonverbal stimuli, (see this thesis, p. 114) only consisted of negative examples. For instance, a negative example of one teacher's gestures, followed by a direct request of the student was indicative of impatience, or inflexibility.

> she kind of looked down and shook her head and made that little, (he moved the fingers of one hand through the air as though imitating *xxxxx*) shook her fingers like she was going to grab something in the air and then, 'No, I've gotta have it, gotta have it...' she had the *xxxxx* nonverbal like shaking, shaking her head and her eyes closed and a wrinkle in the forehead [IMY]

Although it is not clear why this happened in the data, it is clear that gestures are powerful sources of information about the teacher for students.

Thus, the international students in this sample draw on three types of behavior for making inferences about the teachers: (a) nonverbal cues alone; (b) verbal cues alone; and (c) behavioral clusters comprised of both verbal and nonverbal cues. What

was most interesting from the data is that reported teacher characteristics were most often inferred from nonverbal information.

Hall's (1976) notions of high and low context point to the relevance of nonverbal cues for inferring meaning. Individuals from high context cultures, such as Japan and Saudi Arabia tend to rely more on the nonverbal channel (eg, gestures, appearance) to infer meaning, whereas low-context cultures, such as the U.S. and Australia, rely more on the verbal channel and infer very little from what is embedded in context (see this thesis, pp. 28-31).

Strictly from a verbal standpoint and often without consideration for context, the self-disclosure literature, in general, reflects a reliance on the verbal code for inferences of trust, liking and attraction (for review of self-disclosure see Collins and Miller, 1994; Gilbert and Horenstein, 1975; and for review of benefits see Rosenfeld, 1979). However, in this study, the participants knew something about the teacher role *and* their teachers as persons outside of that role based on verbal *and* nonverbal information available in the classroom context.

The context of the U.S. university classroom is unlike that of each participant's native country (see Susan Kuhn, 2000). The relationship between teacher and student are perceived as "more friendly" and learning in this context, via the relationship, appears to possibly affect student's overall experience. The questions that now appear as relevant to understanding a participant's definition of teacher self-disclosure rest with receiver imputed meaning. Common definitions of self-disclosure require behavior to be intentional and therefore would not consider the receiver's point of

view as viable, since intentionality is mute without asking the sender. The common definition leaves out the receiver as an important component of the interaction; a stance contradicted by the data in this study.

Discussion of Research Questions

RQ1: What do international students consider to be teacher self-disclosure?

It was the primary intention of this research to consider self-disclosure from the perspective of the international student as a test to the extant self-disclosure literature in order to generate insights into this interpersonal phenomena (Philipsen, 1982). From the foregoing discussions it can be seen that international students infer meaning about the teacher as teacher and person through both verbal and nonverbal information. Whether the information sent is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant as long as it is received and meaning is inferred. Based on the data, this researcher constructed the following definition that seemed to reflect the participants' perspective.

> Intentional and/or unintentional verbal and nonverbal behaviors received during interaction that provide information about the teacher and have meaning for the students.

This data driven definition is actually closer to Jourard's (1971b) original conceptualization where he speaks of unintentionality and the receiver point of view:

> Disclosure means to unveil, to make manifest, or to show. Self-disclosure is the act of making yourself manifest, showing yourself so others can perceive you...Nevermind what disclosure I give to the world, deliberate and unintentional, but how much of the disclosure of the world do I receive? (p. 19).

Jourard's original definitional intent for self-disclosure is clearly on information that is received, whether intentionally sent or not. Participant data more appropriately reflects Jourard's original definition than that which has been predominately used in the literature.

RQ2: How do international students perceive teacher self-disclosure?

Chaikin and Derlega (1974a) and Gilbert and Horenstein (1975) stressed the context as a determinant of whether self-disclosure is appropriate (see p. 12). Although participants identified hypothetical topics considered to be highly intimate as potentially inappropriate, they did not report any actual disclosures that they considered as inappropriate for the communication classroom context. Furthermore, other than one participant who viewed casual dress as inappropriate for a professional teacher, the participants did not perceive teacher nonverbal disclosures as inappropriate.

The participants of this study reported enjoying teacher self-disclosure and felt it made the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student more positive. This is contrary to what Barnlund (1989) and Nakanishi (1986) might have predicted for Japanese participants based on their findings outside the communication classroom in which increased levels of disclosure did not increase levels of attraction (see this thesis, p. 18). Communication behaviors, such as eye contact and smiling that indicate liking, are considered immediacy behaviors and tend to result in "perceptions of interpersonal closeness...friendliness" (Rodriguez, et. al., 1996, p. 294). The interpersonal relationship based on "teacher communication variables, such as

immediacy, disclosure...attractiveness and others, are likely to create an affectively based relationship with students" (p. 303).

Students expressed increased trust and respect for the teacher, both as a source of conceptual information and as a person with whom an interpersonal relationship is shared. With regard to the communication classroom, this is consistent with Galvin's (1999) position that "students expect to view a teacher as a model of personal communication competence as well as a communication scholar" (p. 252). The relationship is one in which the interaction that occurs is conducive to the affective component of student learning. Learning course concepts is "more fun" when the interaction between teachers and students, and among the students themselves, is open. As Rodriguez et. al. (1996) point out, affective learning "is the central causal mediator between teacher immediacy and students' cognitive learning" (Rodriguez, et. al., 1996, p. 293). The perception of teacher immediacy based on verbal and nonverbal disclosures appears similar across study participants and strongly suggests they were positively imparted, both interpersonally and intellectually.

RQ3: How is student uncertainty affected, if at all, by teacher self-disclosure?

The impact that teacher self-disclosure may or may not have on students', uncertainty was difficult to determine with the available data. It may be the case that with the inclusion of nonverbal behaviors as part of the definition, student uncertainty, at least about the teacher, may be reduced because inferences are more likely to be considered as strategies. Berger (1979) named verbal self-disclosure as an interactive

strategy for reducing uncertainty based on the notion of reciprocity (see this thesis, pp.14-17).

As an interactive strategy for reducing uncertainty, participants would need to intentionally offer information about themselves with the expectation that a similar topic, at a similar level of intimacy, would be returned. Altman and Taylor's (1973) notion of reciprocity is founded in a cost-reward mentality (i.e., spend money to make money). According to Berger (1979), this exchange would likely decrease student uncertainty for the context. There was not any data that suggested an instance where participants offered information about themselves with the expectation that they would learn something about the teacher, and thus reduce uncertainty, by using this strategy.

Findings are inconclusive for this research question; however, Kuhn (2000) suggested a link to teacher verbal self-disclosure and participant perceptions of what constitutes knowledge in the communication classroom (p. 139). Gaining certain types of knowledge is likely to decrease uncertainty in the communication classroom context. To further compliment this discussion, a more thorough examination of uncertainty, as perceived by participants, can be found in Kuhn's thesis (2000).

Limitations and Strengths of this Study

As with any research there are always limitations and strengths to consider before a concluding summary is articulated. The limitations primarily rest with a lack of generalizability to international students, either as a total population or a specific culture. The strengths of this research rest primarily in its contributions to the

definition of self-disclosure and the implications that nonverbal forms of disclosure have for future research.

Limitations

Researcher as "instrument" for investigation carries implications for how the data were interpreted. As McCracken (1988) admits, "there is no simple one-to-one relationship in this matching process...the investigator's experience is merely a bundle of possibilities, pointers, ans suggestions that can be used to plumb the remarks of a respondent" (p. 19). Although many quotes throughout this thesis support the findings reported, the interpretation is ultimately that of the researcher.

Another limitation of this research is that the perspective of the teacher (sender) was not part of the data. The teachers were not interviewed to discover intentionality in the interaction and obviously, they are an intricate part of the interaction. The findings are reflective of the receiver only, which offers a one-sided picture of a very complex interaction.

Other limitations primarily rest with generalizability of findings. The sample size was limited to eight and therefore the findings are reflective of eight people. Not only was the sample size limited, country of origin varied among participants. Although context appears to supersede individual culture, generalizability to all international students is not possible due to the uniqueness of each participant's cultural background and overall size of sample.

Strengths

This thesis is the first to examine teacher self-disclosure in the context of the university classroom from the perspective of the international student. This population is not well known in the interpersonal research and their influence in this setting may have more influence than we know. In order to maximize learning for all, it is important to include international students as contributors in this context. Interpersonal research on concepts such as self-disclosure is necessary for a better understanding of the interaction that takes place between the teacher and all students, including international students, in U.S. classrooms. The primary strengths of this research are in its contributions to self-disclosure as a concept and the methods used for inquiry into this interpersonal phenomenon.

The findings are most appropriate to understanding self-disclosure as a complex process of perception (receiver oriented), rather than limited to an intentional act used simply to reveal information about the self (sender oriented). As stated throughout this research, the common definition has not included nonverbal forms of communication as part of its definition. There is strong evidence in the data to suggest that the omission of nonverbal as a viable source of information for international students would limit understanding of the impact that self-disclosure can have on relationships and learning outcomes. For instance, based on this study, the participants not only reported liking the teacher, respecting her as an instructor and trusting her information more but also appeared to find self-disclosure useful in learning course concepts. From the data, it became clear that the student-teacher

relationship appears to have the potential to maximize learning outcomes for international students in the communication classroom.

The a priori definition that included nonverbal behavior, interaction and inferred meaning was supported by the definition generated from participant data. The two definitions complemented one another in that both contributed to a working definition that could be used in future explorations of self-disclosure in intercultural research generally, and in international education, specifically. A working definition based on a composite of the a priori and data-driven definitions is as follows:

> Teacher self-disclosure constitutes information sent as deliberate or unintentional through both verbal and nonverbal channels during interaction in the classroom that has meaning for the students about the teacher as teacher and as person in this context.

The methods for inquiry were combined to more adequately address an underrepresented population. Since no other study has considered self-disclosure using a qualitative approach from the perspective of international students the focus group and individual interviews were modified and combined in a way that was most conducive to learning about teacher self-disclosure from this population. This approach yielded a positive response from the participants and provided insightful and descriptive data from which to draw findings.

It was expected that language proficiency, as well as participant willingness to disclose personal opinions about their teachers, would both pose limitations during data collection. Neither expectation proved to be accurate. Participants were more reflective than anticipated and appeared to enjoy talking about their experiences in an open and articulate manner. The participants shared insights beyond what I had

expected. Upon reflection I believe that they were able to answer the questions quite thoroughly. I think this might have been because they had their native countries to use as comparisons. Being able to compare is clearly an advantage for international students in the communication classroom that I had never considered.

Implications for Communication Pedagogy and International Education

The relevance of nonverbal behavior in revealing personal information about the teacher has important implications for teachers in the communication classroom. All teachers, but especially teachers of communication, need to recognize the significance of their nonverbal behaviors. As part of a low-context culture in which the emphasis for understanding communication is on verbal messages, most U.S. native teachers are unaware of the impact that their nonverbal behaviors can have on student learning.

Teacher appearance and dress, as well as the use of time, space and silence, are relevant sources of information for students for understanding the overall context of the classroom, especially the social and cultural aspects. This means the teacher has a responsibility to pay attention to both verbal and nonverbal messages that she is sending because they say something about her as a teacher and as a person, which has implications for the relationships developed.

The relationship between teacher and student is a necessary component to the overall learning experience for international students. Self-disclosure appears to facilitate learning in a more supportive environment where communication is

perceived as being "more open." It appears that teachers, who verbally self-disclose as part of teaching course concepts, may actually be making personal connections to course content for student. Teacher disclosures found in the data can not only be linked to concepts being taught in the communication classroom, they appear to have an effect on both the cognitive and affective components of learning.

The teacher is not only a source of information for the discipline she represents, she is a human being with personal experiences and opinions that are relevant to a broader conceptualization of what counts as knowledge and facilitates students' understandings. Without the personal aspect in teaching, students may be receiving a limited view of communication. In this sense, a more complete view of knowledge can be facilitated through the development of interpersonal relationships in the classroom.

Altman and Taylor (1973) describe personality as having dimensions, similar to an onion with layers. Toward the core, are personal opinions based on views held deep within the center of the onion; their metaphor suggests that "interaction at one level of depth will have important implications for interaction at other levels of personality [onion]" (p. 17). With this thought in mind, Sorenson's (1989) and Rodriguez, et. al.'s (1996) findings in the communication classroom on immediacy (i.e., behaviors that enhance physical and psychological closeness) reinforced Andersen (1979) who asserted that the student-teacher relationship has a positive influence on student affective learning (p. 263; p. 303). Without the personal aspect in teaching, the sharing of personal opinions and the like, students are possibly denied

what has the potential to be a "process in which students learn about the course contents and in the process, learn about themselves and others" (Lederman, 1992, p. 15). The affective component of teaching may be sacrificed without the personal aspect in the relationship.

Understanding the impact that teacher nonverbal behavior has on the relationship, more specifically the learning experience of international students, has the potential to maximize learning outcomes in the communication classroom for all students. Developing an interpersonal relationship with students in the communication classroom might even be viewed as an ethical responsibility in which teacher self-disclosure (both verbal and nonverbal) plays an important role in the creation of that relationship which enhances student learning.

Implications for Future Research

Future areas for research that would be relevant to consider are (a) connections to Kolb's (1984) affective aspect of the learning model, (b) the relevance of teacher intentionality and (c) the impact that teacher self-disclosure can have on international education. First, it would be valuable to consider self-disclosure in terms of Kolb's (1984) affective learning model in order to develop strategies that teachers can use in the classroom for reaching affective levels of student learning. Teacher self-disclosure appears to have unique relevance to experientially learning course concepts in the communication classroom where participants reported being better able to apply their own experiences to that of the teacher's.

Second, teacher intentionality of disclosure is relevant to research in order to complete the interaction profile. Based on the limited information received during phase II of the pilot study, (see p. 61) both teachers interviewed discussed using certain nonverbal behaviors in the classroom. This suggests that some teachers are aware of the impact that nonverbal can have for desired learning outcomes and have strategically used nonverbal behaviors in class. Whether or not intentional nonverbal behaviors would be perceived as self-disclosure would reveal specific strategies for teachers.

Finally, the relevance of teacher-student relationships as they are enacted in the U.S. may affect education beyond these borders when international students return to their countries of origin and share the knowledge gained as a sojourner. For instance, two participants plan to return to their countries of origin to teach: one will teach English, and one Communication. The effect that being a student in the U.S. has on their teaching styles as compared to those teachers that did not experience university classrooms in the U.S. needs to be examined to ascertain what impact, if any, teacher self-disclosure has had on the individual sojourner.

Closing Summary

The common definition for self-disclosure as an intentional, verbal act of revealing information about one's self to another is no longer sufficient for gaining insight into self-disclosure as an interpersonal phenomenon. The definition conceptualized a priori to gathering data was confirmed by the participants as

including both verbal and nonverbal behaviors that can be either sent as intentional or unintentional information about the teacher. Knowing personal information about the teacher not only has implications for the student-teacher relationship, it is also directly linked to student affective and cognitive learning in the communication classrooms. The overall positive response that international students report as a result of teacher self-disclosure also has implications for international education. These findings clearly fulfill an appeal made by Wolfgang (1979) over twenty years ago that attempted to "sensitize teachers or potential teachers to the importance of understanding the role of nonverbal behavior in communication and its particular role in the multicultural classroom" (p. 159).

> A great deal of the misunderstanding in intercultural communications that occurs in and outside of the classroom often leads to prejudice and stereotyping. This occurs largely because of our lack of understanding of the powerful effects our nonverbal behavior has on others. This lack of understanding occurs because we have been taught [in the U.S.] that it is the written and spoken word that is all powerful and therefore the nonverbal part of communication is carried on primarily out of the awareness level and it becomes the silent but restless language. When we become aware of how loud and powerful nonverbal language can be in its silence in communicating our attitudes toward others, our likes and dislikes, our feelings, and make an attempt to understand its social and cultural implications, then we have the seeds for improving and humanizing intercultural communication (p. 172).

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Appendix A: Human Subjects Review Committee Letter of Approval

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROJECTS

DATE: February 18, 1999

TO: Darlene Geiger/SS#396-94-8937 [redacted]

FROM: Vikki Vandiver, Chair, HSRRC, 1998-99

RE: HSRRC waived review of your application titled, "American Teacher Self-Disclosure in the University Context from the International Students' Perspective"

Your proposal is exempt from further HSRRC review, and you may proceed with the study. However, the Committee requests that someone other than the researcher (Speech Communication office staff, for example) peruse the course rosters to establish a list of students eligible to participate in this study, and that this person or persons mail out the introductory cover letters to students on the list. In this manner, student names are not given out without their consent.

Even with the exemption above, it was necessary by University policy for you to notify this Committee of the proposed research, and we appreciate your timely attention to this matter. If you make changes in the research protocol, the Committee must be notified in writing, and changes must be approved before being implemented.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Martha Clarke at the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, (503) 725-8182, 111 Cramer Hall.

cc: Maureen Orr Eldred
David Ritchie
Susan Poulsen

waiver memo

Appendix B: Letter of Inquiry

Dear _____, Date _____

This letter is written so that we may introduce ourselves and invite you to be a participant in a research study about international students. Our names are Darlene Geiger and Susan Kuhn and we are both graduate students who are conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Susan Poulsen in the Speech Communication Department. This study is part of the requirement for our masters' degrees.

We are interested in learning the international students' experiences at PSU in the Speech Communication Department. We are asking for your participation in this study because you are an international student who is currently taking a class in the Speech Communication Department.

If you are interested in participating in this study, we will meet with you and other international students three times this term. You may participate in one or all of the meetings. The first meeting will be a group interview with several international students. The second interview will be with individual students who are available and interested. In the final meeting, we will ask you to clarify and/or confirm parts of the interview. Total time required of you is approximately two to four hours. You will not receive any direct benefit for your participation in this study, however your participation will increase knowledge, which may help others like you in the future.

We hope you are interested in our study and wish to be a participant. Please call if you are interested. If we do not hear from you, we will call you after seven days. You are under no obligation to participate in this study, and your participation, or lack of, will not affect your course grade or your relationship with your teacher.

We are very interested in learning about your experience. We appreciate your time in reading this letter and considering our project. Please call or email any questions to one of the numbers listed below.

Sincerely,

Susan Kuhn and Darlene Geiger

Susan Kuhn may be contacted at 253-4743 or psu20533@odin.cc.pdx.edu
Darlene Geiger may be contacted at 245-0674 or geigerd@irn.pdx.edu

Appendix C: Informed Consent

I, _____, agree to take part in this research project interested in learning about the international students' experiences in the university being conducted by Susan Kuhn and Darlene Geiger under the supervision of Dr. Susan Poulsen. I understand that this study is part of the requirements for their masters' degrees.

It has been explained to me that the purpose of the study is to learn of international students' experiences at Portland State University in the Speech Communication Department.

I understand that this study will consist of three interviews where I will be verbally responding to questions asked by Susan and Darlene. The total time required for the interview(s) is 2 to 4 hours. I may not receive any direct benefit from participation in this study, however participation may help increase knowledge that may benefit other students like me in the future. Susan and Darlene have offered to answer any questions that I may have about the study and of what I am expected to do in this study.

I have been promised that all information I give, as well as my identity, will be kept confidential. Darlene Geiger and Susan Kuhn will maintain the information (tape recordings, etc.) under lock and key.

I also understand that I do not have to participate in this study, and that this will not affect my course grade or my relationship with my instructor, or with Portland State University. I understand that I may also withdraw from this study at any time without affecting my course grade or my relationship with Portland State University, my instructors or with Susan and Darlene.

I have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Research and Sponsored Projects, 105 Neuberger Hall, Portland State University, (503) 725-8182. Or contact either one of the researchers:

Susan Kuhn, 253-4743, psu20533@odin.cc.pdx
Darlene Geiger, 245-0674, geigerd@irn.pdx.edu.

Appendix D: Pre-interview Demographic Questions

Please complete the following questions. This basic information will allow us to have a better understanding of the participants. If you choose not to answer a question, you may leave it blank. Any information you do give will be kept confidential.

1. Circle one: Male/Female
2. What is your age? _____
3. What is your major? _____
4. What country are you from? _____
5. What is your first language (s)? _____
6. How many years of education have you had in your country? _____
7. Díd you study English in your country? Yes/No If yes, how long? _____
8. What was your TOEFL score? _____
9. How long have you lived in the U.S.? _____
10. How long have you been a student in the U.S.? _____
11. Did you study English at PSU? Yes/No

    11a. If yes, what level did you start at PSU? Level 1/ Level 2/ Level 3/ Level 4

    11b. If yes, how many terms did you study English?
12. How many class(es) have you taken in the Speech communication Dept.?

    _____
13. What grade do you think you will receive in your Speech Communication class this term? A/ B/ C/ D/ F/ Not known
14. Are there any questions or concerns that you have at this time?

Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Guide

1. Tell us what it's like to be an international student at PSU. (establish setting)
   1A. Tell us what it's like to be an international student in the Speech Communication classroom at PSU. (establish setting)

2. What is the role of the teacher in your country? (student-teacher roles)
   2A. How do you think that compares with the U.S.? (role comparison)
   2B. What kinds of things does your teacher say or do that is different than what a teacher in your native country would say or do? (verbal and nonverbal SD and role)

3. What actions do you believe are OK or not OK for a teacher to do in the class? (NV appropriateness)

4. Can you tell us of a time when your current teacher surprised you with what she said or did in the classroom? How did that make you feel? (level and content of verbal/nonverbal SD and URT)

5. Sometimes in class, teachers will use real-life examples to explain class concepts. Can you tell us about a time when the teacher did use a real-life example and then, how it may have affected what you thought about her? (verbal affect)

6. What kinds of things do you feel are OK or not OK for a teacher to say in class? (verbal appropriateness)

7. Sometimes teachers say and do things that seem unclear and difficult for us as students to understand. Can you think of a time when this happened to you? What did you do? (URT and Strategy)

8. What advice would you give to other international students who are about to take the class you just took? (closure)

9. In thinking about what we have been talking about, is there anything else you would like to say? (final, general question)

Appendix F: Individual Interview Guide

1. In our previous interview you talked about what it was like to be an international student. About your experience as a student in the Speech Communication Classroom and about interactions with your instructors? Since that interview have you had any additional thoughts on any of those topics that you would like to add? (reestablish setting)
2. Why did you take the Speech Communication class that you took? (establish setting)
3. Do you think the Speech Communication classes are different or the same as other classes at PSU? How are they different or the same? (class context)
   3A. What about the teacher, was she the same or different from teachers in other classes? How? (class context and teacher role)
4. Describe your teacher to us.
   4A. Tell us what you know about your teacher, both as a teacher and as a person. (SD and URT)
   4B. How does she feel about her students? (self-disclosure)
   4C. How do you know these things? (explain and SD)
   4D. What is the most surprising thing that you know about her? (SD appropriate)
5. If a friend of yours said they were about to take the class that you just took, what would you tell him/her to expect from the teacher? (predict and explain URT)
6. What kinds of things are difficult about being an international student in the class you just took? What was the easiest? (URT)
7. What are things that your teacher does or says that are helpful to you in the class? (decrease uncertainty)
8. Can you think of anything that your teacher has done or said that made you like or dislike her? (SD and Affect)
   8A. What about what she wears? Does that influence what you think of her? (NV SD)
9. In the last interview, we asked you what advice you would give to another international student from your country about coming to PSU. Now we want to know what advice you would give to a US teacher about interacting with students from your culture. (closure)
10. In thinking about what we have been talking about, is there anything else you would like to say? Are there any questions that you think we should have asked? (final question)